

Writing of the Inklings
ENGL 146 W
Professor Christine Perrin
Online office hours Wednesdays 9 a.m.-10 a.m. and by appointment

Welcome

Welcome to Writings of the Inklings. The Inklings were a group of writers that met in Oxford England over a number of years around the mid-twentieth century. The notable writers who were part of this group were Lewis and Tolkien, Charles Williams and Owen Barfield. Some group Dorothy Sayers among them for her lively and intelligent correspondence with Lewis during these years and because she takes on many of the same subjects and styles as they with fierce intelligence and wit. She did not meet with the Thursday night group to share tea and writings but she was part of the exchange with Lewis. The Inklings read aloud to each other and commented on fresh work. They did it for sheer delight and the desire to get feedback on their writing which was different in its commitments from what most writers were making in the wider literary culture. Lewis and Tolkien loved the Norse gods, language, and philology and both taught at Oxford. Tolkien was instrumental in Lewis' faith epic recounted in Lewis' book "Surprised by Joy."

One of the most prominent features of this group is the world of conversation and ideas which they inhabited. They were known for their avid love of discourse and many of their books were born as the fruit of such. This is an online course, so the discussion and cross pollination of ideas will be more limited than theirs. However, reading these books closely, so closely that you can write about them, will serve you well. There will be a discussion component to the class in the forums. This will help you to talk about what you are reading and to get to know each other. Take the chance to read these books thoroughly and follow these thinkers, you may never have the time for it later in life. I have tried to set up the course to require it with weekly writing assignments that will require engagement with the texts and with exams that hold you accountable for some of the dominant ideas and even passages you encounter this semester. I recommend that you read with a pen, underlining and perhaps keeping a reading notebook; these writers are dense and thoughtful and will require such attention.

Fix a cup of tea and open your book, pen in hand. Expect to have your mind surprised and sharpened by these four thinkers who lived through the World Wars and during Modernist period and wrote to tell about it.

Please note that online courses are convenient but do require time set aside at regular intervals. You will not absorb this material quickly, this is a course that needs rumination. Please realize that the homework assignments will only require so much of you, but to perform well on the tests you will have to follow the course closely as it unfolds. Beyond your performance, however, a world of thought that could influence your life in many ways awaits you.

Objectives

Literature General Education W courses have these objectives:

Objectives: By the completion of the course the students will demonstrate the ability to

- a. evidence a basic understanding of some of the traditions and methods of literary study.
- b. appreciate significant works of literature.
- c. read closely and critically.
- d. respond to significant questions of textual interpretation and of the text's relationship to the student's personal world.

As a part of this course you will also be encouraged to think about conversation as an end of education, the way in which relationships affect the work we do, and your own depth of understanding about Christian faith and the imaginative life.

Required Books

(to purchase)

CS Lewis: *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* is by HarperTrophy ISBN 0064471047

CS Lewis: *The Last Battle* (same as above)

CS Lewis: *Screwtape Letters* HarperCollins ISBN-13: 9780060652937

CS Lewis: *Till We Have Faces*

CS Lewis: various essays (I will make available)

JRR Tolkien: *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Book I of *The Lord of the Rings*) (available online) Houghton Mifflin Co ISBN 0618002227

Dorothy Sayers: *The Man Born to Be King*, Ignatius Press ISBN 0898703077 (coursepack necessary) and various essays by and about Sayers (noted in syllabus, which I will make available)

***You are responsible to purchase and listen to two MP3 downloads from Mars Hill Audio call 18003316407 or order online. The material from these wonderful interviews will be included in your exams. They will be a part of your daily calendar syllabus.**

The Mars Hill Conversations which you need to purchase are “Alan Jacobs on *The Narnian*,” and “Maker of Middle Earth”. If you have further questions about this please let me know. For your information the following authors discuss their books in the interviews, I recommend their texts to you:

