



# THE THIRD **EDUCATION** REVOLUTION

Home School to Church College



Editors :

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## Chapter 10

### **C.S. Lewis College:**

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As noted by others in this volume, from a Christian standpoint, the responsibility for education ultimately belongs to the family and, by extension, to the church, which nurtures and sustains faithful families. The secular state, however, has become an increasingly hostile supplier of this most essential service—the building up of the inner lives of our children.

A range of education is needed in a healthy society, but one particular need is often overlooked, especially in the church. *Who has the training to speak authoritatively of the entire sweep of Western civilization?*<sup>1</sup> Given the West's growing secularization, we increasingly need Christian leaders who are prepared to respond to challenges from the vantage of strong and broad knowledge of the roots and major turning points of the civilization that has shaped our world. C.S. Lewis College is intended to meet just this need. C.S. Lewis College will train Christian leaders who will have deep knowledge of the cultural treasures of Western civilization. In doing so, we will celebrate the 'transcendentals'—goodness, truth, and beauty—and teach the virtues, which are the heart of genuine character.

We are inspired by the life and legacy of C.S. Lewis. As a young man, Lewis enjoyed a remarkable classical education. He was renowned for his scholarly accomplishments. He was genial and jovial, and he loved the company of his

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<sup>1</sup> "Western Civilization" refers to the broad complex of cultures that have come together over the last three millennia to create Europe and the parts of the world that have been primarily impacted in their development by European nations and their cultures. Thus, it includes North and South America, Australia, and New Zealand, and to a lesser extent, South Africa, Israel, South Korea, Japan, The Philippines, and probably other states as well. This cultural tradition is also often referred to more briefly as "the West." "Civilization" refers to the elements of human life taken together (the culture of the people) that permit people to live together in large numbers. A civilization might be considered a mega-culture. The West has been formed from three distinct ancient roots: [1] the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, tracing back nearly 2,000 years before the time of Christ, and rooted in Palestine and the broader Middle East; [2] the ancient Greek civilization, some evidence for which reaches back to perhaps 1200 BC; and [3] the civilization growing out of ancient Rome, with traceable roots back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.

friends.<sup>2</sup> He enjoyed a good debate.<sup>3</sup> He was acclaimed for his literary achievements in the realm of imagination. And, last but most important, he was a joyful follower of Jesus Christ.

In honor of our namesake, we aim to found a robustly Christian college of the liberal arts, bringing young people **together** to carefully study and discuss classic texts; enjoy ideas and the arts together; debate the nature and source of goodness, truth, and beauty; develop the virtues and learn to practice hospitality; and worship the living God who is the source of all good things.

Covering not only theology, philosophy, literature, and history, but also mathematics and the natural sciences, the students will receive an education of high rigor and intellectual depth, preparing them to move into nearly any career they desire. Their ability to analyze the path of Western civilization through the lens of Christian worldview will yield graduates capable of providing strong leadership in both the Church as well as the broader culture. They can lead in the recovery of an authentically Christian thought life, worthy of sustained attention by a critical society, and bringing vitality to the Church. This is the vision that animates the founding of C.S. Lewis College.

*How did we get here?*

Our vision began in 1972, in the mind of Dr. J. Stanley Mattson. His concern (prescient in light of our present crisis) was the need to develop a response to the shrewd challenge presented by Harry Blamires in his 1963 book *The Christian Mind*. Blamires, a former student of Lewis's at Oxford, begins the book with this startling declaration: "*There is no longer a Christian mind*" (p. 3, emphasis added). To be sure, there is Christian worship, and Christian ministries, both at home and abroad. Blamires' point? Where serious scholars of any academic discipline meet, whether on campus, or at regional or national academic conferences, all the diverse (and sometimes radical) voices are to be found, and in abundance. Christian scholars, however, are nowhere to be seen, let alone heard. Blamires said that "to-day there is no public pool of discourse fed by Christianly committed thought on the world we live in" (p. 13).

That spring, Dr. Mattson convened a retreat at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Simsbury, CT, inviting friends and scholars who shared his concern. The consensus of this retreat was that Stan should, with the help of those gathered, launch an interdisciplinary, "merely Christian" community of higher

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<sup>2</sup> One of **Lewis's** closest friends, J. R. R. Tolkien, might never have published the most popular work of fiction of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, without Lewis's encouragement.

