



## Grace Communion Seminary

### TH507: Theology of C. S. Lewis

#### Short Syllabus

**Instructor: Dr. Gary W. Deddo**

(Instructor may be contacted through GCS course website)

#### **GCS Mission Statement**

*“Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry.”* We are committed to equip the saints for pastoral ministry through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, ministerial and pastoral studies informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

#### **Course Description**

In this course we will survey C.S. Lewis’s primary works and two of his fictional works to see how Lewis understood the central tenets of Christian faith and their inter-relationships. We will also consider how Lewis communicated the Christian faith in his context through his fiction and how we might more faithfully communicate the Christian gospel in our day.

#### **Required Texts and Articles**

Reading assignments will be taken from the required texts and from “on reserve” readings of several essays. It is recommended that the required texts be purchased.

C. S. Lewis is the author of all the required readings. *Any edition of these books, including electronic editions, is acceptable for the class.* The ISBN number below references the most recent edition and is provided for your convenience. The prices given are estimates. To find the lowest prices on these books, use [bookfinder.com](http://bookfinder.com).

## Required Complete Texts

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*, HarperSanFrancisco; Revised & Enlarged edition, 2001. ISBN: 978-0060652920. \$10.19

Lewis, C. S. *The Problem of Pain*, HarperOne, 2001. ISBN: 9780060652968. \$10.98

Lewis, C. S. *God in the Dock*, edited Walter Hooper. Eerdmans, 1994. ISBN: 978-0802808684. \$12.02

Lewis, C. S. *The Silver Chair*, Scholastic Inc; First Scholastic Printing edition (1995) ISBN: 978-0590254809 (or any other edition) \$0.98 (used)

Lewis, C. S. *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, HarperOne, 2001. ISBN: 978-0060653200. \$9.29

Lewis, C. S. *The Great Divorce*, HarperOne, 2001. ISBN: 978-0060652951. \$10.98

Lewis, C. S. *Christian Reflections*, Eerdmans, 1994 ISBN: 978-0802808691. \$10.44.

## Required Articles “On Reserve” (these do not need to be purchased)

“On Obstinacy in Belief” in *World’s Last Night*, on reserve (17 pp.)

“A Word about Praising” from *Reflections on the Psalms*, on reserve (10 pp.)

“On the Efficacy of Prayer” in *World’s Last Night*, on reserve (8 pp.)

## Additional Primary Sources

(These books by Lewis will be referred to in the course but are not required reading.)

*Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer*

*Till We Have Faces*

*The Abolition of Man*

*Miracles*

*Screwtape Letters*  
*The Four Loves*  
*An Experiment in Criticism*  
“On Stories” in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*  
*A Grief Observed*

## **Recommended Texts/Short Bibliography (for supplementary reading)**

- Beverluis, John. *C.S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion*.  
Eerdmans, 1985.
- Reppert, Victor, *C.S. Lewis’s Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason*. InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Sayer, George. *Jack: C.S. Lewis and His Times*. InterVarsity Press, 1988.
- Vaus, Will. *Mere Theology: A Guide to the Thought of C.S. Lewis*.  
InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Baggett, David, *et. al.* editors, *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher*, InterVarsity  
Press, 2008.

See Select Bibliography at the end of the syllabus for further guidance to secondary sources on Lewis and some of his critics.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will:

- a. describe the major theological themes and their inter-relationships as developed by Lewis, including his understanding of the Christian life. (Through readings and class discussion accounted for in the reading notebook online forums.)
- b. analyze and critique aspects of Lewis’s thought and arguments in the light of Scripture, relevant ecumenical creeds of the church and contemporary expressions of evangelical theology with some reference to

- a few of his contemporary critics. (Through readings and accounted for in reading notebook and online discussions)
- c. draw from Lewis's thought in a way that contributes to the student's own ability to more faithfully articulate key theological themes and thereby enrich their own ministry, preaching, teaching and personal lives as members of the Body of Christ in its local and global expressions. (Through the forums, reading notebook entries, final paper and final exam)
  - d. identify, appreciate and reflect critically upon how Lewis understood and attempted to relate with theological faithfulness literary form and theological content in his writings. (Through online forums and accounted for in the reading notebook and final exam)

