



Regent University Mission

Regent University serves as a center of Christian thought and action to provide excellent education through a Biblical perspective and global context equipping Christian leaders to change the world.

School of Communication and the Arts Mission

To prepare emerging and established Christian leaders to inspire, enrich and transform the media, the arts, and the academy through excellence and innovation in scholarship and practice.

COURSE SYLLABUS

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Syllabus: COM 485 (Undergraduate students), COM 685 (masters' students), and COM 785 (doctoral students) C. S. Lewis & Friends: Communication, Myth and Imagination

Summer Semester, 2026
May 11-August 15

COURSE LOCATION: Oxford University and online

MEETING LOCATION: OXFORD
Oxford Dates: June 20-27

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

WILLIAM J. BROWN, PH.D.
PROFESSOR
and
Michael Elam, PH.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

**All students are required to read and have a thorough understanding of the syllabus.
Any questions or concerns need to be addressed to the instructors.**

COM 485, COM 685, and COM 785

SECTION 1 – COURSE OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Instructor: William J. Brown, Ph.D.

Telephone: (757) 352-4216

E-mail: willbro@regent.edu

Instructor: Michael Elam, Ph.D.

Telephone: (757) 352-4878

E-mail: melam@regent.edu

Office Hours: Dr. Brown and Dr. Elam are available at all hours in Oxford--just call our room

Office Location: Dr. Brown: COM 216, Dr. Elam: RH 3rd floor, 317, English Dept. suite

Best time to contact me: By appointment

This class should prove to be an amazing academic and cultural experience. We will do all we can to challenge you academically and spiritually. Welcome to the city and intellectual world of C. S. Lewis.

SHORT BIOS

Dr. William J. Brown is a professor and research fellow in the School of Communication and the Arts. He specializes in the study and use of entertainment-education for social change, health communication, and media and social influence. He has conducted academic and professional research in more than 60 nations for the past 25 years. Dr. Brown has co-taught the C.S. Lewis summer class since 2003.

Dr. Michale Elam is an assistant professor in the Department of English Dr. Michael Elam was born and raised in North Highlands, California, and lived in northwestern New Jersey and the greater St. Louis area before coming to Chesapeake. He holds B.A. degrees in Ministerial Studies from Trinity Life Bible College in Sacramento, California and in English from Rutgers University, where he also minored in Ancient Mediterranean Civilization. He holds a M.A. degree in English from Rutgers University as well. Elam received his Ph.D. in English from Saint Louis University, where he concentrated on Medieval Studies. He has taught in higher education settings in various capacities for over 10 years, including teaching Latin, composition, and various literary courses.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class examines the life and work of C. S. Lewis as it relates to our understanding of communication theory and practice. The class will give special attention to Lewis' contributions to the study of reason, myth and imagination by examining his writings and by exploring the city of Oxford and the people who contributed to his work. Our exploration of the themes and events of Lewis' life, the influence of his close friends, and the context of the

culture in which he lived will help us to better understand why he continues to be so popular and influential among both scholars and practitioners.

Theme Scripture: Proverbs 27:17 - As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

INTEGRATION OF FAITH

To begin this section on the integration of faith and learning, we would like to refer to a brief comment made by John Courtney Murray, given at the inaugural series of St. Thomas More Lectures at Yale University. This class, as Father Murray reminds us, raises the question of the uniqueness of our subject matter and the problem of God amid the whole range of problems that we face. Murray states:

If God is a reality, his reality is unique; it will therefore present to man a unique problem. The problem of God exhibits only the barest analogy with the standard model of a problem as it is found in science. In the scientific world of observation and inference, hypothesis and verification, the data are, as it were, “out there.” The scientist is distant and detached from them; other things being equal any number of men who are scientists can do the same experiment and record the same results. No personal issues arise in the scientific problem. In contrast, the problem of God is primary among the fateful human questions that, as Pascal said, “take us by the throat.” The whole man--is profoundly engaged both in the position of the problem and its solution. In fact, he is in a real sense a datum of the problem itself, and his solution of it has personal consequences that touch every aspect of his conduct, character, and consciousness. Moreover, the problem of God is unique in that no man may say of it, “It is not my problem.” Fyodor Dostoevsky’s challenge is valid: ‘If God is not, everything is permitted.’ But the challenge needs to be amended to include, “except one thing.” If God is not, no one is permitted to say or even think that he is, for this would be a monstrous deception of oneself and of others. It would be to cherish and propagate a pernicious illusion whose result would necessarily be the destruction of man. On the other hand, if God is, again one thing is not permitted. It is not permitted that any man should be ignorant of him, for this ignorance, too, would be the destruction of man. On both counts, therefore, no man may say that the problem of God is not his problem.

