First Year Seminar
Imaginative Rationality: Philosophical Themes in C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Their Intellectual Circle

Course Number: 44950, FFYS 1000, section 72
Course Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00–4:15 PM
Course Location: Pereira 207

Instructor: Dr. Thomas Ward
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(310)-338-4287 (phone)
(310)-338-5997 (fax)
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:15–10:15 AM and 2:00-3:00 PM

Writing Instructor: Mr. Joshua Kulmac Butler
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Course Description:

This course will introduce you to the philosophical thought of Lewis, Tolkien, some other members of their circle, and some of their intellectual influences. We will explore traditional philosophical themes through the fiction and non-fiction of these and other authors. These themes include: the existence of God, the problem of evil, human nature, moral knowledge, and the meaningfulness of figurative language. Since we will be examining some of these philosophical issues through literature, one major question that we will ask throughout the course is this: To what extent can imaginative discourse effectively communicate truth?

and lots of other texts that will be available as .pdf downloads on Blackboard

Please make every effort to buy precisely these editions. This will make it easy to refer to texts in class discussions.
Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand and appreciate the intellectual rigor and academic excellence that defines an LMU education by reading, discussing, and writing about some fictional and non-fictional writings of important twentieth-century authors, focusing on some philosophical themes as well as the relationship between the intellect and the imagination.

2. Engage critically and reflectively in different forms of scholarly discourse such as classroom discussions, meetings with the instructors, and consultation of secondary literature.

3. Learn to read critically and carefully by engaging fictional writings from several disciplinary angles and especially from a philosophical angle, and by discussing these writings in detail in class.

4. Exercise critical thinking in oral discussion and writing through participation in all class discussions, and working closely with the instructors on drafts of a term paper.

5. Be able to evaluate sources for quality after completing the Library’s Information Literacy Tutorials and by working with the instructors on a long paper requiring several drafts.

6. Acquire research skills including use of the library catalog and electronic databases to retrieve books or articles, whether in print or online after completing the Library’s Information Literacy Tutorials and putting these tutorials in practice by researching for a long paper.

Grading Scheme:  

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Literacy Tutorials</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Notebook</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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A=93-100, A-=90-92, B+=88-89, B=83-87, B-=80-82,  
C+=78-79, C=73-77, C-=70-72, D=60-69, F=0-59

Workload: You should expect a minimum of six hours of out-of-class work per week, in accordance with nationally recognized standards available at http://www.lmu.edu/Assets/LMU+Credit+Hour+Policy_Final.pdf. 

The majority of this work will consist of reading and writing, and you will probably need to work considerably above six hours per week to excel in the course.

Since we will be reading a combination of very long books and short essays, the number of pages due for each class session varies dramatically, from just a few to hundreds. It is imperative that you plan ahead and use lighter periods in the class to get started on heavier upcoming reading assignments.
Assignments:  1. **Four Information Literacy Tutorials.** One Tutorial must be completed each week, starting in the third week. You cannot pass the class without completing these Tutorials. They are worth 10% of your overall grade.

2. **“Write like a Philosopher” Writing Workshop.** See ARC attachment for details. Attendance at this Workshop is worth 5% of your overall grade and is counted toward your Attendance and Participation score. If you cannot attend the Workshop you must arrange for it to be recorded, listen to the recording, and write a summary.

3. **Notebook:** You are required to take both “pre-class” and “in-class” notes for each reading assignment. Pre-class notes are notes you take while you’re reading on your own. In-class notes are those taken in class. The notebook may be written or typed. You should keep it like a journal or diary, i.e., with dates. You will turn it in on the day of the final exam, and it will be worth 10% of your grade.

4. **Small Paper.** This 800-1000 word paper will be due on 9/10 and will be worth 10% of your grade. It is designed to assess your current writing ability and reading comprehension before beginning the multi-draft Big Paper.

5. **Big Paper.** This 2000-3000 word paper is the most important assignment of the class. It is due on 12/8 and will be worth 30% of your grade. However, there will be several mandatory drafts due at earlier dates in the semester.

Final Exam:  The Final Exam is scheduled for Tuesday, 12/8 at 8:00 AM. It will be worth 15% of your overall grade and will consist of several short-answer questions. There will be about one question per reading assignment and the questions will test for general comprehension rather than retention of details. The Notebook is meant, in part, to prepare you to do well on the Final Exam.