<sup>3</sup> For 12 years, from 1942 to 1954, Lewis served as the founding President of the Socratic Club, an Oxford University debating club dedicated to providing an open forum for considering intellectual challenges to Christian faith.

learning. At the time, he was a 36-year old Assistant Professor of American thought and culture at Gordon College, Wenham, MA. He would soon leave Gordon to begin the decades-long quest to found the institution that we now refer to as C.S. Lewis College.

In order to build toward the College, Dr. Mattson first founded the C.S. Lewis Foundation in 1986. By then a plan had emerged to found a college in which to model strategies to engage the secular world of ideas and arts from a robust and creative Christian perspective, following Lewis's example of 'friendly persuasion.' A year later, he and 20 others met for five days at St. Andrew's Priory in Southern California to develop the conceptual framework for the college. Among others, Christian philosopher Dallas Willard (University of Southern California) and Roman Catholic theologian (and noted Lewis expert) Paul Ford, participated.

Attendees hammered out the foundation's "mere Christian" statement of faith, which the college would share. They determined that the college would be a Christian "Great Books College," with a school of visual and performing arts, to be named in honor of Lewis.

Starting in 1988, the Foundation began producing its signature triennial Summer Institutes in Oxford and Cambridge, England, now known as the *Oxbridge* conferences (10 institutes, so far, and counting). These conferences have varied in length from nine to fourteen days. The first two were held in Oxford, the third was held in Cambridge, and all the rest have been held in both cities and universities (since Lewis lived and worked in both). These events have been intended to build a constituency for the founding of the College, as well as to model and test the curriculum, pedagogy, and ethos to be implemented in it.

From 2009-2011, a major effort was made to bring the College into operation as a residential, undergraduate school. Those efforts ultimately fell short, but an enormous amount of concrete planning was carried out, ready to be capitalized upon at a later date.

In 2013, the College was legally incorporated in the state of California as a Christian not-for-profit institution of higher education for the public benefit. In 2019, application was made to the IRS for 501(c)3 tax exempt status; receipt of this status is anticipated any day.

Over the years, many have contributed prayer, labor, and treasure to realize the vision of this college. We are deeply grateful for this generous support, and continue to seek funds to select and establish a campus, and commence operations. For now, it is our privilege to share the exciting vision for transformative education that has developed.

Ultimately, we envision both an undergraduate program and multiple graduate degree programs. We will first describe the undergraduate program, because it reveals the full scope and value of a Great Books education. We conclude with our vision for a graduate program in the humanities, which will be the first program we offer. We are now making concrete plans to initiate operations of the College with a low-residency Master of Arts degree in Humanities, described below.

### *The Undergraduate Program*

Five qualities characterize our model for undergraduate education, and reveal the philosophy of education which we believe will most strengthen the Church in our day.

#### **Distinctive 1: “Merely Christian”**

Following Lewis’ lead, the College will be, at its core, a “merely Christian” institution, celebrating the common commitment to Jesus Christ that is shared by the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Christian traditions. The College community—students, staff, faculty, trustees—will be drawn from all historic branches of Christian faith. College curriculum will also reflect this “mere Christian” commitment. This diversity within unity will enrich the community of faith and strengthen bonds between traditions while ensuring that we do not lose sight of the “cornerstone” of Christian thought—Jesus Christ.

#### **Distinctive 2: “Great Books”**

C.S. Lewis College will be a Great Books college. Four elements describe this concept:

(a) Instead of textbooks, students study the pivotal texts of Western civilization (and some non-Western classics)—the work of the great thinkers whose ideas shaped civilization.

(b) There will be no daily lectures. All classes will be discussion-based. Students will carefully study assigned readings, then come together in seminars and tutorials to thoughtfully discuss the significance of the readings.