*Murray, J. C. (1964). The problem of God. New Haven: Yale University Press.

As indicated by the quotation above the issues raised in this class speak to the whole of our life not just the academic. We cannot divorce the sacred from the secular, one’s heart from one’s mind, or the God of reason from the God of history.

Furthermore, we engage the content of this class as communication scholars looking at theology and not as theologians looking at communication. By this we mean that you are to respond to questions raised in the class or to specific class assignments as a communication

scholar speaking or writing to other scholars in the field. Although the professor provides a framework or structure for the class it is the responsibility of the student to integrate the subject matter of the class into their own worldview.

SECTION 2 – COURSE REQUIREMENTS

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course will offer a balanced emphasis on theory and practice with the aim of helping each student come to appreciate C. S. Lewis as a communicator, a Christian thinker, and a person. At the end of this course the attentive student should be able to:

1. Recognize and be sensitive to the problems and challenges inherent in engaging, describing, and interpreting the work of C. S. Lewis.
2. Discuss the ideas of some of the key thinkers and theorists that populate Lewis' work and who have contributed to his writing.
3. Proficiently discuss and write about some of the key works produced by Lewis.
4. Discuss some of C.S. Lewis' colleagues and close friends and know how they influenced Lewis' thinking and spiritual development.
5. Discuss some of C.S. Lewis' major works and the implications of these works for the field of communication study.

Course Objectives (specific tasks/assignments with match to CLOs above)

Course Assignments	CLO1	CLO2	CLO3	CLO4	CLO5
Discussions and Participation	X	X	X	X	X
Contemplations			X		X
Book Presentations	X		X		X
Lewis Blog					X
Final Paper	X	X	X		X

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Students are responsible for acquiring the following books and materials for this course **before the first class meeting**:

Textbooks

Jacobs, A. (2005). *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C.S. Lewis*. New York: HarperCollins, Publishers.

Lewis, C. S. (1991). *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Lewis, C. S. (1995). *Surprised by Joy*. New York: Harcourt. Inc.

Lewis, C. S. (1996). *That Hideous Strength*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Lewis, C. S. (2001). *Mere Christianity*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Lewis, C. S. (2001). *The Screwtape Letters*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Lewis, C. S. (2009). *The Great Divorce*. New York: HarperCollins, Publishers.

Lewis, C. S. (2010). *The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers

Lewis, C. S. and Hooper, Walter. (2005). *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*. New York: Eerdmans Pub. Co.

Ward, Michael. (2010). *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis* (Oxford University Press, 2008; paperback edition, 2010)

Note: The School has partnered with the Regent Bookstore to have textbooks available for purchase for all students, including distance students. Items may be ordered using the secured online catalog found at www.regentbookstore.net.

- Daily access to the Internet and email
- Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) version 2007 or later.
- The latest version of a web browser compatible with Canvas and media players. For assistance, visit the links provided in the Helpful Resources section of the course in Canvas or contact IT Helpdesk via their [website](http://www.regent.edu/helpdesk), phone at 757-352-4076, or email helpdesk@regent.edu.
- Additional materials (e.g., PowerPoint files, quizzes, media, and the like) may be provided via Canvas. Students are responsible for the information and materials distributed in class and on Canvas (see “Use of Canvas” below for more information).

- Understand and adhere to the [Regent Honor Code](#) found in the Student Handbook. A persistent link can also be found in Canvas's "RU Resources" tab.

Recommended Books (not required):

Duriez, Colin (2003). *Tolkien and C.S. Lewis: The gift of friendship*. Mahwah, NJ: Hidden Spring, Paulist Press.

Knight, Gareth (1992). *The Magical World of the Inklings: J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, Owen Barfield*. Rockport, MA: Element Books.

Lewis, C. S. (1956). *Till We Have Faces*. New York: Harcourt, Inc.

