

## STUDENT SYLLABUS

### I. REL 3362, The Christian Imagination

Catalog Description: This course offers a close look at the impact of such authors as Joseph Campbell, C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, J. K. Rowling, and the Scriptures upon the world of religion, imaginative literature, communication, and our way of life by studying the role of imagination and myth. Prerequisite: None, but REL 3361 is recommended.

### II. LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE

As a result of taking this course, the students will:

#### A. Cognitive Objectives (Outcomes)

1. Learn the events in the lives of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien that affected their understanding of Christianity;
2. Gain a greater familiarity with myth, fantasy, fiction, and theology in the writings of Tolkien and Lewis;
3. Analyze imaginative writings in order to understand why and how myth has affected so many people.

#### B. Affective Objectives (Outcomes)

1. Develop an appreciation for conveying theology through imaginative writing;
2. Identify with the solutions Lewis, Tolkien, and biblical authors offered to various problems through mythical passages.

#### C. Psychomotor Skills (Outcomes)

1. Develop oral presentation skills;
2. Engage in PowerPoint presentation development;
3. Learn to articulate the function and power of myth in class presentations and class discussions.

### III. LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- A. Reading selected writings of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. Class discussions will occur on most Readings, especially *The Hobbit* and the Duriez book. The preparation of daily assignments is essential.
- B. Lecture on selected relevant topics.
- C. Research project on a single topic for presentation to the class during the last five periods of the semester. The project will focus on one of the following authors, or an author approved by the instructor: George MacDonald, J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, J. K. Rowling, Joseph Campbell, or Philip Pullman. This report will include the unique method and message of one of these writers, but it may also go in other directions. You should also include points of application, i.e. explaining how others can use this author for teaching, preaching, witnessing, or general communication. Use our study of myth earlier in the semester as a guide, search online resources (including Wikipedia), reviews, serious essays, your own reading, etc. Students also present a devotion, based on Scripture, and done in a mythical vein at the start of the class period. Team members must review and approve

the topic and manner of presentation. The research paper must:

1. Be constructed in an orderly manner;
2. Show that you understand the basic material presented in the course and can use outside references;
3. Make use of quotations (two to five per page is a good guideline) and give proper credit; this means that you are responsible for understanding the nature of plagiarism;
4. Follow Turabian (an abbreviated version of *Chicago Manual of Style*), but MLA may be used instead;
5. Be 8-10 pages long, 12-point type, one-inch margins;
6. Have a clear focus and argue for definite positions or conclusions;
7. Be written carefully so that the final product is clear, avoids redundancy and filler, and is correct in spelling and grammar (if you find a spelling mistake in this syllabus, then you are allowed to make spelling mistakes!)
8. Typewritten, double-spaced; include a bibliography of at least eight sources used in the paper, with no more than forty percent of your bibliography from the Internet. Your research must be submitted both electronically and in paper copy prior to your class presentation;
9. Be presented in class with the assistance of PowerPoint;
10. Include a list of contributions that each member of the team made to the entire project. This should include such things as books or essays consulted by each person, writing done, editing of the project that is done, Internet sources consulted, contribution to the devotion, PowerPoint development, group meetings attended, and other activities. Some time in class will be devoted to the group project.

D. A two-page paper comparing the movie “Prince Caspian,” with the book, *Prince Caspian*.

#### IV. PRINCIPAL UNITS OF THE COURSE

Unit I: The Nature and Purpose of Myth. This unit studies C.S. Lewis’ and J.R.R. Tolkien’s understanding of myth, fantasy, and imagination, especially as it is resident in various mythical writings. It includes an understanding of the three domains of human learning: the cognitive, the affective, and the psychomotor. Application is made to teaching and devotional presentations.

Unit II: The Friendship of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. This unit covers the relationship between Tolkien and Lewis, demonstrating their influence upon one another and their connectedness from the time of Lewis’s conversion to the time of their writing and publishing imaginative works. The impact of the Inklings is also incorporated into this unit.