(c) At the undergraduate level, there will be one major, Great Books. All students will read everything. Why? Think of the Western intellectual tradition as a “great conversation,” in which one author presents a new idea, and the next author replies to it, attempting to extend, elaborate, turn it to a new direction, or refute it in whole or part. In order to truly understand what is said, a student of the Great Books must “hear” the entire conversation, from beginning to end, without jumping in half-way or skipping parts. Thus, *all students will read everything.*

(d) There will be no departments, and no specialist teachers. Great Books college tutors are not there to profess specialized expertise, they are there to help students read difficult material. Tutors model how to learn. Further, a Great Books program treats the Western intellectual tradition as an organic whole, not separating the literature, science, theology, philosophy, history, and art from one another. Teachers, along with students, must study the whole tradition. While our faculty will come with standard academic specializations (physics, languages, music, mathematics, literature, philosophy, theology, etc., sharing their expertise), over the years, and with appropriate preparation along the way, *all teachers will teach everything*. This approach models active search for understanding, rather than passive reception, and celebrates the unity of truth and the interconnectedness of knowledge.

This Great Books approach to education honors students by placing upon them the primary responsibility for education. By preparing thoroughly *prior* to class, they will be able to discuss ideas in a well-considered, well-supported, and accurate manner. Students thus take on themselves the primary work of education. Growth comes best when students commit to the hard work of puzzling through difficult ideas, or at least grasping *why* they struggle to understand. Then seminar discussion requires students to clearly formulate their views, or to articulate clearly their lack of clarity, so others can help.

Those of us who are guiding the development of the College have taught by these methods in other programs, and have observed this philosophy of education in action in other Great Books colleges. When the Great Books method is fully adhered to—students responsible to study carefully, then discuss, classic works under guidance of the tutors—the result is a stunning education for students who are motivated to develop themselves through what we believe is the most demanding program of general education in the world.

**Distinctive 3: “Faculty-governed”**

Since our college is centered on a powerful course of instruction, we take care that the school is administered by those who teach that course. Some two thirds of its Executive Council, the chief administrative body, will consist of teaching faculty.

**Distinctive 4: “Broad cultural engagement”**

The College aims to prepare its graduates to engage the broader world of ideas and the arts. In pursuit of this, we plan to locate our campus close to a major secular university. This will enhance the academic experience by sharing intellectual, cultural, and artistic events, as well as shared conversation deriving from those interactions. For students to be effective agents of change, they must understand the culture as well as the books that helped create that culture.

For the students' later effectiveness as advocates of a Christian understanding, their study of the Great Books needs to be balanced with fluency in the cultural context of the present.

**Distinctive 5:** “*Visual and performing arts*”

Art is a key element of Western civilization. The College will address this key mode of understanding and communication in two ways. First, the primary Great Books degree program will include a year-long tutorial on the visual arts, which will cover both artistic creation as well as the historical/critical analysis of art. The aim of this special training is to assist our students in learning to “read” this vital element of culture.

Second, at the appropriate time, the College intends to establish a School of Visual and Performing Arts, offering bachelor's degrees in music, theatre, dance, visual arts, graphic design, and film. The general education component of these programs will consist of the Great Books, taught in the standard Great Books modality. The strong performance/studio orientation of these degrees will allow students to make progress in their respective art forms as they enjoy the foundation of Great Books learning. The performance/studio orientation of these degrees will allow students to layer artistic skills upon a foundation of Great Books learning. This focus on the creative arts is intended to help the Church gain a voice in this critical sphere.

Together these distinctives will produce graduates who understand, first, how to *learn*, and second, how to broadly *understand* Western civilization and its various trajectories (good and bad), in order to allow the healing truth of Christian faith to repair a culture which is in desperate need of reformation.

*Academic Order—Undergraduate Program*

The special nature of a Great Books college is seen in both the educational content and class structure.

The content of the College's instruction will consist of a Reading List, containing books and articles to be carefully studied over the course of the four-year program. The Reading List will be created by tutors of the college, but it will be similar to the reading lists of existing Great Books colleges and programs.<sup>4</sup> The greatest western authors will be studied: the Bible, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Pythagoras, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle,

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<sup>4</sup> Four small existing institutions are fully committed to Great Books content and pedagogy: St. John's College, with campuses in Annapolis, MD, and Santa Fe, NM, (founded in 1696, but Great Books program launched in 1937); Thomas Aquinas College, with its primary campus in Santa Paula, CA and a new campus in Northfield, MA, founded in 1971; Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts, Warner, NH, founded in 1972; and Gutenberg College, in Eugene, OR, founded in 1994. In addition, scores of US colleges and universities have Great Books programs as part of their curricular offerings.

