California State University, Chico
Comparative Religion and Humanities

RELS 364
C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien: Theology and Myth
Fall 2014

Instructor: Dr. Jed Wyrick
Office location: Trinity 239
Telephone: 898-6379
Email: jwyrick@csuchico.edu for all questions or appointments; Blackboard Learn to send documents if necessary
Office hours: M 9-12; W 3-5; Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:30 or 5:00 by confirmed email appointment only (jwyrick@csuchico.edu)
Class days/time: TR 3:30-4:45
Classroom: LANG 303
Prerequisites: None

Course Usage of Blackboard Learn
Copies of the course syllabus, readings, homework, and major assignments (including how to make an academic poster) may be found on Blackboard Learn. You are responsible for regularly checking the online resources, which is accessed through the portal at http://portal.csuchico.edu and then on “My Bb Learn Courses.”
Course announcements will be sent on Blackboard Learn email or appear as Blackboard Learn announcements.

Course Description and Goals
C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien were close friends and the first readers of each other’s works of fiction. While they shared a religious tradition (Christianity), they were divided in their approaches to this tradition: Tolkien was Roman Catholic, and Lewis was an Anglican and an advocate of “Orthodox” Christianity. Their impact on contemporary literature is vast. Nevertheless, they are usually not considered as writers of “serious” literature.
Lewis and Tolkien have important views about the nature of the human condition that will be explored in this class. These views are either shaped by their respective religious beliefs, or resemble the writings of other religious traditions. Lewis and Tolkien discuss the nature and origin of evil, the seductiveness of technology and control, the existence of non-human beings and spirits, the place of earth in the solar system, the purpose and origin of mankind and the universe, and the justification of God (theodicy).

Lewis and Tolkien chose to voice these views in symbolic form, in the genre of the fairy-story or the child’s tale. Lewis employs creatures and images derived from pagan mythology. Tolkien’s works partake of genres such as myth, epic, tragedy, and historiography; his works also in part derive their form and subject matter from precursors like the Bible, Old Norse saga, and Anglo-Saxon or Finnish poetry. How do these authors justify their use of non-Christian materials to convey what is essentially or at least in part a Christian message?

**Student Learning Objectives**

**Course Content Learning Outcomes**

The main goal of this course is to gain skills in articulating the relationship between fiction and belief systems. We will practice this skill by investigating the relationship between the fictional worlds of Tolkien and Lewis and their respective religious commitments, with attention to other ideological, literary, and religious forces (such as pagan myth) that also play a role in their fiction.

A second goal of this course is to gain skills in the rapid reading of large sections of English prose. Arguably, one of the best ways to accomplish this is to read a significant cross-section of fiction written by these two masters of the English language. You are expected to read all required course materials, NOT to skim them. Please look up several unfamiliar words in each assignment and keep a list of them and their definitions. Falling behind in the readings is not acceptable, since they are often cumulative.

A third goal of this course will be to gain skills in the “close-reading” of texts and in forming written arguments about the ideas explored in these works. We will also consider the dramatization of fantasy and the worlds of Lewis and Tolkien in film.

This course counts towards the major in Religious Studies and the minor in Comparative Religion (39 units and 21 units respectively; see [http://www.csuchico.edu/rs/](http://www.csuchico.edu/rs/)). Students graduating with majors in these and other disciplines in the liberal arts are known for their overall educational preparation, their job flexibility, and their ultimate earning potential when compared to graduates receiving a more narrow, technical, or vocational undergraduate education. Graduation with a double major or even a minor in these fields provides extra evidence of open-mindedness, perseverance, inquisitiveness, and the ability to relate to people of other cultures and to those who are highly educated.
Required Texts/Readings (available at AS Bookstore)

Texts
1. C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe
2. C. S. Lewis, Out of the Silent Planet
5. J. R. R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings

Library Liaison
George Thompson, ghthompson@csuchico.edu, 898-6603, MLIB 305

Classroom Protocol
You will lower your attendance grade by 10 points (1% of your final grade) every time you miss class; you have one absence allowed. Legitimate excuses (e.g. medical, job related, or an activity related to another class) will be accepted, provided that they are accompanied by a 1/2 page written discussion of the readings assigned for that day. It is your responsibility to inform me at the end of class if you missed roll call.

Texting, games, newspaper reading, or surfing the internet for materials unrelated to the course are not allowed. You are welcome to excuse yourself to make a necessary phone call or text.

Please ask permission to look at materials for another class in an emergency, but only if you can also pay some attention to classroom discussion.

You are encouraged to skim through the readings for the day while listening to class discussion to remind yourself of what you read or catch up in an emergency.