Lewis, C. S. (1970). *The Chronicles of Narnia*. New York: Collier Books.*

McGrath, A. (2013). *C. S. Lewis – A Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Ordway, H. (2017). *Apologetics and the Christian imagination: An integrated approach to defending the faith*. Emmaus Road Publishing.

Poe, H. L., & Veneman, J. R. (2009). *The Inklings of Oxford: C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Their Friends*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

* The Chronicles of Narnia series has seven books. One is required but all are recommended

USE OF CANVAS

Canvas will be used to aid communication and delivery of extemporaneous and other content as the semester progresses. We may also utilize the Discussion Board to extend our in-class discussions. Participation in Canvas does not supplant course requirements for attendance or class participation. Therefore, while access to and use of Canvas is required for this course, it should not be seen as a surrogate for class attendance or other course requirements. Also, please keep the following in mind:

- All discussion posts should be scholarly in nature and respectful of colleagues.
- Students are expected to check the Announcements section of Canvas each week beginning one week before the start of the course.
- Students must keep their e-mail address current in Genisys in order to receive communications from Canvas and the instructor. Students are expected to check their Regent e-mail daily to ensure timely receipt of messages from the professor.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance is required in order to complete this course. Students failing to attend a minimum number of campus class meetings will automatically fail the course unless arrangement is made with the professor to take an “Incomplete” grade in order to complete the course at a later date in accordance with University policy (see student handbook for more information about withdrawing from a course or the University or for incomplete grades). To prevent automatic failure of a course, the minimum class attendance is as follows:

For a 5-day Modular (Intensive) course: Must attend all 5 days of campus class meetings.

Note: International students should consult the [Office of International Student Services](#) for how immigration status may be impacted if you fail to meet attendance requirements for this course. All students should consult the [Financial Aid office](#) for information on how their funding may be impacted as well. International students should consult the [Office of International Student Services](#) before registering for a Distance or Modular course.

In addition, the following attendance requirement applies to this course: You are expected to attend all classes.

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for Regent University to suspend normal operations. During this time, Regent University may opt to continue delivery of traditional classroom instruction using the Canvas Course Management System. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the course Canvas site in the event of campus closure.

SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise instructed, all assignments for this course must be submitted via the “Assignment Link” found in Canvas. All files should be submitted using the following naming convention:

YourName_AssignmentName (e.g. John Smith_Essay 1)

Papers should be in MS Word format (.docx) compliant with the **APA** writing style guide.

Unless otherwise stated in Canvas, no assignment will be accepted if submitted via any method other than Canvas.. It is recommended that students give themselves a buffer of time before the deadline to allow for trouble-shooting should your upload attempt fail. Students should look at the assignment submission page to verify that the submission was successful.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted without substantial lowering of your grade.

NOTE: Technical difficulties when submitting to Canvas will not be accepted unless documented by the IT Help Desk. The IT Help Desk is your first point of contact for problems with Canvas. Deadline extensions will be allowed only when a system issue occurring on Canvas’s side is documented by Regent University IT department.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Course grades will be based on the completion of class assignments and on class participation. Because of the brief and intense nature of this course, it is critical that all assignments be completed on time. Course assignments are discussed below.

- A. All required reading must be completed and “digested” before the class period they are due. Because this class meets at Oxford, England, for only seven days, **you need to read the required texts before the on-campus portion of the class begins at Oxford and complete the book contemplation questions.** Each week, two questions will be posted regarding one of the assigned books that you are to answer in the Discussion Forum section of Canvas.
- B. Each student will make respond to two contemplation questions during the first six weeks of classes by posting online responses to each question. These responses are due each Saturday during the first six weeks of the class (May 15, 23, 30, June 6, 13, 20).
- C. Each student will create a powerpoint presentation of one of the C.S. Lewis books assigned to them and will give an oral presentation based on their summarizing and analyzing this C.S. Lewis. The powerpoint slides will need to be posted online and will need to be presented to the whole class orally in Oxford. Each student will be given 20-30 minutes of allotted time for their presentation. Your instructors will assign your class presentation times in Oxford. The powerpoint presentation should be posted online in Canvas no later than June 20.
- D. Each student will create a Screwtape blog, mimicking Lewis’ style in his work, *Screwtape Letters*. The blog will be a senior devil writing to a junior devil, just as Uncle Screwtape wrote to his nephew Wormwood. The professors will create a thread on Canvas for this assignment to be turned in. Undergraduate students are required to write at least two separate blogs, M.A. students 3 blogs, and Ph.D. students 4 blogs. A link will be provided in the Assignments section of Canvas where you can upload your blogs or the online links to your blogs. This assignment is due on July 11.
- D. Each student must write a final academic paper on any subject related to C.S. Lewis and communication approved by one of your instructors. This paper must be posted in Canvas by the end of the day on August 8. Below are the paper requirements for undergraduate, MA, and Ph.D. students.
 1. COM 485 students: 10-12 pages, including 10-12 academic references.
 2. COM 685 students: 13-15 pages, including 13-15 academic references.
 3. COM 785 students: 18-25 pages, including 18-25 academic references.