Marcus Aurelius, Euclid, Galen, Ptolemy, Eusebius, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Augustine—not just theology, philosophy, literature, and history, but mathematics and natural sciences, up through Newton, Einstein, and non-Euclidean geometry (Lobachevsky). The students will also be creating and analyzing visual art, and will learn the structure of music by analyzing pieces by Bach and Mozart. By studying the best ideas and art in the civilization's history, our students will be challenged to become their best.

These texts will be studied and discussed in seminars, tutorials, and laboratories. In all formal class meetings, the rule will be to engage—as friends—in conversation, discussion, and debate concerning the assigned texts, according to a protocol of civility and seeking truth.

### Seminars

Seminars will meet once a week for three hours, every semester, all four years. Seminars will include 17-20 students and 1 or 2 tutors. Every student will be enrolled in his or her year-appropriate seminar. It will be in these seminars that the broader, more sweeping readings will be discussed, synthesizing insights from the Bible, literature, philosophy, theology, history, and political and economic theory.

While the seminars will be conducted under the guidance of tutors, student discussion will be central. This is their opportunity to grapple with great ideas and try to make sense of them and their relevance in the modern world. Ideas will be offered, with supporting evidence from the text. Questions of interpretation will be raised and similarly grounded. Challenges will be made, and rebutted, all with evidence from the text. A delightful and educational interplay will arise between the students' soaring ideas sparked by the authors' genius, but as disciplined by the requirement that every contribution to the discussion be rooted in the text, and supported by evidence from the text.

The effect of reading such literature, read with respect and discussed with rigor, over four years will form minds in a superior educational experience.

### Tutorials

Tutorials are small groups (10-15 students with a single tutor), designed to facilitate the study of texts and material that require close, line-by-line examination. These classes will meet twice-weekly, for a total of three hours per week. The subjects studied will include theology/philosophy (worldview), mathematics, music, visual art, and languages. The worldview, mathematics, and languages tutorials will run throughout the four years; the music and visual arts tutorials will be limited to a single year each.



Tutorial classes allow students to demonstrate mastery of subjects requiring careful attention to detail and subtle reasoning. Often students will take turns going to the board to work through a mathematical proof, translate a sentence, realize a figured bass (music theory), or draw a diagram of the meaning latent in a paragraph. When one student gets stuck, others will offer help.

### Laboratories

These classes, meeting all four years, will be structured like tutorials and are designed to allow students to work through experimental ideas (reading key scientific texts) and activities that are critical to understanding the natural sciences. They will often involve the replication of key historical experiments.

### *Educational Objectives—undergraduate program*

C. S. Lewis College will seek to send forth graduates who are excited to be followers of Jesus Christ and called to engage the culture and the world in ways that are loving, redemptive, dynamic, winsome, and effective. To meet this calling, our graduates must be competent, wise, virtuous, learned, and imaginative. The College is intended to imbue graduates with six general qualities and capabilities:

**Objective #1: Vital intellectual/spiritual engagement of life:** The College's five distinctives combine to create an intense, focused educational experience in which collegiality and camaraderie will flourish around a core of Christian worship. To bring together keen students with dedicated faculty members, all carefully studying the greatest works that have ever been written, diligently struggling with and debating vital ideas will create a bracing intellectual atmosphere. Substantive conversations will no doubt flourish at meals, in the residence halls, and in the café at 11:00 pm after seminars (dozens of freshmen re-hashing their Plato reading!). This is what happens when intellectually alive students are given a common vocabulary and a shared reservoir of ideas and concepts by which, together, to come to terms with the world, especially in light of the challenge of integrating Christian faith throughout their life of thought. It is the over-arching objective of the College to nurture and instill in its students the passionate enjoyment of this vital intellectual and spiritual engagement, the drive to comprehend all within a Christian framework. It will nurture, stimulate, and support the growth of all the other objectives.

