



Course: Cultivating Virtue with CS Lewis

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

Instructor: Mr. Casey McCall

Email: casey@ashlandlex.org

Office Hours: by appointment

Meeting Place: Zoom Classroom

Course Description

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.

This course is designed to guide middle school-aged students in the cultivation of virtue through engagement with C.S. Lewis’ writings. Students will be expected to read 20-40 pages per week and must be ready each week to engage in Socratic dialogue on the material read. Additionally, students work through field-tested curriculum formed by university scholars for the purpose of leading middle school-aged students in cultivating the Narnian virtues of wisdom, self-control, integrity, fortitude, justice, and love.

Course Objectives

- Develop a familiarity with Lewis’ life through biography
- Develop historical awareness by noting the historical context of Lewis’ 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 writings that display deep engagement with Lewis’ virtue writings

Required Texts:

1. Geoff and Janet Benge, *C.S. Lewis: Master Storyteller*. 192 pp.
2. Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. 227 pp.
3. Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. 189 pp.
4. Lewis, C.S. *Prince Caspian*. 256 pp.
5. Lewis, C.S. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. 256 pp.
6. Lewis, C.S. *The Screwtape Letters*. 209 pp.

Course Schedule:

Week 1	Introduction to Lewis and virtue
Weeks 2-6	<i>C.S. Lewis: Master Storyteller</i>
Week 7	“Weight of Glory” Essay; Letters
Weeks 8-13	<i>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</i>

Week 14-19	<i>Prince Caspian</i>
Weeks 20-25	<i>The Voyage of the Dawn Treader</i>
Weeks 26-28	Selections from <i>Mere Christianity</i>
Weeks 29-31	Selections from <i>The Screwtape Letters</i>
Week 32	Essay presentations

Course Requirements:

Reading – Students will be asked to read 20-40 pages per week.

Workbooks – Students will complete workbooks that coincide with the three *Chronicles of Narnia* books. These workbooks focus on virtue and guide students in considering the six Narnian virtues (wisdom, self-control, integrity, fortitude, justice, and love) in depth.

Character Passports – Students will choose two virtues for personal growth during the year and will be given assignments to work on at home with parents to measure growth.

Personal Reflection Essay – Students will write an advice letter to their imaginary future son or daughter, drawing from virtue 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 any assignments that coincide with the readings. 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.