Late Assignments: Late work will not be accepted except in cases of serious emergency or distress as determined by me.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and I will take roll. If you miss more than four classes you will lose 10% of your overall grade. (Obviously, exceptions will be made for students who have medical or family emergencies.)

Participation: This is a seminar-style class where your participation through discussion is expected, desired, and required. Lack of participation in class discussions and/or poor performance could result in as much as a 30% deduction of your overall percentage.

For the purposes of this class, “good performance in class discussions” may be defined as frequent, thoughtful, spoken communication to one
or more classmates and/or instructors, which addresses the topic under
discussion and seeks to advance it in some way, e.g., by asking a
question, answering a question, seeking clarification, and offering
criticism or praise. “Frequent” may be defined as at minimum one such
communication per class session, and preferably more than one per class
session.

Keep in mind that it is also possible to participate poorly by talking too
much.

Extra Credit: You may earn up to five percentage points of extra credit by attending
additional ARC Writing Workshops. You will receive one point of extra
credit per additional Workshop you attend. See the ARC information
sheet, appended. (Keep in mind that the grade A+ is not given at LMU.)

Technology: You may use anything you find helpful, including laptops, smartphones,
and voice recorders. Unusual items should be cleared with me before
used in class. I reserve the right to restrict any student from using any
form of electronic technology (except where medically necessary) for
any reason at any point in the semester.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter,
with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for
assignments/tests to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any
work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source
(including Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. It is
your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of
academic honesty set forth in the “LMU Honor Code and Process” which
appears in the LMU Bulletin (see
)

Tentative Syllabus: I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus for any reason. In the
event that I do make changes I will notify you and ensure that these
changes do not unfairly disadvantage you.

Special Needs: Students with special needs who require reasonable modifications,
special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly
direct their request to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. Any
student who currently has a documented disability (ADHD, Autism
Spectrum Disorder, Learning, Physical, or Psychiatric) needing academic
accommodations should contact the DSS Office (Daum Hall 2nd floor, 310-
338-4216) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain
confidential. Please visit www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.

Class Schedule:

Readings listed next to each date are the readings DUE on that date.
T 8/27: Syllabus and Introduction

**Thought and Imagination**

R 8/29: Humphrey Carpenter, *The Inklings*, chs.1–3
Writing Instruction 1

T 9/3: George MacDonald, “The Fantastic Imagination”
C.S. Lewis, “On Stories”

R 9/5: Dorothy Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*, ch.5
Austin Farrer, “Poetic Truth”
Owen Barfield, “Imagery in Language and Metaphor in Poetry”

**The Problem of Evil**

T 9/10: C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, chs.1–3
Small Paper Due

R 9/12: C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, chs.4–6
Info Lit Tutorial 1 Due

T 9/17: Writing Instruction 2

R 9/19: C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, chs.7–10 and appendix
Info Lit Tutorial 2 Due

T 9/24: Bilbo Baggins’ Belated Birthday Bash
Big Paper Topics Due

C.S. Lewis, *The Magician’s Nephew* (selections)
Info Lit Tutorial 3 Due

T 10/1: C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra* 1/3

R 10/3: C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra* 2/3
Info Lit Tutorial 4 Due

T 10/8: C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra* 3/3

R 10/10: Writing Instruction 3

**Reasoning—and Feeling—Our Way to God’s Existence**
T 10/15:  C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (selections)  
C.S. Lewis, *Miracles* (selections)  
Big Paper Bibliography Due

C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (selections)  
C.S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory”  
C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (selections)

M 10/21:  “Write Like a Philosopher” workshop at the ARC  
**Human Nature, Science, and Scientism**

T 10/22:  C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, ch.1

R 10/24:  C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, ch.2  
Big Paper Draft 1 Due

T 10/29:  C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, ch.3  
C.S. Lewis, *The Pilgrim’s Regress* (selections)

R 10/31:  Writing Instruction 4

T 11/5:  C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 1/3

R 11/7:  C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 2/3

T 11/12:  C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* 3/3  
**Vice, Narcissism, and Damnation**

R 11/14:  Charles Williams, *Descent into Hell* 1/2

T 11/19:  Charles Williams, *Descent into Hell* 1/2  
Big Paper Draft 2 Due  
**Virtue, Hope, Goodness, and Evil**

Writing Instruction 5

Writing Instruction 6

R 11/28:  Thanksgiving, no class


T 12/8: Final Exam at 2:00 PM; Big Paper and Notebook Due