



**Course:** Readings in C.S. Lewis (MS)

**Meeting Time:** T/TH 2:00 pm (EST)

**Instructor:** Mr. Casey McCall

**Email:** [casey@ashlandlex.org](mailto:casey@ashlandlex.org)

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Meeting Place:** Zoom Classroom

## Course Description

This course is designed for 6th–8th graders who want to dive deeply into C.S. Lewis’s more accessible writings. C.S. Lewis (1898–1963) is beloved today by Christians from all traditions due to his commitment to “mere Christianity” and his imaginative Christian engagement with culture through his fiction, essays, nonfiction works, poetry, and letters. Lewis was something of a “divine popularizer,” as he mined revelation and history for wisdom in order to make it accessible for contemporary audiences. Over half a century after his death, the Oxford educated writer, philosopher, and popular theologian still speaks through his many published works. If you would like to become more familiar with Lewis and his writings in order to grow in virtue and wisdom, this course is for you.

Students will be expected to read 25–30 pages per week and must be ready each week to engage in Socratic dialogue on the material read. Additionally, students will keep a notebook for “commonplacing” in order to write down impactful ideas from the reading and will be given two writing assignments/presentations over the course of the year.

## Course Objectives

- Develop a familiarity with Lewis the person via biographical works and personal letters
- Develop historical awareness by noting Lewis’s context in order to better understand his writings
- Grow in recognition and love for truth, beauty, and goodness through thoughtful engagement with Lewis’s writings
- Expand vocabulary to include the language of virtue toward the goal of moral formation
- Produce written works in the style of Lewis and present works to class

## Required Texts:

1. Como, James. *C.S. Lewis: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 160 pp.
2. Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. 227 pp.
3. Lewis, C.S. *The Great Divorce*. 133 pp.
4. Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. 189 pp.
5. Lewis, C.S. *The Screwtape Letters*. 209 pp.
6. Lewis, C.S. *The Weight of Glory*. 192 pp. (only one essay out of this book)
7. A notebook for “commonplacing” (If you already have one of these, you may continue to add to the one you have. Students will be expected to record ideas, moments of inspiration, questions, quotes they want to remember, etc. as they read and discuss)

## Course Schedule:

<b>Weeks 1-4</b>	<i>C.S. Lewis: A Very Short Introduction</i>
<b>Weeks 5-6</b>	“Weight of Glory” Essay; Letters
<b>Weeks 7-13</b>	<i>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</i>
<b>Week 14</b>	Character profile presentations
<b>Weeks 15-21</b>	<i>Mere Christianity</i>
<b>Weeks 22-26</b>	<i>The Great Divorce</i>
<b>Weeks 26-31</b>	<i>The Screwtape Letters</i>
<b>Week 32</b>	Essay presentations

## Course Requirements:

**Reading** – Students will be asked to read 25-30 pages per week.

**Commonplacing** – Students will be expected to take notes in a commonplace journal throughout the semester. These notes should be taken during reading, during discussions, and anytime an idea or concept stands out to the student. During class discussions, students will be asked to share something from their journals.

**Reflections** – Students will be given short writing assignments (usually at the beginning or end of class) in which they will answer a question posed by the teacher in one paragraph. For this, students may be asked to write a brief character sketch or summarize a main idea from a reading.

**Character Profile Essay and Presentation** – Students will choose one character from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, write a 700–800-word character profile, and present the profile to class.

**Personal Reflection Essay** – Students will write an advice letter to their imaginary future son or daughter, drawing from themes in Lewis’s writings. This letter will be 1000 words.

## Student Expectations:

Students are expected to arrive each day to class fully prepared to discuss the readings. Each class, students should have both the book being discussed as well as some of their own notes. Our class sessions will include a lot of discussion about Christian virtues and students will be expected to manifest those virtues by listening attentively and discussing respectfully. Students will need to arrive on time for class each day.

## Evaluation Procedures and Grading Criteria

Teachers will often assign the following grades based on students’ level of achievement: *magna cum laude* (with great praise), *cum laude* (with praise), *satis* (sufficient, satisfactory), and *non satis* (not sufficient). Ideally, every average student working diligently should do praiseworthy work (*cum laude*). Those who excel beyond this expectation will be the *magna cum laude* students. Students who do adequate but not praiseworthy work should be designated *satis*. *Non satis* means lacking sufficiency or adequacy. These assessments are not mere grading

instruments but ways for both the student and the instructor to assess mastery. Students will receive written feedback on each essay.

If students need to complete a high school transcript with either a numeric or letter grade, they will need to notify the teacher in advance so he can provide a traditional letter grade at the end of the course. Please review the Student-Parent Handbook for policy regarding traditional grades.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Do not plagiarize or cheat. All papers and assignments must be your own work. While you may get help from parents or tutors with brainstorming, organizing, and proofreading your papers, the writing and rewriting of your papers should be your own work. All sources must be cited.

### **Contacting Me**

Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns you may have. I will **usually** respond within the 24-hour period but may not be able to respond before then. If there is an issue or concern that requires discussion of details, I'll be happy for us to set up a Zoom appointment to talk instead.

### **Schoology**

I will be posting our class syllabus, assignments, occasional class recordings, PowerPoint slides and other links in our Schoology classroom, so please check Schoology for updates regularly throughout the week. Class recordings will be posted within 24 hours after class, as needed. Please make sure you can access Schoology or that you get help from your parents if you are having problems accessing it.