

BROWN UNIVERSITY

BEYOND NARNIA: THE POLITICAL THEORY & WRITINGS OF C. S. LEWIS

Instructors: Dr. Timothy Flanigan, Dr. Edward Wing, and Dr. Hannah Wei Wu

Course Description

C. S. Lewis was one of the most widely read authors of the 20th Century, yet much of his philosophical, theological and political theories are unfamiliar. His fiction and philosophical writings will be explored to better understand his perspective on modern humanity, the relationship of man to family, the community and the state. C. S. Lewis had a very clear philosophy on the importance of the individual and how he relates to the larger social structures. Morality and the role of individuals as they interface with others around them and their responsibility for working with society both at community level and at the macro-state level will be explored.

Course Guidelines

Over the course of the semester, students will spend 2 to 3 hours per week in class (42 hours total). Required reading for the class meetings is expected to take up to approximately 7 hours per week (98 hours total). In addition, writing and researching weekly response essays and midterm is estimated at approximately 40 hours over the course of the term.

Learning Goals

1. Read Lewis' literature with a critical lens, find the questions he wants to ask, and respond to them with honesty and vulnerability in a community setting.
2. Encourage lively, joyful, and productive thoughts as leaders in Jeopardy reviews and Discussions.
3. Ask and discuss the questions that matter most, both with and beyond an academic lens.
4. Bring honest thoughts and open minds to class and learn how to share our beliefs outside of our class.
5. Respect the diversity of the class, as we all come from a myriad of backgrounds.

Attendance/Participation

Attendance at all classes is mandatory. Weekly attendance will be taken by the TA. If excused, a 3-page paper is due on the day you miss class for that week's assigned book

Weekly Responses

A brief response (5 to 10 lines) about the assigned book will be due by 7 AM the morning of the next class each week. A few of your responses will be read anonymously to the class each week. *(If your response is personal in nature and you would prefer we not read it out loud, please write that at the top of the response, and we will respect your wishes.)*

Class Discussion/Jeopardy

Each week 2 to 3 students will lead the class in Discussion. They will prepare a handout (1-page front and back) with pertinent questions and quotes to aid in organizing discussion. A second group of students (2 to 3) will prepare a round of Jeopardy based on the assigned book. ***It is required that each student lead at least 1 Jeopardy and 1 Discussion per semester.***

Papers/Essays Assigned: There will be a Midterm (7 to 10 pages) and a Final Paper (5 to 7 pages) due for the course. The midterm topic can be based on any of the books read up to that point. The final paper will be on a topic of your choice that has some relationship to the writings or life of C.S. Lewis. This includes writing about the Inklings, any of C.S. Lewis’ mentors, the relevance of C.S. Lewis to Brown or any aspect of modern life, or an approved interactive project. To do a special project, talk to your professor.

Examples of past special projects include a campus-wide Narnia symposium featuring Dr. Michael Ward and artwork interpreting each of the Narnia books with a written artist statement.

Grading: Grades for the course are based on the following: 60% Weekly attendance and participation (which includes weekly thoughts and Jeopardy and particularly Discussion participation). 25% of the grade will depend on your Midterm paper (7-10 pages). The remaining 15% will be your final paper or project.

Schedule of Readings:

Week	Material Covered
Week 1	Intro all 3 classes
Week 2	Voyage of the Dawn Treader
Week 3	The Silver Chair
Week 4	The Great Divorce
Week 5	MOVIE NIGHT: <i>Shadowlands</i>
Week 6	The Problem of Pain
Week 7	A Grief Observed
Week 8	<u>MID-TERM DUE</u>
Week 9	Out of the Silent Planet
Week 10	That Hideous Strength
Week 11	The Screwtape Letters
Week 12	The Magician’s Nephew
Week 13	The Last Battle
Week 14	<u>FINALS DUE</u>