**Objective #2—Basic intellectual virtues:** Certain habits of the mind are critical to enabling one to perform capably in a wide array of professional settings, and becoming a dynamic, life-long learner. The College's Great Books program will lead the students to cultivate in their minds and souls the basic intellectual virtues, including the ability to:

- Engage in sharp analysis and rigorous reasoning;

- Read carefully and tenaciously;
- Craft subtle, sensitive interpretations;
- Grasp, assess, and evaluate comprehensive theories about important matters.

These basic virtues will help form a critical perspective on one's own views, the ability to subject one's own beliefs to objective reflection. This sense of perspective is what Socrates advocated when, according to Plato's *Apology*, he states that "the unexamined life is not worth living." Socrates' dictum may deserve careful scrutiny, itself, but clearly, Socrates assumes that there is objective truth related to the life one is living, and that that truth ought to be sought.

So C.S. Lewis College will cultivate basic virtues that equip students as critical thinkers. But make no mistake. The objective will not be merely to enjoy self-reflection, but to use the intellectual and moral freedom thus achieved to recognize and embrace what is true. Critical reflection that does not aim at the apprehension of truth is ultimately either solipsism or narcissism, intellectual failures all too common in the contemporary academy. Thus, the ability to challenge one's own beliefs is not about oneself, but rather about the discovery of that which is good, true, and beautiful. C.S. Lewis College will prepare students for the exciting task of fully examining all ideas in order to embrace truth.

Objective #3—Wide knowledge of the world: The College's program will, over the course of four years, yield students whose minds are well-furnished with:

- Knowledge of the sweep of ideas in the Western intellectual tradition, including not only theology, philosophy, literature, and history, but also key concepts and breakthroughs in the historical development of the Natural Sciences;
- Exposure to some of classic ideas from non-Western cultures;
- Appreciation of the role and history of art in various forms (music, drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture);
- Awareness of the diversity and richness of human experience and culture.

Objective #4—Communication skills: The curriculum will lead to the development of effective communications skills, in two most essential dimensions:

- Writing— Students will be taught to craft well-structured expository and argumentative essays;
- Oral communication— In every class, students will learn to articulate their views. After four years of explaining, arguing, defending, rebutting, and reformulating ideas, students will be adept at expressing their thoughts subtly and clearly.

Objective #5—Intellectual appetite: In approaching the authors of the Great Books with humility and respect (even those authors with whom one may largely disagree), our program will cultivate the essential virtues of learning (accuracy, honesty, diligence, humility, etc.) and the thirst for understanding. It will seek to instill a proper sense of wonder, a keen sense of curiosity, and a hunger for knowledge and wisdom.

Objective #6—Moral and spiritual virtues: Finally, there are the capstone moral and theological objectives that students will come to know, namely:

- The demands of goodness and justice;
- The virtues by which one lives well;
- The fabric of Christian faith, by which all the rest becomes truly intelligible, and by which faith we are enabled to achieve what is otherwise impossible;
- A life of virtue, animated by the Holy Spirit, forged in an intentional community overseen by the Office of Student Life, enabling the development of a full life that demonstrates the love of God, equipped to live effectively as followers of Jesus Christ in the contemporary world.

Our College motto, *Dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the company of friends*, will characterize the overall life of the College. It is truth that we are after, and nothing less; truth in the world of ideas, and truth in the fabric of our lives together.

But does this exciting program provide the basis for meaningful employment? Certainly. The scope and rigor of a Great Books education produces graduates possessing impressively wide knowledge, sharp analytical abilities, creativity, and well-honed writing and speaking skills. Most employers desire employees who are able to read carefully, figure things out, and communicate clearly. And perhaps most important, they want workers who are dedicated and who possess the personal discipline and character to make reliable, well-adjusted, honest, and diligent workers—employees who can be relied upon and who can work well with others. This well describes the persons who will be drawn to the study of the Great Books and persevere in the program, mastering requisite skills and virtues that make them highly desirable employees. They will also find themselves to be effective in more specialized studies. Further, their consequent work within specialized fields, whether as teachers or computer programmers or managers, will be all the more valuable by virtue of their having acquired such a powerful liberal arts education.

*Why is C.S. Lewis College needed?*

There are several reasons why the Great Books curriculum is desperately needed. First, our culture is in danger of losing a vision for the whole. Our universities and colleges have become so good at creating specializations that

we have begun to lose the ability to see the big picture, to address the big questions of life that can only be meaningfully examined from a truly integrated approach to serious learning.

