

Intellect and imagination: the rational religion and theological stories of C.S. Lewis

Dr Meriel Patrick

C.S. Lewis remains one of the most popular religious thinkers and writers of the twentieth century. His work has received much praise — and much criticism. The purpose of this seminar is a close examination of a number of key strands of his theological works, both imaginative and apologetic. Themes that will be explored include: Lewis's trilemma, the argument from desire, Christianity and myth, theodicy (the problem of suffering), and heaven and hell. There will also be the opportunity to look at some responses to Lewis's writings, and to consider the works in the context of other philosophers and theologians writing on similar themes.

Additional student learning outcomes

Students who have taken this seminar will:

- have read and considered a selection of C.S. Lewis's theological writings, and of the relevant secondary literature
- have critically analysed the main arguments found within these texts
- have examined the impact of literary form or genre on the message conveyed

Required reading

The editions of Lewis's work which are suggested below are ones which are readily available in the USA. Other editions are also acceptable.

- C.S. Lewis, *The great divorce* (1945; New York, 2001)
——, *The problem of pain* (1940; New York, 2001)
——, *Mere Christianity* (1952; New York, 1996)
——, *Essay collection: faith, Christianity and the church*, ed. L. Walmsley (2002) [esp. the essays 'Myth became fact', 'What are we to make of Jesus Christ?', 'Is theism important?', 'On obstinacy in belief', and 'The weight of glory']
E.J. Wielenberg, *God and the reach of reason: C.S. Lewis, David Hume, and Bertrand Russell* (2007)

Recommended reading list

- D.J. Baggett and others, *C.S. Lewis as philosopher* (2008)
J. Beversluis, *C.S. Lewis and the search for rational religion*, 2nd edn (2007)
[P.H. Brazier, 'C.S. Lewis and Christological prefiguration', *The Heythrop Journal*, 48 \(2007\), 742–75](#)
[S.T. Davis, 'Was Jesus mad, bad, or God?', in *The incarnation: an interdisciplinary symposium on the incarnation of the Son of God*, ed. S.T. Davis, D. Kendall, and G. O'Collins \(2002\)](#)
C.S. Kilby, *The Christian world of C.S. Lewis* (1964, 1995)
C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*, rev. edn (1960; 2001)
——, *A grief observed* (1961; 2001)
——, 'Sometimes fairy stories may say best what's to be said', in *Of other worlds: essays and stories*, ed. W. Hooper (1966)
A.E. McGrath, *The intellectual world of C.S. Lewis* (2013)
[R. MacSwain and M. Ward, eds., *The Cambridge companion to C.S. Lewis* \(2010\)](#)
W. Vaus, *Mere theology* (2004)

Additional reading

Although we will not be studying them closely, you may also like to look at:

- C.S. Lewis, *The chronicles of Narnia* (1950–56)
——, *The space trilogy* [*Out of the silent planet* (1938); *Perelandra* (or *Voyage to Venus*) (1943); *That hideous strength* (1946)]
——, *The Screwtape letters* (1942; 2001)
——, *Surprised by joy* (1955; 2002)