Unit III: The Imagination of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. This unit studies Tolkien’s and Lewis’s understanding of fantasy and imagination, especially as it is resident in the *Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Influences upon both Lewis and Tolkien, such as George MacDonald and Charles Williams, are included. Application is made to teaching and devotional presentations.

Unit IV: Student Team Presentations. Students present their own research for class discussion in concert with other students by reporting on their selected outside reading project from George MacDonald, J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, J. K. Rowling, Joseph Campbell, or Philip Pullman.

## V. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance at every class session is crucial to the student's success. Every absence, whether excused or unexcused, must be explained to the instructor in writing by the next period in which the student returns to class.

## VI. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

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| A. | Three Exams  | 60% |
| B. | Homework Assignments<br>(class discussions and reading assignments [10%], Prince Caspian paper [5%], and Bruce Edwards lecture [5%]) | 20% |
| C. | Research Project   | 20% |

Extra credit is available for reading and summarizing additional articles in *On Stories* or *Of Other Worlds*. Each article (up to a total of seven articles) read and written on will add three points to a test grade. The articles you may read for extra credit are listed below. In the event that you are unable to attend the Bruce Edwards lecture, you will read and write on one of the essays in one of these two books.

“On Juvenile Tastes”

“On Science Fiction”

“On Stories”

“Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to be Said”

“On Three Ways of Writing for Children”

“The Lord of the Rings”

## VII. TEXTBOOKS

### Required

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. Houghton Mifflin, 2007.

Duriez, Colin. *Tolkien and C. S. Lewis: The Gift of Friendship*. HiddenSpring, 2003.

Lewis, C. S. *On Stories and Other Essays on Literature*. Edited by Walter Hooper. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1966.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*. Edited by Walter Hooper. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1966.

These Chronicles of Narnia (*Prince Caspian, The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader,' The Silver Chair, The Horse and His Boy, The Last Battle*).

Schakel, Peter J. *Imagination and the Arts in C. S. Lewis: Journeying to Narnia and Other Worlds*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002.

### Resources for Research

Abanes, Richard. *Harry Potter, Narnia, and The Lord of the Rings: What You Need to Know About Fantasy Books and Movies*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2005, 304 pages.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Power of Myth*. New York: Anchor Books, 1991.

Granger, John. *Looking for God in Harry Potter*. Chicago: SaltRiver (Tyndale), 2006, 256 pages.

- MacDonald, George. *Phantastes*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981, 185 pages.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *Lilith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1895, 2000, 252 pages.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *The Light Princess*. Boston: Boston & Bath, 1993, 131 pages.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *The Princess and Curdie*. Neeland Media LLC, 2004, 272 pages.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *The Princess and the Goblin*. North Books, 1998, 154 pages.  
 Pullman, Philip. *The Golden Compass*. New York: Random House, 1995, 351 pages.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *The Subtle Knife*. New York: Random House, 1997, 288 pages.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *The Amber Spyglass*. New York: Random House, 2000, 465 pages.  
 Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Book 7. New York: Scholastic Inc. 2007.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Book 6. New York: Scholastic Paperbacks reprint edition. 2006.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Book 5. New York: Scholastic Paperbacks reprint edition. 2003.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Book 4. New York: Scholastic Paperbacks reprint edition. 2002.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Book 3. New York: Scholastic Paperbacks reprint edition. 1999.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Book 2. New York: Scholastic Paperbacks reprint edition. 1998.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Book 1. New York: Scholastic Paperbacks reprint edition. 1998.  
 Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord of the Rings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994.  
 \_\_\_\_\_. "On Fairy-Stories." *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1947. Pages 38-89.

## VIII. TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Unit I: The Power of Myth. This unit studies Lewis and Tolkien's understanding of myth, fantasy, and imagination, especially as it is resident in various mythical writings. It includes an understanding of the three domains of human learning: the cognitive, the affective, and the psychomotor. Application is made to teaching and devotional presentations.