The Narnian by Alan Jacobs

JRR Tolkien’s Sanctifying Myth by Bradley Birzer

JRR Tolkien Author of the Century by Tom Shippey

Tolkien: Man and Myth by Joseph Pearce

The Gospel According to Tolkien: Visions of the Kingdom in Middle Earth by Ralph Wood

Grade Breakdown

Forum discussion 25%

Homework 25%

Midterm 20%

Final 30%

Homework: each week I will assign you a topic, passage, or question to answer/discuss. Typically, I will be asking you to articulate and summarize the theme of the essay you have read for that week and apply it to the fiction you have read in 600 words or more. My expectation is that you will be specific in your comments and quote liberally from the text you are considering to support the argument and ideas you are developing. I will regularly post student papers (from other classes) on topics that will enhance your ability to write these “Working Pages” and to give you a sense of what good writing in this category looks like. I look forward to hearing your thoughts. You will be given a grade of 1-10. Ten will be for clear writing that expresses succinctly the idea the essay explores and finds examples from the fictional text. I will look for support in the form of examples and quotations. I would like you to read at least 2 other student papers a week and possibly use them as part of your forum discussions. I will post your papers to be read by your classmates regularly—hence be aware that I am not your only audience, but your classmates are as well!

You will also turn in 3 questions per week in response to your reading.

Forums: This is the way that you will talk to each other this semester. I will post a discussion forum for the week and you will respond to it and to each other in it. I have a rubric that clearly outlines my expectations for this. My expectation is that you will take this as seriously as class discussion—demonstrating your analysis of the material and of each others' posts, extending the discussion by building on previous posts, fully addressing the question and referencing the readings we have read that week and previously in the course. There will be times when you will want to pull in outside reading as well as life experience. This course involves much application! You will be amazed when you read Screwtape Letters, for instance, and see yourself on those pages! I will contribute to these conversations as well, but you will take the lead. You will have 18 possible points in this category per week. Please familiarize yourself with the rubric which is posted with the syllabus.

Midterm and Final Exams: this is your accountability for the course—not only that you have done the reading but that you have thought through it and synthesized the material. Your exams will test you on the views of these writers, on topics such as these (and others): their view of mythology, the entrances and exits into worlds, sehnsucht, fellowship/the church/community, forgiveness, pride, diminishment, creativity, dogma, story and theology. Among other elements, passage identification and essays will figure prominently. For passage ID you will identify who said it in what book, what the context of that saying was in that book and then more widely in our course. I will choose prominent passages that we have talked about on the forums, in lecture notes and lectures, in homework. We will have an exam review before the exams.

My availability: I will respond to your emails within 24 hours. I will hold weekly office hours—either in the chat room function (on sakai) or by phone, you may also schedule an appointment with me in one of these mediums. I look forward to getting to know you. Sometimes that happens more quickly online.

Check carefully the announcement section on the course site—read anything I send you by sakai (usually announcements with attachments)

Stay on top of things: there is a good bit of reading for this course, you will not be able to make up for it once you get behind. Some weeks you will have to set aside several hours a day to read.

Minimum Computer Requirements

System Requirements

The following list represents configurations that provide the best performance with our learning management system and synchronous software and configurations the College is ready and able to support. Although, students may find that other configurations may work as well, those configurations may not be supported by Academic Technology Services.

Internet Connection - High speed or broadband cable required; Satellite Broadband not recommended due to conflicts with synchronous software; **Air cards may not be used**

Browser - Mozilla Firefox 3.0 or higher

Operating System Version:

- Windows® XP (recommended)
- Windows® Vista
- Windows® 7
- Mac OS 10.4 or higher

Desktop Processor (CPU): Pentium 4 at 2.0 GHz or faster

Laptop Processor (CPU): Centrino (or Centrino Duo) 1.5 GHz or faster

Memory (RAM):

- Windows® XP: 512 MB or more
- Windows® Vista: 1024 MB or more
- Windows® 7: 1024 MB or more
- Mac OS: 1024 MB or more

Hard Disk Space: 40 GB or more of free space

CD-ROM/CD-RW drive (DVD or combo drive helpful)

Any Office Suite; Examples include Microsoft Office 2007 or newer, OpenOffice 3.1, or Google Docs

Technical Support How do I get IT support?

