



## NORTHWIND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

### C. S. Lewis on Scripture and Romantic Theology NS-CTSF-521

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### Course Description

As both a rational scholar and romantic poet, C. S. Lewis approached Scripture and the traditional teachings of the Church as revealed truths to be *received* and *believed* with the mind and heart, and more imaginatively than propositionally. Lewis's literary view on biblical inspiration and authority of Scripture encompassed both his rational faculty for understanding and his romantic longing to find a deeper meaning. "For me," he says, "reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning." ("Bluspels and Flalansferes", *Selected Literary Essays*, p. 265). Through his enlightened reason and "baptized imagination" Lewis championed the creative conjunction of *Logos* and *Mythos* (Reason and Story) to produce compelling works of theological fiction. *Mythopoesis*—the making of myth and language of image, metaphor, poetry and narrative—for Lewis pointed to primary religious experience and theological truths in aesthetic and concrete ways that engage both the mind and heart.

This doctoral level course features pre-recorded video lectures and digital resources focused on Lewis's literary view of Scripture and his contribution to the Romantic Theology of the Oxford Inklings. It is offered as an *individual tutorial* (at the student's own time, place and pace) with optional, periodic group discussions for those taking the course at the same time. As an intensive reading course of independent study, students are expected to have already read at least 6-10 fiction and non-fiction books by Lewis; and be ready to read more deeply in selected scholarly works focused on Lewis's distinctive approach to epistemology, mythopoeics, biblical interpretation, and literary criticism as it relates to Romantic Theology.

### Student learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, the successful student should be able to:

1. Read carefully and critically primary C.S. Lewis texts.
2. Describe the basic contents, structure and unique features of Lewis's work.
3. Describe some of the major issues and debates in the scholarly study of C.S. Lewis's body of work.
4. Describe Lewis's major themes and their significance for our understanding of Romantic Theology.

5. Demonstrate an ability to engage these major themes and issues in current academic study.

**Required Texts:**

**Primary Texts: (by C.S. Lewis)**

*Letters to Malcolm Chiefly on Prayer*

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/svseoglt889mqw3/Letters%20to%20Malcolm%20chiefly%20on%20prayer.%20C.S.%20Lewis.%20741709039.%20604.1.pdf?dl=0>

*An Experiment in Criticism*

[https://www.amazon.com/Experiment-Criticism-Canto-Classics/dp/1107604729/ref=asc\\_df\\_1107604729/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=266013286732&hvpos=&hvnetw=q&hvrand=9362440404738123525&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9003717&hvtargid=pla-487327974462&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/Experiment-Criticism-Canto-Classics/dp/1107604729/ref=asc_df_1107604729/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=266013286732&hvpos=&hvnetw=q&hvrand=9362440404738123525&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9003717&hvtargid=pla-487327974462&psc=1)

*Allegory of Love (Chapter 1)*

Lewis, C. S. *The Allegory of Love : A Study in Medieval Tradition*. London: Oxford University Press, 1977. [not in DTL may be requested through Interlibrary Loan]

*The Discarded Image*

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/7xr3qjlef2lzp7w/The%20Discarded%20Image%2C%20An%20Introduction%20to%20Medieval%20and%20Renaissance%20Literature%20-%20By%20C.S.%20Lewis.pdf?dl=0>

*The Four Loves*

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/l7ymnx85ab53fip/The%20four%20loves%20%E2%80%93%20Lewis%2C%20Clive%20S.%20222267521%20%23204%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0>

*Surprised by Joy*

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/8el4fwv7b3mnutc/Surprised%20by%20joy%20%20the%20shape%20of%20my%20early%20life.%20C.S.%20Lewis.%2033822259.%20%23148%281%29.pdf?dl=0>

*Till We Have Faces*

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/n9oypx1930x4qba/Till%20we%20have%20faces%20%20a%20myth%20retold%20%E2%80%93%20Lewis%2C%20C.S.%2032675076%20%2371%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0>

Lectures:

Lewis, C. S. *De Descriptione Temporum: An Inaugural Lecture*.

Inaugural Lecture (University of Cambridge), 1954. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955. [not in DTL may be requested through Interlibrary Loan]

Lewis, C. S. "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism." *Brigham Young University Studies* 9, no. 1 (1968): 33–48.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43041856>.

Sermons:

“Transposition” and “The Weight of Glory” in  
Lewis, C. S., and HarperCollins Publishers. *The Weight of Glory and  
Other Addresses*. First HarperCollins Paperback ed. New York:  
HarperOne, 2007.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/wy1u1j86k9g84ao/The%20Weight%20of%20glory%20and%20other%20addresses.%20C.%20S.%20Lewis.%201088960561.%20708.1.pdf?dl=0>

**Secondary Texts:**

Lazo, Andrew. “‘Early Prose Joy’: A Brief Introduction.” *VII: Journal of the Marion E. Wade Center* 30 (2013): 5–12. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48599470> .

