



**The Narrative of the Fall in Literature and Life**  
Weekly on Wednesdays, period five (11:45–12:35)  
Location: the Christian Study Center classroom  
for undergraduate and graduate students only  
Instructor: Dr. Richard V. Horner



This class will begin with a close reading of the narrative of the fall in Genesis chapter three, and then we will explore the ways that this narrative appears in literature and life. This will include a look at the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes as a Hebrew meditation on life in a fallen world and a look at the New Testament gospel account of the temptation of Jesus. We will then discuss C. S. Lewis' retelling of the story in *Perelandra* and consider John Milton's influential and extraordinary *Paradise Lost*. After spring break we will move from Milton to William Blake and from Blake to C. S. Lewis before concluding with Mary Daly, Albert Camus and Blaise Pascal. Students are not required to do any outside reading, but you will gain far more from this class by reading the works that we will be discussing in class. Copies of each will be available on the shelf at the top of the stairs in Pascal's Coffeehouse. Please do not remove them from the CSC.

Jan. 22 – Setting the stage – or Why are we still talking about Genesis 150 years after Darwin?  
(Genesis 1-2)

Jan. 29 – The narrative of the fall in Genesis (Genesis 3)

Feb. 5 – Ecclesiastes as a Hebrew meditation on life in a fallen world (Ecclesiastes)

Feb. 12 – The Gospels replay Eden in the temptation of Jesus (Mathew 4, Luke 4)

Feb. 19 – C. S. Lewis replays Eden on another world (*Perelandra*)

Feb. 26 – John Milton interprets and shapes the story (*Paradise Lost*)

[BREAK]

Mar. 12 – From John Milton to William Blake (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*)

Mar. 19 – From William Blake to C. S. Lewis (*The Great Divorce*)

Mar. 26 – Mary Daly exorcizes evil from Eve (*Beyond God the Father*)

Apr. 2 – Albert Camus finds the fall in each of us (*The Fall*)

Apr. 9 – And so does Blaise Pascal (*Pensées*)

**Optional readings – strongly suggested:**

- Genesis 1-3, Ecclesiastes 1-12, Matthew 4 and Luke 4, in The Holy Bible (RSV)
- C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra* and *The Great Divorce*
- John Milton, *Paradise Lost*
- William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*
- Mary Daly, "Exorcizing Evil from Eve" in *Beyond God the Father*
- Albert Camus, *The Fall (la Chute)*
- Blaise Pascal, sections vi – xiii in *Pensées*

## **Discussion sections**

Our fifty-minute class sessions will allow us to do little more than introduce the material that we will be discussing in class. Therefore, students are encouraged to sign up and attend smaller, weekly discussion sections that will meet in the Study Center classroom. The primary purpose of these sessions will be to allow for more student discussion and interaction with the material, but these sessions will also create space for exploring related issues and important tangents. Discussion sections are strictly optional but very much encouraged. I am especially looking forward to this extra time with students.

## **Discussion section options**

Wednesdays: period six (12:50-1:40 – immediately after class)

Fridays: period four (10:40 – 11:30)

## **Office hours**

I will hold office hours on Friday mornings during period three (9:35-10:25) in Pascal's Coffeehouse or in my office (depending on how hard it is to find a seat in Pascal's.)

## **Fringe benefits**

There are no tests or quizzes, and lunch is served weekly. (A small donation is appreciated.)

## **The instructor**

I am the Executive Director of the Christian Study Center of Gainesville (home to Pascal's Coffeehouse). My M.Div. is from Covenant Theological Seminary; my PhD from the University of Virginia, and my interests wander back and forth between biblical studies and modern, Western intellectual history. My doctoral work, done under the direction of Richard Rorty, focused on the parallels between French thought and the American pragmatists. More recent studies have focused on Blaise Pascal and his place in the philosophical discourse of modernity.

My wife April and I will celebrate our thirtieth anniversary this spring, and we are thankful to be the parents of three children: Rachel is a UF grad and is now an interior designer with the Tavistock architectural firm in Orlando; Ken is a UCF grad and is an engineer with CH2M Hill in Tampa; Jenna is in her final year as a painting major at UF and serves as a barista at Pascal's Coffeehouse. April is a psychiatric nurse and also provides home health care for Hospice. I am especially happy to be known as April's husband and as Rachel, Ken, and Jenna's dad.

## **The Christian Study Center of Gainesville**

The Study Center exists to encourage the thoughtful consideration of a Christian understanding of life and culture. Our lectures, panels, classes, reading groups, and other events explore the intellectual and cultural resources of the Christian tradition and seek to understand cultural change. While we are an independent study center, we are very pleased to work collaboratively with academic departments and centers of the University of Florida. We are also pleased to host Pascal's Coffeehouse as an embodiment of our desired way of being in the world and as a place of inquiry, study, conversation, friendship, and really fine espresso. Everyone is welcome at Pascal's as they are at this class and at all the events that the Study Center sponsors.