- Help is available between the hours of 8 A M and 11 PM (7days a week).
- Contact us via one of the following methods:
 - o Instant Messaging at SCS5901@AIM.com
 - o Phone at (717) 796 - 1800 Ext. 5901
 - o Email at bthompso@messiah.edu or ResNet@Messiah.edu

Disabilities

If you have a disability that impacts your learning needs in this class please contact me by email right away so that we can discuss it. You should also be in touch with Keith Drahn at Messiah College who helps to structure and coordinate these services. I would like to support your efforts in this class, Messiah College is committed to this as well.

Weekly Calendar: only 7 weeks of class

Basic weekly expectations:

- **Most reading due on Monday (a few early exceptions)**
- **readings include a book and an essay**
- **3 typed questions due every week on Monday, surrounding the reading**
- **600 word essay due every week on Friday summarizing the essay, applying it to the book**
- **Discussion in the forums each week 2-3 high quality posts (spaced out due by Sat)**

Week One (work for week of May 30th)

Read: *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* for Monday 30th, turn in questions 1 on Sakai

Read: *The Last Battle* for Wednesday June 1st, turn in questions 2 on Sakai

Read: for Friday article *Theology in Stories* by Gilbert Meilander

http://www2.luthersem.edu/Word&World/Archives/1-3_Experience/1-3_Meilaender.pdf

(Meilander essay online, please print it out and mark it up it will be essential to course)

Read: Lecture notes, posted under resources on Sakai

Write 1: 600 word response and analysis called a “working page”

First summarize the argument that Meilander is making in his essay then support it with examples from the two books you read this week, use quotations and specific support from the books. Due June 3, 11 p.m.

Discuss: See forums for discussion, read through the rubric so that you understand my expectations for the discussion (if you fulfill all expectations in every category you will receive 18 points, in terms of frequency you are expected to post 2-3 times a week in deliberate and developed ways). Due June 4, 9 p.m.

Watch: Documentary on Lewis’ Life (have it done by June 5th)

Please note: this documentary is on Sakai—to access it go to “Resources” then “DVD and CD” under this folder there is a link called “Writings on the Inklings” when you click on it the movie will begin playing (after you choose the media player you will use to play the film) you can watch it on your computer in that window that opens.

Week Two (work for week of June 6)

Read: *Screwtape Letters* for Monday June 6, questions 3 due on June 6, *Weight of Glory* essay by CS Lewis due on June 8.

<http://www.verber.com/mark/xian/weight-of-glory.pdf> (weight of glory essay online—please print it off and mark it up, it will be essential to this course)

Read: Lecture notes and Student papers from Messiah imitation “Screwtape Letters”
Turn in questions from both readings on Sakai on June 6.

Write 2: Summarize the argument of the *Weight of Glory* and apply it to *Screwtape Letters*—give multiple examples of how *Screwtape Letters* bears out the ideas of *Weight of Glory* in story form in *Screwtape*, in Sakai by June 10, 11 p.m.

Discuss: see forum for discussion (please note that the discussion is due by Saturday night 9 p.m. each week, after that the forum will be locked and a new discussion opened for Monday of the new week, you are expected to space your posts throughout the week). Due by June 11, 9 p.m.

Week Three (work for week of June 13)

Read: *Till We Have Faces* ½ (through page 167 end of chapter 14) reading to be completed by June 13th, Monday, questions 4 also to be completed by June 13th)

Read: *The Great Sin* (one short chapter from *Mere Christianity*, I will send it to each of you before this week). Due June 15.

Read: Lecture notes

Write 3: Summarize the essay “The Great Sin” and apply it to “Till We Have Faces” 600 words (due by Friday 17th at 11pm.)