*OHEL* (Introduction)

Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature* (version 2nd ed.). 2nd ed.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. [not in DTL may be requested through Interlibrary Loan]

MacSwain, Robert, and Michael Ward. *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis*. The Cambridge Companions Complete Collection. Cambridge:  
Cambridge University Press, 2010.

<https://www-cambridge-org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/core/books/cambridge-companion-to-c-s-lewis/67BD6D063F08FACCE83FE734EC31275#>.

McGrath, Alister E. *Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis*. Chichester, England:  
Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.

<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=7103741>

Starr, Charlie W. *The Faun's Bookshelf : C.S. Lewis on Why Myth Matters*. Kent, Ohio: Black  
Squirrel Books, 2018.

<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=5447417>

Christensen, Michael J. *C.S. Lewis on Scripture : His Thoughts on the Nature of Biblical  
Inspiration, the Role of Revelation, and the Question of Inerrancy*. Waco, Tex.: Word Books,  
1979.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/rxpeygo43ulpdoe/C.%20S.%20Lewis%20on%20Scripture%2C%20Michael%20J.%20Christensen%2C%205136620%2C%20350.pdf?dl=0>

Lewis, C. S. (Clive Staples). *The Collected Poems of C.S. Lewis: A Critical Edition*. Edited by Don W.  
King. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2015. [not in DTL may be requested through  
Interlibrary Loan]

**Recommended Texts:** to read as time permits

Gaspey, Terry W. *Not a Tame Lion : The Spiritual Legacy of C.S. Lewis*. Nashville, Tenn.:  
Cumberland House, 2006. [in DTL]

Green, Roger Lancelyn, and Walter Hooper. *C.S. Lewis : A Biography*. Rev. Harvest ed. A Harvest  
Book. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1994. [in DTL]  
(Authorized and Revised edition 2011 recommended but it is not in DTL)

McGrath, Alister E. *C.S. Lewis : A Life : Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet*. Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2013. [in DTL]

Prothero, James, and Donald T Williams. *Gaining a Face : The Romanticism of C.s. Lewis*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013. [in DTL]

Downing, David C. *Planets in Peril : A Critical Study of C.s. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* (version [Pbk. ed., 1995].). [Pbk. ed., 1995] ed. Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995. [in DTL]

Markos, Louis, Will Kelly, and Azusa Pacific University. Honors College. *A Compass for Deep Heaven : Navigating the C.s. Lewis Ransom Trilogy*. Edited by Diana Pavlac Glyer and Julianne Johnson. Baltimore, MD: Square Halo Books, 2021.

Ditchfield, Christin. *A Family Guide to Narnia : Biblical Truths in C.S. Lewis's The Chronicles of Narnia*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2003. [in DTL]

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Topics and Reading Assignments:

#### Topic 1 Lewis on Scripture

What is Lewis's view of Divine Revelation, transposition, literary inspiration, Biblical authority, infallibility and inerrancy?

- o View: Dr. Christensen introduction to "The Romantic Theology of C.S. Lewis"
- o Read: *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis (Part I)* plus essay "On Scripture" by Kevin J. Vanhoozer (In Part II) OR *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis* by Alister McGrath
- o Read: *C.S. Lewis on Scripture* by Michael J. Christensen
- o View/Read: Dr. Christensen lecture on "C.S. Lewis on Scripture and the Issue of Inerrancy" o Read/Review: Lewis on "Modern Theology and Criticism" (pdfs)
- o Read/Review: Lewis Sermons on "Transposition" and "The Weight of Glory" o Read/Review: *Letters to Malcolm Chiefly on Prayer*
- o Read: "Letters to Malcolm: Letter XIIa (transcription) in *VII: The Journal of the Marion E. Wade Center* (Vol 34. 2017)
- o View/Read: Dr. Christensen lecture on "The Lost Letter to Malcolm: Chiefly on Scripture"
- o Assignment: Write 10-page paper on romantic elements in Lewis's view of Scripture
- o Discuss with Faculty Mentor: *C.S. Lewis on Scripture* by Michael J. Christensen and the "Lost Letter to Malcolm: chiefly on Scripture"

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#### Topic 2. Philosophical, Theological and Literary Foundations

What is Lewis's theory of myth, epistemology, and nature of language and meaning?