Second, our increasing specialization has made it very difficult for educated people to speak to one another from within the “silos” of their separate domains of learning. This loss of effective communication cripples the society in addressing problems.

Third, if a civilization has lost its way, only those who are schooled in its entire path are likely to discern this effectively. Even more, solutions for problems are likely to be heard and heeded only if those offering the solutions “speak the language” of the civilization in terms that it will understand.

Finally, to the extent that academic specialization maintains its grip on higher education, Christian faith will continue to be in eclipse within the culture. This is because the detailed, specialization-based criticisms of faith will continue to be heard, but the macro-level power of Christian faith as an explanatory account for the whole range of life and existence can never be deployed adequately within the “specialized” academy.

In light of these concerns, it is essential that *some* particularly strong students be trained in the breadth, richness, and rigor of the civilization’s whole range of learning. In short, we need those whose *specialization* is the *breadth* of the civilization’s learning. This is particularly critical from the standpoint of Christian faith, which shines like a priceless gem when seen from the vantage point of a comprehensive worldview.

### *Master of Arts in Humanities*

The Foundation has determined that the most effective way to commence the operations of the College is with a graduate degree, the Master of Arts in Humanities, offered through a low-residency program with internet-based enhancement.

For full-time students, this 48-unit degree will be a 25-month program. In six semesters spread over these 25 months, students will encounter a bracing list of classic readings, spread across the entire sweep of Western civilization, in the areas of theology, philosophy, history, literature, and the arts:

## Reading List (tentative)

### Semester 1

Aeschylus – *The Oresteia*  
Bible – *Deuteronomy, Mark*  
Augustine – *The Confessions, The Trinity*  
Plato – *Euthyphro, Apology*  
Aristotle – *On the Soul*  
Aurelius – *The Meditations*  
Homer – *The Odyssey*  
Plato – *The Republic*  
Sophocles – *Oedipus the King*  
Aristotle – *Metaphysics, Poetics*  
Boethius – *The Consolation of Philosophy*  
Anselm – *Monologian, Proslogion, On Truth*

### Semester 2

Dante – *The Divine Comedy*  
Bible – *Genesis, Isaiah, Romans*  
Athanasius – *On the Incarnation*  
Bonaventure – *The Journey of the Mind to God*  
*Beowulf*  
Spenser – *The Faerie Queen*  
Shakespeare – *King Lear*  
Chaucer – *The Canterbury Tales*  
Descartes – *Meditations on First Philosophy*  
Hume – *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*  
Lewis – *The Great Divorce*

### Semester 3

Aristotle – *Ethics*  
Voltaire – *Candide*  
Shelley – *Frankenstein*  
Madison – *Declaration of Independence, The Constitution of the United States, Federalist Papers,*  
Kant – *Grounding for the Metaphysic of Morals*  
Mill – *Utilitarianism*

### Semester 4

Cervantes, *Don Quixote*  
Bible – *Jeremiah, John, Galatians, I Peter*  
Swift – *Gulliver's Travels*  
Lewis – *Miracles*  
Tocqueville – *Democracy in America*  
Herbert – *The Temple* (Selections)  
Austin – *Pride and Prejudice*  
Marx – *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*  
Dickens – *Tale of Two Cities*  
Dickinson – *The Complete Poems* (Selections)

Twain – *Huckleberry Finn*  
Ibsen – *A Doll's House*

#### Semester 5

Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*  
Bible – *Joshua, Judges*  
Maximus the Confessor – *Four Hundred Chapters on Love (selections)*  
Edwards – *The Nature of True Virtue*  
Shakespeare – *Henry V*  
Nietzsche – *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*  
Conrad – *Heart of Darkness*  
Nietzsche – *The Gay Science*  
Buber – *I and Thou*  
Freud – *Civilization and Its Discontents*  
Lewis – *The Abolition of Man*  
Habermas – *The Philosophical Discourse on Modernity*  
Solzhenitsyn – *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

#### Semester 6

O'Connor – *Wise Blood*  
T. S. Eliot – *Four Quartets*  
Beckett – *Waiting for Godot*  
Lewis – *Space Trilogy*  
Lewis – *Till We Have Faces*

The formal study of language will be integrated into this program. The details are still being finalized.

