

**PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
DM9332**

**The Theology of Evangelism
William J. Abraham**

Course Description

A critical examination of the contribution of St. Patrick, C.S. Lewis, and William J. Abraham to the theology of evangelism.

Aims

1. To provide a critical overview of the life and work of Patrick, Lewis, and Abraham with a view to developing a coherent theology of evangelism for today.
2. To enable students to think through the insights on evangelistic theory and practice that emerges in their encounter with representatives of Irish Christianity, past and present.

Pre-class Readings

Required Texts:

John B. Bury, *St. Patrick and his Place in History* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1905, 1998).

The Confession of St. Patrick; and The Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus, trans. By John Skinner (New York: Image Books, 1988).

Eusebius A. Stephanou, "The Charismata in the Early Church" (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1976). [Available as pdf]

C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*

Mere Christianity

Till we have Faces

Selected essays in *God in the Dock*

Part I # 1, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13, 19, 16, 22, 23,

Part II # 4, 8, 12, 14, 15,

Part III # 4

Austin Farrer, *Saving Belief* (New York: Moorehouse: 1964).

William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans, 1988).

Celtic Fire (Dallas: Highland Loch Press, 2013)

The Bible Beyond the Impasse (Dallas: Celtic Fire, 2013)

Shaking Hands with the Devil: The Intersection of Terrorism and Theology (Dallas: Highland Loch Press, 2013).

Pre-Class Assignments

In preparation for the course students will develop a series of critical reviews of the texts identified above. In each case students will provide: 1) an accurate, comprehensive summary of the text and 2) a critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the material presented. Within the critical evaluation, students should feel free to focus on a particular aspect of the work in question. At least one half of the review should be devoted to critical evaluation. The texts should be read in the order given above.

All reviews must be completed and in hand for the first session of the class. Students will bring copies of their reviews to other members of the course either in printed or virtual form each day when the material is relevant to the assigned figures in the schedule below.

Total written work should be no more than 30 pages. The written reviews should cover material related to St. Patrick, C.S. Lewis, and William J. Abraham. [*Saving Belief* by Farrer counts within the texts related to C. S. Lewis, given Lewis' hearty endorsement of this book.] [Note that it is not essential that students write on every piece of every author, although all authors are to be read prior to class time. Students are free to combine two authors in one review.]

Assignments During Seminar

During the formal class sessions we shall work as a single group, proceeding thorough the texts and the written reviews.

Post-Seminar Assignment

Write a 10-page paper gathering together their thoughts and insights on the encounter with Irish Christianity represented by their textual reading and their experience in Ireland.

Grades

Grades are numerical with an 80 required to meet the requirements of this course. The essays will be graded as one whole and will be counted toward 50% of the total grade. The quality of your participation in the group will count for 20% of your grade. The post-seminar project, due within 90 days after the end of the seminar, will count for 30%.

Class Schedule

June 16, 2014	9.00 to 12.00	Patrick 1
June 16, 2014	1.30 to 4.30 pm	Patrick 2

June 17, 2014	9.00 to 12.00	Lewis 1
June 17, 2014	1.30 to 4.30 pm	Lewis 2
June 18, 2014	9.00 to 12.00	Lewis 3
June 24, 2014	9.00 to 12.00	Abraham 1
June 25, 2014	9.00 to 12.00	Abraham 2
June 26, 2014	9.00 to 12.00	Abraham 3
June 27, 2014	9.00 to 12.00	Conclusion