



## Introduction to the Inklings

*"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.  
"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times.  
But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is  
what to do with the time that is given us."*

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

**Professor:** Dr. David C. Downing

**Space and time:** Wade Center, MWF 12:55-2:05

### Course Materials

#### Required Materials

Owen Barfield, (excerpts, available on Schoology)

G. K. Chesterton, "The Blue Cross," "The Honour of Israel Gow" (available on Schoology)

C. S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet*

C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*

C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

George MacDonald, *An Anthology* (excerpts available on Schoology)

George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin* (available on Schoology)

George MacDonald, *Phantastes* (excerpt available on Schoology)

Dorothy L. Sayers, *Whose Body?*

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers*

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King*

Charles Williams, *War in Heaven*

### Course Description

**ENGL 230. Introduction to the Inklings.** *This course provides a foundation for the study of seven British authors who blended intellect, imagination and faith: C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Dorothy L. Sayers, George MacDonald, G. K. Chesterton, Owen Barfield, and Charles Williams. The course will focus on the lives and works of these authors in the context of their historical moment and the genres in which they were so accomplished—fiction, drama, memoir, and theological reflection. Students will make extensive use of the Marion E. Wade Center, the world's pre-eminent archive and study center for these seven authors. Students will be encouraged to develop their own topics and programs of study for exploring the legacy of seven authors who are acknowledged as classics even while remaining surprisingly contemporary. (4 cr.)*

### Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Understand the form and development of the fiction genre;
- Analyze the basic components of literary fiction;
- Appreciate works of fiction in their biographical and cultural contexts;
- Engage in focused research of primary and secondary texts;

- Compose well-researched, well-ordered, and smoothly written interpretive essays;
- Engage in oral communication and group interactions with skill, tact, and confidence;
- Explore literary texts in the context of Christian faith, doctrine, and symbolism.

### Student Evaluation Procedures

#### GRADING

The course grade will be based upon the following:

- 20% Essay One
- 20% Essay Two
- 20% Essay Three
- 20% Essay Four
- 20% Final examination and class participation. Cumulative score accounting for attendance, punctuality, peer editing participation, pop quizzes, cell phone addiction, homework, classroom discussion, a general alert look in the eyes

*Pop quizzes count for 5 points each. Oral presentation grade counts for 10 points*

### Course Content and Calendar

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT FOR CLASS</u>
Aug 26	Introduction	
Aug 28	Research tips	Schoolology, George MacDonald Excerpts
Aug 31	GM, <i>Phantastes</i> , Cosmo Episode	Schoolology, Cosmo Episode
Sep 2	<i>Princess and Goblin I</i>	Schoolology, P&G, chaps. 1-15
Sep 4	<i>Princess and Goblin II</i> . Report #1	Schoolology, P&G, chaps. 16-32
Sep 7	LABOR DAY. NO CLASS.	
Sep 9	G. K. Chesterton I	Schoolology, Quotable quotes, "The Blue Stones"
Sep 11	G. K. Chesterton II. Report #2	Schoolology, "The Honour of Israel Gow"
Sep 14	Peer editing day	
Sep 16	<b>Essay One Due</b>	
Sep 18	C. S. Lewis, Intro. Report #3	
Sep 21	CSL, <i>Out of the Silent Planet</i>	OSP, chaps 1-9
Sep 23	CSL, <i>Out of the Silent Planet</i>	OSP, chaps 10-16
Sep 25	CSL, <i>Out of the Silent Planet</i> . Report # 4	OSP, chaps 17-end
Sep 28	CSL, <i>The Great Divorce</i>	GD, chaps 1-4
Sep 30	CSL, <i>The Great Divorce</i>	GD, chaps 5-9
Oct 2	CSL, <i>The Great Divorce</i> . Report #5	GD, chaps 6-end
Oct 5	CSL, <i>Lion, Witch and Wardrobe</i>	LWW, chaps 1-9
Oct 7	CSL, <i>Lion, Witch, and Wardrobe</i>	LWW, chaps 10-17
Oct 9	Reports #6 and #7	
Oct 12	Peer editing day	
Oct 14	<b>Essay Two Due.</b> Dorothy Sayers I	
Oct 16	DLS II. Report #7	<i>Whose Body?</i> chaps 1-5
Oct 19	DLS III	<i>Whose Body?</i> chaps 6-end