Discuss: See forum for discussion (always due by Saturday night (18th) by 9 p.m.

Listen: Lecture MP3 which you are required to buy from Mars Hill Audio (see General Syllabus for an explanation) Alan Jacobs on *The Narnian*. *You are responsible to purchase this and listen to it by June 17th at 11 p.m. material from it will be on the midterm next week.*

Week Four (work for week of June 20) MIDTERM THIS WEEK given on Friday June 24. You must have the exam finished by 9 pm. See further instructions in announcement as time gets closer. I will post review notes as well as sample exam questions. Passage identification and essay questions as well as short answer questions will be on the exam. I will most likely choose passages with intersect with your essay reading and its intersection with the fiction (as you have been writing about for working pages). I will also rely on lecture notes, including the Alan Jacobs lecture from Mars Hill. I will be available for appointments for any questions you have regarding preparation for the exam. I welcome the chance to talk to you.

Read: *Till We Have Faces* ½ (through end) reading to be completed by June 20, questions 5 turned into sakai

Read: article *On Forgiveness* (I will send you this). Due on June 22nd.

Read: Lecture notes

Write : no writing this week since you are preparing for the midterm exam

Discuss: See Forum for discussion (due Saturday night 25th by 11 pm).

Week Five (work for week of June 27)

Read: Book I (through page 209, do not skip the prologue) of the *Fellowship of the Ring* (which is book I of the trilogy). Turn in questions 6 on Sakai. All this finished by June 27. I will post student papers that are helpful and informative for you to read alongside your reading. These will help you with essay questions on final exam.

Lecture: Listen: two free MP3 conversations (about 10 min each) Birzer: On How Tolkien understood the idea of myth and Wood: on How Tolkien viewed the use and meaning of human language. Listen to lectures by Friday at 9 p.m. though all lectures will help you prepare for your writing assignment.

Listen also to Tim Keller Lecture on Tolkien (about 50 min). This lecture is available from Sakai resources. Listen to the lecture by Friday at 11 p.m.

Write 4: (due July 1, 9 pm). Write on the subject of Fellowship—how does the book (thus far) portray the nature of friendship and of companionship, support your thesis with examples and quotations as well as aspects of plot and character development.

Discuss: (due July 2, 11pm) see forums

Week Six (work for week of July 4)

Read: Book II through the end of FOTR, questions 7 due July 4th, reading due July 4th

Read: Lecture notes

Listen to Maker of Middle Earth (one hour) MP3 from Mars Hill, see syllabus for purchase instructions. You are to listen to this by Wednesday, July 6th at 11 p.m.

Write 5: (due July 8th at 9pm). The notion of diminishment (Medieval Latin *diminuere* “to make smaller”) shows up in the Lothlorien section when the ring is offered to Galadriel and she wrestles with the choice and then responds by saying “I will diminish”. This choice to become smaller, less important, less powerful is repeated in countless circumstances throughout the book: an individual is presented with a situation in which he/she must decide whether or not to relinquish a cherished object, status, or role. Write about this using characters, plot, examples and quotations.

Or

Write about Lewis’ idea of *Sehnsucht* in Gimi’s experience of Lothlorien.

Discuss: (due July 9th at 11pm) see forums

Week Seven (work for week of July 11)

Read Sayers: *The Man Born to Be King*, read by July 11th, questions 8 turned in on sakai by July 11th

Touchstone Article on Sayers, posted in Resources, also available in Touchstone Archives online—search “Dorothy Sayers” Read by July 12.

Read: *The Greatest Drama Ever Staged* (I will email this to you). Ready by July 12.

Write: no writing this week since you are preparing for the final exam.

Discuss: see forums due July 14th at 11 p.m. (please note change because of the last week)

Final Exam: JULY 15th must be finished by 9 p.m.

Expectations for the course:

All the reading!

8/ question assignments

5/ 600 word writing assignments

discussions every week: see rubric

midterm

final