While this array of names and titles may seem overwhelming, it is good to remember that every work comes from a particular understanding of life and reality—a particular worldview. It is central to this program to understand ways of life, understandings of goodness, and visions of ultimate reality represented in each specific reading. In addition to the sheer intellectual and analytical skills students will develop as they read, digest, discuss, and understand these masterpieces, they will also progressively develop the ability to recognize conflicts within an age or between ages, recognize trends and advancements (or retrogressions) in thinking, note cultural turns or major deviations, and periods of reform. *This sort of study attunes students to the intertwining threads of the fabric of the culture.*

Such a program prepares students to become leaders. Graduates will recognize patterns, understand the origins of ideas, see the value of Christian faith within the fabric of Western civilization, articulate the value of freedom of speech, explain why belief in the inherent goodness of human nature is foolish, show how atheism undermines belief in objective morality, and challenge other popular intellectual errors.

Note that the Bible, as the greatest of the Great Books, is present throughout the program. It is God's true light, that illumines all else that we study. (It is also largely responsible for the West becoming the West.<sup>5</sup>) Those of us privileged to live in the "bright shadow"<sup>6</sup> of God's revelation cannot overestimate what we owe to him. It is our rational, academic duty, and our joy, to come to understand everything according to the knowledge and wisdom he grants us in his Word.

The program will be managed as befits an honors program for highly-motivated students. The College is committed to face-to-face encounters as ideal for quality education. Digital interaction can supplement classroom meetings, and we are grateful for modern conveniences. But there is no replacing face-to-face encounters between people in training students to fully appreciate goodness, truth, and beauty.

The program is called "low residency" because the total contact time is about 50% of the total "seat time" in a full-residency program. We actually think this intensive contact time is more efficient than regular, weekly class time, since the (essential) preparation guarantees that class time will be more effective, while the intensity of the week-long residencies compounds the learning that takes place. The low-residency structure will keep costs down while facilitating significant face-to-face education. While living at home, students will study independently, under the supervision of tutors, reading and writing papers, more than would be the case in a full-residency program.

Students will come together in special gatherings called "residencies," five in total over the 25 months of the program. Residencies will be held in carefully chosen locations, with ready opportunity for cultural events and for experiencing the natural surroundings.

The students will be organized in cohorts of 8 to 16, and ideally a cohort will be together throughout the program. Each of the five residencies will involve a week of intensive seminars, tutorials, worship services, artistic and cultural events, and excursions. This face-to-face contact will allow students to get to know each other well over two years. They will dine together, share cups of coffee, take bus rides to excursions, and chat in the dorms.

Between residencies, students will read the assigned material, electronically submit assignments as required, write papers, and meet with tutors online in individual sessions and synchronous class meetings (Zoom or similar). In addition to assigned meetings, we expect that students will engage regularly

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<sup>5</sup> See Mangalwadi, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> The phrase "bright shadow" is borrowed, with gratitude, from C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1955), p. 179.

with one another in study groups and other collegial contact—texting, emailing, or video conferencing.

A final significant component of the program is the Distinguished Lecture Series. Six times a year, a distinguished Christian scholar will be invited to address the entire College on a topic germane to the studies of the program and its setting in Western civilization, and the broader world. The lectures will be video-recorded and available for individual viewing, but there will also be a live, synchronous question-and-answer period for deeper probing of the subject. These lectures and Q & A sessions will be integrated into digital or face-to-face class sessions for enhanced understanding and evaluation of comprehension. This Distinguished Lecture Series will bring the power of world-class scholarship into a program primarily focused on the careful reading of difficult texts and the painstaking crafting of academic papers.

The M.A. in Humanities program of C.S. Lewis College will provide an academic experience for Christians who desire to understand themselves and our world better, as they become imbued with the virtues and values of a Christian education in pursuit of goodness, truth, and beauty. The Third Education Revolution will find one of its most willing partners in C.S. Lewis College. The College and its Master of Arts in Humanities program will develop believers who can reason carefully and come to understand the rich academic and cultural heritage of the West, a foundation which comes from the heart of Christ and his church.

### **Works cited**

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