Oct 21	FALL BREATHER. No class.	
Oct 23	J. R. R. Tolkien Intro. Report #8	
Oct 26	JRRT, <i>Fellowship</i> I	FR, Book I, chaps 1-8 (skip Prologue)
Oct 28	JRRT, <i>Fellowship</i> II	FR, Book I, chaps 9-12; Book II, chapter 1
Oct 30	JRRT, <i>Fellowship</i> III. Rpt #10	FR, Book II, chapters 2-end
Nov 2	The Two Towers I	TT, Book III, chaps. 1-5
Nov 4	The Two Towers II	TT, Book III, chaps. 6-11; Book IV, chap. 1
Nov 6	The Two Towers III. Rpt. #11	TT, Book IV, chaps. 2-10
Nov 9	The Return of the King I	RK, Book V, chaps. 1-6
Nov 11	The Return of the King II	RK, Book V, chaps. 7-10; Book VI, chaps. 1-3
Nov 13	The Return of the King III. Rpt. #12	RK, Book VI, chaps 4-9. (Peruse appendices)
Nov 16	Peer editing day	
Nov 18	<b>Essay Three Due</b>	
Nov 20	Owen Barfield. End of on-campus class	Schoolology excerpts
November 23-27.	Thanksgiving break.	Be grateful.
Nov 30	Charles Williams I	<i>War in Heaven</i> , chaps. 1-7
Dec 2	Charles Williams II	<i>War in Heaven</i> , chaps. 8-12
Dec 4	Charles Williams III. Report if needed.	<i>War in Heaven</i> , chaps. 13-end
Dec 7	Peer editing day	
Dec 9	<b>Essay Four Due</b>	
Dec 11	Semester review. Reports if needed.	
Dec 16	<b>FINAL EXAMINATION</b> 10:30-12:30	

### Writing Assignments

Students in this course are required to write four essays (4-6 pages, double-spaced in Times New Roman). You may write from these four options in any order for the four deadlines: Feb 14, Mar 7, Apr 11, May 2.

1. Choose a literary text not read in class and provide your own summary and interpretation. You should summarize the story in no more than one page and then offer your own interpretation of its plot structure, character development, themes or symbols, etc. You may consult and quote critics, but the main interpretive thesis should be your own.
2. Take a significant theme or motif and show how it is revealed and developed in different stories, either two stories by the same author or tales by different authors.
3. Compare critical interpretations of a literary fantasy text. You might juxtapose Michael Ward's *Planet Narnia* with a critic such as Devin Brown, who discounts Ward's astrological approach to Narnia. You can review more than two critics, perhaps offering of spectrum of opinion, but the essay should not be all summary of other people's ideas, but rather include your own commentary and evaluation of various critical approaches.
4. Discuss how the Christian faith and worldview informs a fantasy text or else discuss how a Christian worldview may influence one's reading of texts. The essay could be one of more personal reflection rather than a research essay.

5. **CREATIVE OPTION:** Instead of writing four interpretive essays for this course, students may choose to replace one of the assigned essays above with a 7-10 page short story, choosing one of two options:

1. Create a stand-alone fantasy story, perhaps imbued with spiritual values or ethical reflection;
2. Take a famous fantasy story or book, one by an author whose characters, themes, settings, and style you know well. Create a “literary forgery,” an episode of your own creation in which you seek to capture the authorial “voice” of the original. In other words, try to make the reader believe you have discovered a previously unknown story or chapter by MacDonald, Tolkien, Sayers, or Lewis.

NOTE: Short stories usually are built around two to five characters presented in 1 to 3 scenes. Their sense of beginning/middle/end is usually achieved in 1) an *establishing* section or scene, in which the reader comes to understand the basic conflict, mystery, or unusual situation; a *developing* scene or scenes in which we see conflicts or unresolved tensions building; and a *resolving* scene in which the climax is reached the situation and key characters are different from when they began the story.

Keep in mind the key building blocks of fiction writing:

1. **Design.** The plot design (exposition/conflict/crisis/resolution) holds our interest with well-placed plot points, avoiding common errors of anticlimactic endings, contrived endings, or “slice of life” plotting (random episodic adventures.)
2. **Delineation** of character. Create “rounded,” believable characters, not stereotypes, and reveal them directly through elements such as their name or nickname; physical appearance (age, facial features, body type, attire, hair, etc); style of speaking (voice, vocabulary; sentence structure, etc); body language and deportment; setting in which you meet them; their peers or social circle; what other characters say about them; their changing reactions as the scene unfolds; metaphors and similes used to describe the character.
2. **Description.** Paint word pictures for the reader of the setting and characters—their faces, dress, demeanor, body language, etc.
3. **Dialog.** Give well-placed conversations to explain the situation, heighten conflict, reveal character, etc.

**ORAL PRESENTATIONS** (10-15 minutes on Fridays. May use powerpoint but not as a crutch)

Sep 4	Report #1; George MacDonald, “The Day Boy and the Night Girl”
Sep 11	Report #2: G. K. Chesterton, “The Ethics of Elfland” (from <i>Orthodoxy</i> )
Sep 18	Report #3: C. S. Lewis, <i>The Screwtape Letters</i>
Sep 25	Report # 4: C. S. Lewis, <i>Perelandra</i>
Oct 2	Report #5, C. S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory”
Oct 9	Report #6: <i>The Magician’s Nephew</i> ; Report #7: <i>The Silver Chair</i>
Oct 16	Report #7: Dorothy Sayers, “Are Women Human?”
Oct 23	Report #8 J. R. R. Tolkien, “On Fairie Stories”
Oct 30	Rpt #10, J. R. R. Tolkien, “The Music of the Ainur,” in <i>The Silmarillion</i>
Nov 6	Rpt. #11 J. R. R. Tolkien, “Leaf by Niggle”
Nov 13	Rpt. #12 Owen Barfield, “The Silver Trumpet”