



COURSE INFORMATION:

COURSE #: PHL 251: Philosophy of C. S. Lewis [Oxford Travel Class]
CREDIT HOURS: 3
MEETING TIMES: July 2011

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

[From Course Catalog]: A study of the philosophical works of Lewis dealing with arguments for the existence of God based on human rationality, the problem of suffering, objective truth, and moral law. Addresses philosophical themes in the Narnia Chronicles and Lewis' thought in relation to popular culture. Includes viewing and discussion of pertinent videos.

[From Me]: This course is designed to expose you to a wide range of the non-fiction writings (and a few works of fiction) from the famed British writer C.S. Lewis. Although Lewis was not a professional philosopher he nonetheless engages many of the perennial issues that philosophers have wrestled with down through the ages. Given the subject matter covered in his writings along with the keen insights conveyed through the craftsmanship of this fine writer, Lewis is a worthy subject for philosophical exploration.

The aim of this course is:

- To philosophically engage and dialogue with the writings of C. S. Lewis, especially his writings on philosophy of religion.

Which entails:

- Being able to read texts philosophically (i.e. carefully and critically).
- Being able to understand and reproduce Lewis's arguments.

- Being able to interact with and respond to Lewis's arguments – both in written work and class discussions.

In addition, because this course is a travel course, students will be able to interact, not only with Lewis's ideas, but to also explore the context in which they were developed. Students who take this course will leave with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the academic and social environment in which Lewis lived and worked.

Course Topics

Some of the key topics to be discussed will be:

- Lewis's analysis of the relationship between Christianity and mythology.
- Lewis's argument for the existence of God from the experience of "Joy" (sehnsucht).
- Lewis's argument for the existence of God from the moral law.
- Lewis's argument for objective value and its role in education.
- Lewis's argument for the existence of God from reason.
- Lewis's analysis of the natures of the loves.
- Lewis's philosophy of art and creativity.

Required Reading :

1. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*
2. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*
3. C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*
4. C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*
5. C. S. Lewis, *On Stories*

Plus, selected readings from the following books by C. S. Lewis (provided by handout):

- *The Weight of Glory*
- *God in the Dock*
- *The Letters of C. S. Lewis*
- *Miracles*

Helpful Additional Resources (arranged in no particular order)

- Walter Hooper, ed., *C. S. Lewis: Companion and Guide* (a general overview of Lewis's life and work)
- George Sayer, *Jack: A Life of C. S. Lewis* (a biography)
- Alan Jacobs, *The Narnian* (a biography)
- Humphrey Carpenter, *The Inklings* (a biography of Lewis and his famous group of literary friends)
- Devin Brown, *Inside Narnia and Inside Prince Caspian* (two detailed studies of the first two Narnia Chronicles)
- John Beversluis, *C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion* (a critical interaction with Lewis's philosophy)
- Scott R. Burson and Jerry L. Walls, *C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer* (a philosophical

- look at Lewis and another 20th-century apologist)
- David Baggett, Gary Habermas and Jerry L. Walls, eds. *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher* (a collection of philosophical essays about C. S. Lewis's philosophy)

Course Requirements

Students in this course will be required to:

- Complete all assigned readings.
- Complete three short papers on course topics before the travel experience begins.
- Participate in a 9-day trip to Oxford, England.
- Complete 1 research paper on a topic chosen by the student (through consultation with the instructor).

Grade Calculator:

- Research Paper - 70 points
- Short Papers - 10 points each
- Total Possible Points for the Class: 100

Course grading scale:

A = 94 to 100 points, A- = 90 to 93, B+ = 87 to 89, B = 84 to 86, B- = 80 to 83, C+ = 77 to 79, C = 74 to 76, F = 73 and below.

Paper Description:

Papers should clock in around 3000 words. An 'A' short paper will be substantial in terms of defining relevant terms and providing sufficient coverage of the ideas in play, but should also be direct and to the point. Quotation from the course reading material is expected, and should also be properly cited (also please use double-spaced, Times 12pt font).

Papers are graded according to two main criteria: style and content.

Style

An excellent philosophy paper will be written in a clear and lively style, with proper citation of sources, and have few spelling or grammatical errors. Proper citation of works is expected, though there is no set citation style (MLA, Chicago or other styles are all acceptable). For an example of a clearly-written and well-cited paper go to <http://www.dianahacker.com/pdfs/Hacker-Daly-MLA.pdf>

Content

An excellent philosophy paper will also stay on topic, demonstrating a good grasp of the ideas and arguments in play. Students are expected to show an understanding of key concepts and be able to reproduce the main lines of any argument being discussed. Papers should make a case, clearly stating the thesis (or main idea) of the paper and supporting the thesis through sound argumentation. Students may wish to visit <http://www.sfu.ca/philosophy/writing.htm> or <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/humanities/philosophy.shtml> for helpful advice.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

While in Oxford, students will discuss the following topics:

- Lewis on Christianity and Myth (READ: *Surprised by Joy*; “Myth Became Fact”, Tallon, “Addison’s Walk”; Listen: Addison’s Walk)
- Lewis’s Argument from the Moral Law: (READ: *Mere Christianity*, Book 1)
- Lewis’s Argument from Desire: (READ: *Surprised by Joy*; *Mere Christianity*, Book 3, ch. 10; “The Weight of Glory”)
- Lewis’s Argument from Reason: (READ: *Miracles*, ch. 3, “The Cardinal Difficulty of Naturalism”; View: G. E. M. Anscombe Debate)
- Lewis’s Philosophy of Fiction: (READ: “On Stories” from *On Stories*; *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*; *Mere Christianity*, Book 2)
- Lewis on Objective Value and Education: (READ: *The Abolition of Man*, VIEW: *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*)

NECESSARY ACADEMIC INFORMATION: Attendance and Academic Fraud Policy

Attendance policy reflects the standards in the college handbook.

Academic Fraud means deliberate deception in an academic context. This includes plagiarism (deliberately taking another’s ideas and representing them as one’s own) and multiple submission (deliberately submitting for assessment a piece of coursework already so submitted in another course, whether by the submitter or by another person).

When you take notes from a secondary source you should take care to distinguish clearly between your own commentary and the text that you copy, which should always be in inverted commas (“”) with the precise bibliographical reference provided. If you are paraphrasing the ideas from a published source you should also declare this in a reference.

*All syllabi are subject to change until the first day of class.