Use of a laptop is not allowed during lectures or class presentations but may be used for group work. Use of a laptop is not permitted while watching films, video clips, etc.

Dropping and Adding
You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. found http://www.csuchico.edu/catalog/. You should be aware of the new deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

Assignments and Grading Policy
Enumerate and briefly describe assignments for the course and indicate alignment with learning outcomes. Include information about due dates and assignment weights. Specify grading policies including how grades are determined, what grades are possible, whether
extra credit are available, what the penalty is for late or missed word and what constitutes a passing grade for the course.

Attendance: **100 points** (minus 10 for each missed class)
Class Participation (= intelligent questions, comments in class, group discussion, presentations): **100 points**
Homework and Quizzes: **100 points**
Midterm Exam: recognition and discussion of passages (bring blue book): **200 points**
Final Test: recognition and discussion of passages (bring blue book): **200 points**
Academic Poster project: **300 points**
Total: **1000 points**

Late papers may be penalized up to 1/3 of a grade per day unless prior permission has been granted. Final project, Midterm, Final Exam, and Screenplay Hypothesis are all required; you cannot pass the course without completing all of them. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy. You are required to keep a back-up copy of each essay you submit, either in a computer disk or in hard-copy, to be printed out and resubmitted upon my request. Any paper not resubmitted on request will be considered as not having been completed. Alternately, submit both a hard copy of your paper and electronic version on Blackboard Vista at the due date.

**University Policies and Campus Resources**

**Academic integrity**

Students are expected to be familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at California State University, Chico, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity and other resources related to student conduct can be found at: [http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/integrity.shtml](http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/integrity.shtml)

The policy of the Department of Religious Studies is that anyone found to have cheated or plagiarized an assignment will automatically fail the course and be referred to student judicial affairs for further disciplinary action.

**Office Hours:**

Use them! I am available to you to discuss course material, your progress, and general topics in religion. We can talk in person during my scheduled hours, or by e-mail. Make an appointment for another time if needed. Talking with students is one of the most pleasurable aspects of my job, so don’t hesitate to drop by.
Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

Please notify me of any special need relating to your disability within the first two weeks of the semester. I will make every reasonable effort to facilitate your success in this course. Please note that you may be required to show documentation for your disability. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, call me, or email me. Please also contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) as this is the designated department responsible for approving and coordinating reasonable accommodations and services for students with disabilities. ARC will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations.

Accessibility Resource Center
www.csuchico.edu/arc
530-898-5959
Student Services Center 170

Student Computing

Computer labs for student use are available [http://www.csuchico.edu/stcp](http://www.csuchico.edu/stcp) located on the 1st floor of the Meriam Library Rm 116 and 450, Tehama Hall Rm.131 and the BMU Rm 301. Additional labs that may be available to students in your department/college.

Student Services

Student services are designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. Students can find support for services such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. Student services information can be found at: [http://www.csuchico.edu/5.-studentservices.html](http://www.csuchico.edu/5.-studentservices.html).

Student Learning Center

The mission of the Student Learning Center (SLC) is to provide services that will assist CSU, Chico students to become independent learners. The SLC prepares and supports students in their college course work by offering a variety of programs and resources to meet student needs. The SLC facilitates the academic transition and retention of students from high schools and community colleges by providing study strategy information, content subject tutoring, and supplemental instruction. The SLC is online at [http://www.csuchico.edu/slc/](http://www.csuchico.edu/slc/).

Writing Tutor

The Student Learning Center center offers the opportunity to work with a writing tutor. Appointments can be scheduled in person at the Student Learning Center (SSC 340) or by
calling 898-6839. Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am-6:00 pm, Friday 9:00 am-3:00 pm; http://www.csuchico.edu/slc/wtutorinfo.shtml
## RELS 364 Course Schedule