All papers must follow the guidelines stated below:

1. 12-pt Times Roman font, double-spaced throughout, standard 1-inch margins
2. Follow the APA Style Manual, 7th ed., or the Chicago Style Manual, 18th ed.
3. Short summary: 150-250 words
4. Introduction: 5-10 percent of paper
5. Body of paper: 80-90 percent of paper
6. Conclusion: 5-10 percent of paper
7. Scholarly academic style (see the academic journal articles on Lewis)

A link will be provided in the Assignments section of Canvas to upload your final paper.

Course Evaluation:

Book contemplation questions	120 points (12%)
Assigned book powerpoint presentation	100 points (10%)
Class discussion and participation, Oxford	100 points (10%)
Oral book presentation in Oxford	180 points (18%)
Screwtape blogs	200 points (20%)
Final C. S. Lewis paper	300 points (30%)

Total Score	1000 points
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Grading Rubric

Each of the assignments will receive a grade based on the above criteria. The assignments will be weighted as the percentages indicate. Final grades will follow the grading scale below.

Final Grade	Total Score (based on 1000 pts)	Quality Points (GPA factor)
A	930-1000	4.00
A-	900-929	3.67
B+	870-899	3.33
B	830-869	3.00
B-	800-829	2.67
C+	770-799	2.33
C	730-759	2.00
C-	700-729	1.67
D	Below 700	1.00

This grading scale may be lowered by the instructors but will not be raised.

Grading Philosophy

The grading scale on the following page may be lowered by the instructor but will not be raised. For example, if you earn 930 or more points you will receive an A as a final grade in this course, but you also might receive an A by earning 928 points if I decide to lower the grading scale. There is no guarantee that I will lower the scale but I may exercise that option. It is important to note that I never take away points when grading an assignment. You do not begin the course with 1000 points, you begin with 0 points and then you earn points as you complete your assignments. Thus you should never say to me “why did you take away (or subtract) 10 point, 15 points, or X number of points from that assignment.” I don’t do that. My philosophy is to give you points for each assignment according to the quality of your work. High quality work will naturally earn more points than average quality work, and average quality will earn more points than low quality work. In each assignment I will explain how to achieve the highest quality and then you must decide how much time and effort you need to invest to produce the quality you seek. Just make sure that you set as your minimum target to accrue 830 or more points to maintain a B average.

Incomplete Grades: Please note that incomplete grades are only granted for emergency medical needs or family emergencies if a student has completed 75 percent of the required coursework and must be initiated by the student and approved by the Chair of the Department of English and Communication Studies before the end of the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

The schedule below includes the due dates for all assignments in this course. A detailed schedule of our time in Oxford has been emailed to you by Margie Ackerman. It is recommended that you place our daily schedule in a convenient place and plan to take it with you to Oxford.

Prologue: May 11 to June 20 - In this distance portion of the class we will assign course readings and contemplation questions to help you reflect on the assigned readings.

Modular Week in Oxford, UK: June 21-27.

Epilogue: Jun 28-August 15.

May 11-16	Forum 1 Contemplation Questions based on <i>The Four Loves</i>
May 18-23	Forum 2 Contemplation Questions based on <i>Surprised by Joy</i>
May 25-30	Forum 3 Contemplation Questions based on <i>That Hideous Strength</i>
May 31- June 6	Forum 4 Contemplation Questions based on <i>Mere Christianity</i>
June 8-13	Forum 5 Contemplation Questions based on <i>The Screwtape Letters</i>
June 14-20	Forum 6 Contemplation Questions based on <i>The Great Divorce</i>

Instructions for these contemplations will be posted in the discussion forums in Canvas.

