



Honors Research Tutorials, 2007-2009

Grace in the Early Church (Drs. Chris Bounds & David Riggs)

This course is part of an ongoing research project attempting to elucidate how early Christians understood the concept of “grace.” By the advent of Christianity, “grace” (*gratia*, χάρις) already had a long social and literary history. By interpreting the works of ancient Christian authors (second-to-fifth centuries) within the context of their socio-cultural settings, we hope to discern how such authors (and the Christian congregations within which they worshipped) understood and employed “grace” and the degree to which their adoption of the Christian faith may (or may not) have prompted them to invest this concept with new meanings — or at least new nuances. In groups, students will assess particular early Christian writings in order to document and evaluate significant passages related to “grace” and to highlight the most prominent and interesting characteristics and themes that emerge from these texts.

Singleness in Britain’s Long-Eighteenth Century, 1688 – 1714 (Dr. Lisa Toland)

In this research tutorial, we will explore the experiences of single men and women in elite English culture between 1688 and 1815 considering through sermons, memoirs, letters, etiquette manuals, and contemporary novels how attitudes towards singleness were learned and lived by young men and women. We will examine the gulf between the contemporary ideal of marriage and the real experiences of “spinsters” and “bachelors” as demonstrated through these primary sources. Were single women isolated within society? What role did single men have within their wider family without children or wives? How did daily educational or social experiences with their peers either support or challenge their singleness?

Narnians, Hobbits, Tesseractites, and Vampires: The Nature, Structure, and Function of Mythopoeic Literature (Dr. Charles Bressler)

In this research tutorial, we will examine the literary structure and the social function of mythopoeic literature through the literary canons of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Madeline L’Engle, and Anne Rice. Through their texts, these authors construct a personal and collective mythology (their metanarrative) that supports and unifies their stories. By examining both the surface structure (the plot line) and the deep structure (the underlying interpretation) of multiple works of each author, we will establish a working definition of twentieth-century mythopoeic literature, including its formal literary history and structure. In addition, we will explore the following questions: What personal mythologies do the aforementioned authors develop in the deep structure of their texts? What elements of each author’s deep structure are particularly orthodox Christian in nature? Which historical or current literary theories can and should be applied to these authors’ texts? What is the place of such fiction in today’s academy?

The Religious and Social History of the 1960s (Dr. Todd Ream)

The 1960s proved to be a time of great upheaval. Institutions and forms of authority which were previously thought to be absolute in nature were challenged and, in some cases, overhauled. Some critics offer that these changes were indispensable for both the Church and society to come to terms with their true potential. Other critics contend that these changes were unnecessary and have thus irreparably harmed these arenas of our existence. By looking at both primary and secondary sources, we will evaluate these assessments of the 1960s and determine whether a third explanation of the religious and social history of the 1960s is necessary.

Justice unto All Peoples (Dr. Todd Ream)

The objective of this course is to help students think through how models of justice apply across various cultural groups. Readings concerning justice range from the ancient Greeks to our own modern or postmodern age. Complicating these understandings is the realization that we live in an era of globalization. Theories of justice must not only make sense within their particular culture of origin but must also speak across cultural lines. As the Body of Christ, the Christian Church is in a unique position to speak of justice and thus reconciliation and peace to all peoples. This course will focus on how the Church has or has not served as a bearer of justice to the native peoples of North America and Indiana in particular.