- o Read: *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis (Part II)* OR *The Intellectual World of C. S. Lewis* by Alister McGrath
- o Read/Review: *An Experiment in Criticism*

- o Read/Review: *The Discarded Image*
- o Read/Review: *Allegory of Love* (chapter 1)
- o Reac/Review *OHEL (Introduction)* (pdf)
- o Read/Review: Lewis "De Descriptione Temporum" (pdf)
- o Read/Review: *The Four Loves*
- o Read: *The Fauns Book-Shelf* by Charlie Starr
- o View: Dr. Charlie Starr lecture: "An Introduction to Myth in C. S. Lewis"
- o View: Dr. Charlie Starr lecture: "An Introduction to Lewis's Epistemology"
- o View: Dr. Charlie Starr presentation on "Lewis's Literary Theory: The Language of Religion" o
- View Brenton Dickison lecture on "The Spiritual Theology of C.S. Lewis"
- o Assignment: Write 10-page topic paper on Lewis as Philosopher
- o Discuss with Faculty Mentor

### **Topic 3 Lewis's Creative and Intuitional Apologetics**

"Most of my books are evangelistic," Lewis confessed in his essay "God in the Dock". How was his Christian apologetics different from more conventional approaches to evangelism?

- o Read: *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis (Part III)*
- o Read selectively: *The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis* by Alister McGrath
- o View: Terry Glaspey lecture on "Creative and Intuitional Apologetics: indirect 'fiction and symbol' vs. 'frontal assault'"
- o View Christin Ditchfield lecture on "Catching the Reader Unawares: C.S. Lewis, Christian Apologetics, and The Chronicles of Narnia"
- o View: Alan Snyder on "America Discovers C.S. Lewis"
- o Assignment: Write 10-page topic paper on Lewis as Apologist
- o Discuss with Faculty Mentor: Lewis as Communicator

### **Topic 4 Life and Works of Lewis**

In light of Lewis's biography and life commitments, how best to interpret his fiction, narrative poetry, and theological texts?

- o Read/Review: *Experiment in Criticism*
- o Read:/Review: *The Discarded Image* and *Allegory of Love (chapter 1)*
- o Read/Review: *Surprised by Joy*
- o Read/Review: *The Four Loves*
- o Read: *Early Prose Joy* transcription by Andrew Lazo, editor (pdf)
- o Read: *The Collected Poems of C.S. Lewis: A Critical Edition*, Don W. King, ed. o
- Read: "The Archangel Fragment and C. S. Lewis's World-Building Project" by Brenton D. G. Dickieson and Charlie W. Starr (pdf)
- o View: Crystal Hurd's lecture on "Lewis and the Ladies"
- o View: Crystal Hurd's lecture on "Interpreting Lewis's Narrative Poetry"
- o View: Andrew Lazo on "Telling Timelines: Lewis's Chronologies of Conversion"
- o Andrew Lazo on "Sehnsucht as Signpost: Lewis on Joy Leading to Love" (Three texts on Joy: *Early Prose Joy*, *Surprised by Joy*, and *Till We Have Faces*)
- o Assignment: Write a romantic poem following a literary construction found in Lewis to discuss with faculty mentor. OR imaginatively reconstruct a missing piece from Lewis's biography.

### **Final Paper – due within 30 days of the completion of topic 4:**

Submit a final paper: either an integrative paper on all four topics, or a revised and polished version of one of the four topics.

## **Instructor Contact**

Michael J. Christensen, Ph.D. [michael@northwindseminary.org](mailto:michael@northwindseminary.org)

Charlie W. Starr, D.A. [ntscstarr@gmail.com](mailto:ntscstarr@gmail.com)

## **Northwind Instructional Practices:**

This is a class offered in an online format. Online experiences include:

1. Assigned readings
2. Viewing digital resources
3. Video Conferencing
4. Online submission of Papers in the \*.doc or \*.docx file format

## **Attendance Policy**

This is a short-term intensive course.

You are required to participate in all class assignments and/or sessions.

Your attendance and punctuality will affect your grade in a positive or negative manner.

## **Statement on Learning and Physical Disabilities**

Northwind Institute accepts students with learning and physical disabilities and provides reasonable accommodation to help them be successful.

## **Grading Policy**

Submission of materials does not guarantee a passing grade.

Papers are graded on the following:

- Use of Texts and Lecture
- Use of other Course Materials
- Proper citation and footnotes using Turabian Style

Grade points are applied as follows:

A = 4

A- = 3.5

B = 3

B- = 2.5

C = 2

D = 1

F = 0

## **Academic Misconduct Policy**

Northwind Institute does not condone academic dishonesty in any form. When an act of academic dishonesty has

occurred:

1. The instructor has the right to not accept the assignment or test in question and record a "zero" for the assignment or test, and/or require the student to redo the assignment (or test), or require the student to complete a substitute assignment or test.
2. The student may be dropped from the class and assigned a failing grade (F). A written recommendation from the instructor is required.
3. In cases of extreme or repeated incidents (two or more) of academic dishonesty, the student may be suspended from the Institute.

The Academic Dean will notify the student as to the action taken. If the student believes there has been an erroneous accusation made, the student may appeal the action. The student must file a written appeal within 10 working days of notification. The President reviews all written appeals and his decision is final. The Student, Academic Dean and Instructor are informed via email of the action taken.