Assignment Due Dates

1. Contemplation forums Post by each Saturday in weeks 1-6
2. Powerpoint presentations: Post in Canvas by June 20
3. Oral presentations: Week of Oxford on-campus part of class
4. Screwtape blogs: Post in Canvas by July 11
5. Final paper: Post in Canvas by August 8

SECTION 3 – UNIVERSITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

This section covers policies related to academic integrity, accommodations, and University policies and procedures.

Christian Foundations of Academic Integrity

Biblical. Regent University affirms the Biblical commandment of “thou shalt not steal” (Ex. 20:15). In the context of academic integrity, this must be understood in the larger framework of “love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 22:39) as well as “render therefore unto Caesar what are Caesar’s; and unto God what are God’s” (Matt. 22:21). Paul writes from this framework of love and respect when he says, “Pay to all what is owed them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed” (Rom. 13:7). Each of these passages conveys the social obligation to respect the dignity of both the personhood and the property of those in society. Paul thus prescribes the biblical standard of honest, hard work as a key to respecting each other’s personhood and property. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul even provides counsel to those who have committed theft, stating, “Let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need” (4:28). As such, the God of the Bible mandates a higher life than the world requires, a life in which Christians participate in the love and dignity God holds for Himself as Father, Son, and Spirit. Indeed, even as Christ honors and acknowledges the will of his Father and the works of his Spirit, so should Christians honor and acknowledge the wills and works of those that provide opportunities to edify their minds and hearts with the knowledge and wisdom of sound scholarship. In doing so, Christians follow the biblical precept of integrity that is founded on love and respect and enables them to learn both from one another and those outside the faith.

Philosophical. Regent University also affirms the necessity of recognizing the classical virtues when deriving a foundation for academic integrity, particularly the virtue of diligence. The virtues dictate that researchers should consider morality first. In other words, one’s sense of expediency must always follow from that which is right, not from that which is convenient. Cicero comments that, in order to act morally, individuals must act in a manner that prevents themselves from being placed in a position where they must choose between convenience and morality, or, stated differently, into a position where they

“consider one thing to be right but not expedient, and another to be expedient but not right” (102). The virtues, therefore, require diligence in order to act morally upright—diligence to plan ahead, diligence to rationally consider the context of the moral situation, and diligence to act biblically not just ethically. For that which is ethical to the world is never necessarily moral before Christ. (Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *On Moral Obligations*. Trans. John Higginbotham. London: Faber and Faber LTD, 1967. Print.)

Legal. Finally, Regent University affirms the necessity of equipping students for the reality of functioning within a society bound by laws, including copyright laws. Paul speaks clearly about a Christian’s responsibility to abide by the laws of the land. He concludes that authority is ultimately from God, so believers must work within that God-ordained system (Rom. 13). Thus, in mastering the art and science of proper attribution of sources, students are participating in the Biblical tradition of exhibiting reverence for the divine institute of law as well as giving honor where honor is due.

Students should become familiar with *all* university policies as outlined in the [Student Handbook](#) including:

- Disability services
- Regent Honor Code (as an academic and Christian community, Regent University takes seriously the call for integrity and penalizes breaches of academic integrity.)
- Withdrawing from a course or the University
- Discipline policies

A link to the Student Handbook can also be found in Canvas’s “RU Resources” tab along with links to University Library, Student Services, University Bookstore, academic writing assistance resources, and more. Any student who violates the policies in the student handbook can be dismissed from the class by the course professor with approval from the Dean.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities The policy and intent of Regent University is to fully and completely comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, to the extent that they apply to the university. Regent University will not discriminate against an otherwise qualified student with a disability in the admissions process, or any academic activity or program, including student-oriented services.

Regent University will provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical and mental limitations of a qualified individual with a disability, unless to do so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the university, or unless it would fundamentally alter a degree or course requirement.

Qualified students must request reasonable accommodations for disabilities through the Disability Services Coordinator in Student Services.

For information about student records, privacy, and other University policies and procedures, students are directed to the most recent version of the Student Handbook located at <http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/docs/StudentHandbook.pdf>

This syllabus is subject to change without notice.

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Regent University
1000 Regent University Drive, Virginia Beach, VA, 23464
Phone (888) 718-1222
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