## **Course Assignments**

### **Overview**

- 1) Completion of all assigned reading of required texts and essays due prior to participating in class forums. This amounts to 900 pages of reading, accounted for in the Reading Notebook and the Reading Report List. (30% of grade).
- 2) Reading all instructor prompts or instructions sent during the assigned week, about 1 hour per week.
- 3) Submitting a one page Autobiographical Sketch for the instructor and the rest of the class participants the first week of class.
- 4) Participation in two weekly online Forums: One entry per week on the Instructors Forum and two entries per week on the class discussion forum. (25% of grade)
- 5) Completion of one 2-3 page Short Essay making use of one of Lewis's imaginative elements to communicate a theological truth. (15% of Grade)
- 6) Completion of the Final take-home exam (30% of grade)

## Reading Assignments

You will find due dates for the readings listed in the separate “Course Outline and Required Reading Assignment Schedule” document.

-You will also be provided, separately, a “Suggested Reading Plan” which will assure that you read the correct material for any given week but also help you read on average the same number of pages per week. The Plan will recommend that you read parts of longer books ahead of time so that you don’t have to read more than the average of 90 pages in any one week.

### 1. Selections from *Mere Christianity*

*Mere Christianity*, Book II, What Christians Believe (skip Book I)

*Mere Christianity*, Book IV, Beyond Personality (Trinity)

*Mere Christianity*, Book III, Christian Behavior

### 2. *The Problem of Pain*

### 3. Essays from *God in the Dock* (GD), *The Weight of Glory* (WG), *Christian Reflections* (CR), *The World’s Last Night* (WLN)

“Is Theism Important?” (GD)

“Meditation in a Tool Shed” (GD)

“What Are We to Make of Jesus Christ?”(GD)

“The Grand Miracle” (GD)

“The Language of Religion” (CR)

“Horrid Red Things” (GD)

“Is Theology Poetry?” (WG)

“Christian Apologetics” (GD)

“Religion without Dogma?” (GD)

“Miracles” (GD)

“The Seeing Eye” in CR

“Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism” in CR.

“Myth Became Fact” (GD)

“Bulverism” (GD)

“The Poison of Subjectivity” in CR  
“Religion: Reality or Substitute?” in CR  
“On Obstinacy in Belief” in WLN, on reserve      “Man  
or Rabbit” (GD)  
    “A Word about Praising” from *Reflections on the Psalms*, on reserve.  
“A Slip of the Tongue” in WG  
“The Weight of Glory” in WG  
“On the Efficacy of Prayer” in WLN, on reserve  
“The Sermon and the Lunch” (GD)  
“The Trouble with X” (GD)  
“Two Ways with the Self” (GD)  
“First and Second Things” (GD)

#### 4. *The Great Divorce*

#### 5. *The Silver Chair*

## Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting

Activity	Course Assignment			Estimated hours (for the average student)	Percentage of grade
Classroom	Instructor Prompts and Forum questions , at <u>12</u> pages per hour	number of pages: 200 (20 pages per weekly topic)		20.0	Required to pass to pass course
	Reading discussion forums and making responses	number of required forums: 20		15	25 %
	Final Exam	number: 1		3	30%
	<b>Total</b>			<b>38.0</b>	
Out of classroom	Required textbooks, ordinary reading level, <u>20</u> pages per hour	number of pages: 245		12.5	
	Required textbooks, difficult reading, at <u>15</u> pages per hour	number of pages: 655		44.0	All reading: 15%
	Writing reaction or reflection paper, 2 hours per page (Short Paper)	number of pages 2:		4	15 %
	Study for exam	6		6	
	Reflection Comments in Reading Notebook	85 ½-page entries @ 30 min. / entry		42.5	15%
	<b>Total</b>			<b>109.0</b>	
<b>Overall total</b>				<b>147</b>	11-12 hours per week