- January 12 Introduction to the Course, Your Experience with Myth, Lewis, and Tolkien  
 14 Archetypes, Finding God in Harry Potter ("It's NOT 'All in Plato': C. S. Lewis' Theory of Myth, *CSL* Sept./Oct. 2009 [In-class reading]; *The Hobbit*, ch. 1)  
 19 True Myth, Finding God in Harry Potter ("True Myth" in three letters to Arthur Greeves [on Blackboard]; *The Hobbit*, ch. 2)  
 21 The Three Domains of Human Learning ("Myth Became Fact" [In-class reading]; *The Hobbit*, ch. 3)  
 26 Origin and Purpose of Fairy-Stories according to Tolkien (*The Hobbit*, ch. 4, Schakel, chapter 1)  
 28 **Unit I Exam** (Schakel, chapter 1, will not be on this exam)

Unit II: The Friendship of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. This unit covers the relationship between Tolkien and Lewis, demonstrating their influence upon one another and their

connectedness from the time of Lewis's conversion to the time of their writing and publishing imaginative works. The impact of the Inklings is also incorporated into this unit.

- February 2 Lewis and Tolkien: A Chronology (Duriez, chapters 1-2; *The Hobbit*, ch. 5)  
 4 The Inklings (Duriez, chapters 3-4; *The Hobbit*, ch. 6)  
 9 The Extraordinary in the Ordinary (Duriez, chapters 5-6, Schakel, chapter 2; *The Hobbit*, ch. 7)  
 11 The Gospel in *The Lord of the Rings* (Summary of *The Lord of the Rings*, Duriez, chapters 7-8, Schakel, chapter 4; *The Hobbit*, ch. 8)  
 16 The Gospel in *The Lord of the Rings* (Duriez, chapters 9-10, Lewis, "The Hobbit," in *On Stories*; *The Hobbit*, ch. 9)  
 18 Wrapping Up a Friendship (Duriez, chapters 11-12, Schakel, chapter 9; *The Hobbit*, ch. 10)  
 23 **Unit II Exam** (includes Schakel, all chapters)

Unit III: The Imagination of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. This unit studies Tolkien's and Lewis's understanding of fantasy and imagination, especially as it is resident in the Chronicles of Narnia, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*. Influences upon both Lewis and Tolkien, such as George MacDonald and Charles Williams, are included. Application is made to teaching and devotional presentations.

- 25 The Importance of Lions, Witches, and Wardrobes (*Prince Caspian*, Part 1; *The Hobbit*, ch. 11)  
 March 2 The Importance of Lions, Witches, and Wardrobes (*Prince Caspian*, Part 2; Lewis; *The Hobbit*, ch. 12)  
 4 Prince Caspian movie (*The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader'*; *The Hobbit*, ch. 13)  
 9 Prince Caspian movie, Part 2 (*The Silver Chair*, Part 1, Lewis, "It All Began with a Picture..." in *Of Other Worlds*; *The Hobbit*, ch. 14)  
 11 Lewis and Pullman (*The Silver Chair*, Part 3, Lewis; *The Hobbit*, ch. 15)  
**Spring Break: March 15-19**  
 23 Just Narnia (*The Horse and His Boy*, Part 1, Lewis; *The Hobbit*, ch. 16)  
 25 Just Narnia (*The Horse and His Boy*, Part 2, Lewis; *The Hobbit*, ch. 17, Caspian paper due)  
 30 Just Narnia (*The Last Battle*, Part 1; *The Hobbit*, ch. 18)  
 April 1 Charles Williams and Plato (*The Last Battle*, Part 2; *The Hobbit*, ch. 19)  
**Easter Break: April 2-5**

Unit IV: Student Team Presentations. Students present their own research for class discussion in concert with other students by reporting on their selected outside reading project from George MacDonald, J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, J. K. Rowling, or Philip Pullman.