*(Note: subject to change with fair notice.)*

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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| 1    | 8/26 and 8/28 | **Introduction to Christianity and Fantasy**  
Readings for Thursday:  
1) “The Quest for Erebor” in *Unfinished Tales*  
2) *The Hobbit*, chapters 1-4 |
| 2    | 9/2 and 9/4 | For Tuesday: *The Hobbit*, chapters 5-10  
For Thursday: *The Hobbit*, chapters 11-19  
**Assignment for Thursday:** using the Stith Thompson *Motif-index of folk-literature*, find, photocopy/print, and bring into class a folktale that resembles one of the episodes or scenes in *The Hobbit*.  
Meriam Library: GR67 T52 volumes 1-6  
See also: [http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/thompson/](http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/thompson/)  
How to use the motif index: [http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/ANTH/find/motif.html](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/ANTH/find/motif.html) |
| 3    | 9/9 and 9/11 | Tuesday: *The Conversion of Jack Lewis; John Tolkien's Catholicism, Life, and Influences*  
1) Humphrey Carpenter, “Mythopoeia” and “‘The sort of thing a man might say’,” from *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, and Their Friends*, pp. 33-52 (on Blackboard Learn)  
2) The Letters of Tolkien: 142, 250, 257, 306 (on Blackboard Learn)  
Thursday: C. S. Lewis, first half of *Mere Christianity* (selections on Blackboard Learn) |
| 4    | 9/16 and 9/18 | Tuesday: C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, chapters 1-9; close reading: chapters 4 and 9  
Thursday: C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, chapters 10-17; close reading: chapters 13-14 |
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| 6    | 9/30 and 10/2 | J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, chapters 11-12 (book 1) and 1-3 (book 2)  
J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, chapters 4-10 (book 2)                                                                                           |
| 7    | 10/7 and 10/9 | Tuesday: J. R. R. Tolkien, “The Music of the Ainur” and “Valaquenta,” from *The Silmarillion*  
J. R. R. Tolkien, Chapters 1-5 from *The Silmarillion*                                                                                                           |
| 8    | 10/14 and 10/16 | J. R. R. Tolkien, Chapters 6-13 from *The Silmarillion*  
J. R. R. Tolkien, Chapters 14-19 from *The Silmarillion*                                                                                                         |
| 9    | 10/21 and 10/23 | Tuesday: finish J. R. R. Tolkien, Chapters 20-24 of *The Silmarillion* (with quiz)  
Thursday: Mortality and Immortality  
1) Read “The Dialogue of Finrod and Andreth” from *Morgoth’s Ring* (on Blackboard Learn)  
Recommended Readings:  
“Myths Transformed XI,” from *Morgoth’s Ring* (on Blackboard Learn)  
The Letters of Tolkien: 153, 212 and 325 (on Blackboard Learn) |
| 10   | 10/28 and 10/30 | **Tuesday 10/28: ***Midterm Exam (bring blue book)***  
|      |             | ***Academic Poster Topic Proposal Due Thursday 11/6; see list of suggested topics or speak to your professor***                                                                                 |
| 12   | 11/11 and 11/13 | ***class canceled Tuesday 11/11: Veterans Day***  
Thursday: Wizards, Incarnation, and Reincarnation  
1) J.R.R. Tolkien, “The Istari” (on Blackboard Learn)  
2) J.R.R. Tolkien, “The Palantíri” in *Unfinished Tales* (on Blackboard Learn)  
3) J.R.R. Tolkien, “The Hunt for the Ring” (on Blackboard Learn)  
4) The Letters of Tolkien: 153, 156 (on Blackboard Learn) |
<p>| 13   | 11/18 and   | Tuesday: Seen vs. Unseen; Creating Wealth and Slowing Time                                                                                                                                            |</p>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1) Michel Foucault, “The Means of Correct Training” and “Panopticism,” from <em>The Foucault Reader</em> (on Blackboard Learn)</td>
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<td>2) J. R. R. Tolkien, “Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age” from <em>The Silmarillion</em></td>
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<td>J. R. R. Tolkien, “History of Galadriel and Celeborn” from <em>Unfinished Tales</em> (on Blackboard Learn)</td>
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<td>Thursday: <strong>Heidegger and Technology</strong></td>
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<td>1) <em>Heidegger: for Beginners</em> and/or</td>
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<td>2) Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology” (on Blackboard Learn)</td>
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<td>C.S. Lewis, <em>Out of the Silent Planet</em>, chapters 14-22 and Postscript</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>12/2 and</td>
<td>Tuesday: <strong>Academic Poster Session (please do not be late to class)</strong>. Have your printed poster ready to post on the wall and prepare a 2-3 minute oral presentation of the ideas it contains.</td>
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<td>12/4</td>
<td>Thursday: J.R.R. Tolkien, <em>The Return of the King</em>, chapters 1-6 (book 5)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>12/9 and</td>
<td>J.R.R. Tolkien, <em>The Return of the King</em>, chapters 7-11 (book 5) and chapters 1-3 (book 6)</td>
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<td>12/11</td>
<td>J.R.R. Tolkien, <em>The Return of the King</em>, chapters 4-9 (book 6)</td>
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<td>Recommended Readings:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Letters of Tolkien: 131, 186, 144, 191 and 246 (on Blackboard Learn)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>12/18/14</td>
<td>Final Exam in LANG 303 (bring blue book)</td>
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