

Religion 495: Independent Study “C.S. LEWIS”

Instructor: Dr. Syed Rizwan Zamir

Sunday, 7:00-9:00 PM (at 243 Pinecrest St.)

Reading a major thinker systematically and closely offers rewards that are distinct from reading various writers on the same theme or subject. Having employed the latter approach for various classes in the past, this term we will turn to the former through a close and careful reading of selected seminal texts of a contemporary Christian public intellectual, C.S. Lewis. The study will involve close reading and interpretation of his writings, discovering intertextual connections in them, and exploration of various themes and issues raised by him. Selection of texts encompasses various genres, his letters, memoirs, fiction, essays and writings on certain topics.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, the student would have:

1. Covered a significant section of C.S. Lewis’s corpus;
2. Discerned how his various writings relate to one another and his influence as a thinker;
3. Learned what it means to read texts closely and carefully;
4. Furthered their skills to interpret texts and ability to engage others in discussion through a text;
5. Understood the distinction between “speaking from within the text” and “speaking to the text”;
6. Learned how to “map” texts and how to formulate one’s questions, thoughts and conclusions about it;
7. Written carefully though-out 25 pages through a purposeful and engaging interpretation of C.S. Lewis’s writings and issues they raise.

Evaluation:

1. Participation, Preparation, Discussion: 25%
 - a. Involves “mapping” of the text prior to the meeting;
 - b. Formulating themes and questions for discussion;
 - c. Formulating personal “take-away” from the reading of the text; the connection of c) with a) and b) should be made obvious. In other words, it should be clear how one arrives at c) through a) & b)
2. Twenty five pages in total of careful and engaging interpretive and reflective writing: 75% (DUE DATE: May 10)

MEETINGS & TEXTS:

Jan 29: *The Abolition of Man*

Feb 5: *The Great Divorce*

Feb 12: *The Four Loves* (Part I, till page 56)

Feb 26: *The Four Loves* (Part II)

Mar 12? (Too long a gap- We need to find a session in between): *Surprised by Joy* (pp. 3-131?)

Mar 19: *A Grief Observed*

Mar 26: *Letters to Malcolm*

Apr 2: *The Screwtape Letters*

Apr 9: *Till We Have Faces* (Part I)

Apr 16: *Till We Have Faces* (Part II)

Apr 23: *The Magician's Nephew*

Apr 30: *The Discarded Image* pp. ix-21, 45-91, 139-223 (we should consider the possibility of taking a text out, say *The Screwtape Letters* and add another session for *The Discarded Image*.)

May 7: *The Weight of Glory* (selections)

May 10: 25-page careful and engaging interpretive and reflective writing is due. The writing should display serious engagement with scholarly and academic study of C.S. Lewis. The bibliography of sources consulted will accompany the submission. Proper formatting, citations and bibliography is expected.