- 6 Unit III Exam**  
 8 Myth and Symbolism in J. K. Rowling  
 13 Myth and Symbolism in Philip Pullman  
 15 Myth and Symbolism in George MacDonald  
 20 Myth and Symbolism in J. R. R. Tolkien

## 22 Myth and Symbolism in C. S. Lewis

**Final Exams: April 26-30 (Your final presentation is your Final Exam, provided that you are present for all other presentations. If you miss any of the presentations, a final exam will be prepared for you and administered on the appointed day.)**

## The Nature and Purpose of Myth

“It’s NOT ‘All in Plato’: C. S. Lewis’ Theory of Myth,” *CSL* Sept./Oct. 2009

Definitions

How does Lewis define mythopoeics?

What is Joy?

How does Lewis define myth?

What is sub-creation?

Characteristics

What are some of the characteristics of myth?

Is a myth something that did not happen?

Function (How myth works; What myth does)

How does God prepare pagans for the truth of the Gospel?

How did myth play a part in Lewis’ conversion?

How does imagination fit in?

How does imagination differ from reason?

How does imagination express myth?

How does myth do its work?

Purpose (Why it does what it does)

What is the purpose of sub-creation?

What is the purpose of reason?

What is the value or purpose of myth?

Examples

What stories of Lewis can be considered myth?

## Writing a Research Paper for REL 3362

Students start with an A. Each of the items listed below can lower your grade one level, i.e., from a B+ to a B.

### I. Content (60 percent of the grade)

- A. The topic is appropriate to the course and your book assignment, neither too broad nor too narrow. The paper is at least five full pages in length, excluding title page, outline, and bibliography.
- B. Your topic is clearly stated in your first paragraph and well developed throughout the paper. All of your paper relates to and develops the topic.
- C. Research shows depth in understanding sources and incorporating insights into the paper. Personal opinion is absent from the paper, and personal application is minimal or absent.
- D. Parenthetical documentation (instead of footnotes or endnotes) indicates frequent use of items in your bibliography. At least three citations appear per page, and most items in the bibliography are cited more than once. The author does not take credit for insights gained from research, documenting all insights other than the author's and other than common knowledge. Plagiarism is thereby avoided.
- E. All items in your bibliography appear somewhere in your documentation. The bibliography contains a minimum of eight sources. Papers intending to earn an A contain more than the minimum.

### II. Organization (20 percent of the grade)

- A. The paper has clear progression of thought, including an introduction, the main arguments, and then a summarizing conclusion. The reader is able to follow your argumentation. An outline appears on the first page after the title page, but before the paper itself (unless the paper is fewer than four pages). The title page includes author, title, date, and course.
- B. Subheadings appear throughout the paper, dividing the paper into its major sections.
- C. Topic sentences, normally at the beginning of a paragraph, indicate the direction of each paragraph.

### III. Writing (20 percent of the grade)

- A. The paper contains substantially correct grammar and completely correct spelling. If the paper is written on a word processor, the paper has been run through a spellchecker, thus guaranteeing that the only spelling mistakes are contextual (i.e., using *their* where you should use *there*). Therefore, completely correct spelling allows for two contextual spelling mistakes in the paper. Non-contextual spelling mistakes are not allowed, even if the author does not use a word processor. Author also uses complete sentences, page numbering, correct punctuation, and correct capitalization. Proofreading is evident, whether done by the author or a friend or both.
- B. The paper contains correct format (MLA or Turabian or *The Chicago Manual of Style*), including typewritten, double-spaced paper with one inch margins on all sides. Parenthetical documentation is accurately used, and the bibliography lists all sources alphabetically by author and in the correct form, including author, title, place of publication, publisher, and date. In the case of articles, bibliography includes author, title, periodical, volume and number, date, and pages. Page-numbering is also included.
- C. Writing style avoids obscure phrases (e.g., ambiguous antecedents to personal pronouns), filler (e.g., "In my personal opinion, although I'm not an expert on the subject, . . ." or "When I was first assigned this topic, I didn't know how to begin." Or "It is interesting to note that . . ."), lots of white space (e.g., block quotes should be single-spaced), sexist language, and extensive quotations.