

SHADOWLANDS

Background: Set in the early 1950's in the university town of Oxford, England, *Shadowlands* powerfully portrays the poignant relationship between Oxford don C. S. Lewis and the feisty American poet Joy Gresham. Starring Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger, *Shadowlands* is a 1993 film by Academy Award-winning director Richard Attenborough.

Instructions: Where possible, take notes while watching the film. I will give you a few minutes at the end of each class period to solidify your notes over the day's viewing. The more you write during the allotted time, the better your final product will be, and the better grade you will receive.

Then, using your notes and recollections from the film, carefully compose a typed, double-spaced three-page essay (three full pages is the minimum) that incorporates responses to the following questions. (Note that these questions are not a "check list" to be answered "in order" in your paper. Rather, they provide the framework around which your paper will be constructed.)

This assignment will count 120 points toward your course grade (approximately 25% of your cumulative points thus far in the semester). Your completed essay will be due on Monday, October 22, at the beginning of class. (If you are absent that day, the paper is still due ☺.)

- Describe both Lewis' and Gresham's background and life experience up to the point in the film at which they first meet. Be sure to include any unique personality and character traits, life events, etc.
- How do the two levels of the problem of evil which James Sires addresses in the essay you read earlier (the theoretical and the practical level) function in this film and in the major characters' relationships with one another? (Major characters would include Jack, Joy, Warnie, Douglas, Christopher Riley, and Harry.)
- What do Jack and Joy learn about pain and suffering? What questions do they raise? How does Jack's perspective on pain change from the beginning to the end of the film? In what ways does it remain the same?
- One of Lewis' most well-known statements is "Pain is God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world." Include your personal assessment of and reflection on Lewis' statement. How does it fit into the overall context of the film? How does it fit into our study of Job?
- In the barn scene during the rain downpour, Joy tells Jack, "The pain then is part of the happiness now." At the conclusion of the film, Jack says, "The pain now is part of the happiness then." Explain what is meant by those statements & how they relate to each other.
- How do Jack's friends and family relate to his grief? What do you think of their response? How would you evaluate the exchange between Jack and Harry (Jack's clergy friend) at the funeral and afterwards?
- How does Jack help Douglas deal with his grief over the loss of his mother?
- How has watching this story contributed to your growing understanding and personal view of pain and suffering and the problem of evil?