“Stephenie Meyer’s life changed dramatically on June 2, 2003. The stay-at-home mother of three young sons woke up from a dream featuring seemingly real characters that she could not get out of her head.”\(^1\) The Twilight Saga was born.

**Course Description**

The Twilight Saga is a cultural phenomenon, rivaling that of Harry Potter and The DaVinci Code. Appealing to both males and females of all ages, Meyer has produced a saga that breaks down the barrier between generations and gives grandparents, parents, and children something to enjoy, share, and discuss. Over 70,000,000 copies of the novel have been sold and they have been published in 38 languages. Time magazine gives examples of the praise that has been given for the first novel in the series, Twilight:

- *New York Times* Editor’s Choice
- *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the Year
- An Amazon Best Book of the Decade...So Far
- An American Library Association Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults

As the most anticipated movie of 2010, Eclipse, based upon the third novel in the series, broke box office records and secured its spot in the all time hall of fame. During the opening weekend, the film made $83,637,242 in the USA. As of December, 2010, the film had grossed $693,431,751 worldwide with USA DVD sales of $145,489,553.\(^2\)

The number of weeks a novel is on bestselling lists, or a film is successful at the box office, does not prove the worth of a novel or film, or even indicate that the work is good from a literary perspective. The Twilight Saga is a page-turner. It’s a good story and it’s told in an interesting way. Its worth, from a religious studies perspective, is in the use of religion that has now become a part of popular culture.

Asked if her views on religion affected her way of writing in The Twilight Saga, Meyer replied,

Really, not so much. Not consciously at all. When I'm writing the stories I'm just looking to have a good time. But I do think that because I'm a very religious person, it does tend to come out somewhat in the books, although always unconsciously.

This is almost hard to believe since she begins the saga with a quote from the Bible, uses stories from the Bible as illustrations, has characters discuss belief and non-belief, faith, heaven, hell, angels, demons, miracles, the Ten Commandments, prayer, immortality, and a dominate theme throughout the saga, the soul.

The objective of this course is to use the novels, and the films based upon the novels, as a way to learn more about these religious topics that appear in the work.

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\(^1\) [www.stepheniemeyer.com](http://www.stepheniemeyer.com)

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. understand the historical and religious significance of vampires and werewolves in history, religion, and popular culture;
2. discuss the concepts of the soul as understood in various philosophical and religious thought;
3. understand the Biblical sources used in the novels;
4. be beginning to comprehend the concepts of heaven, hell, angels, and demons;
5. discuss the theological importance of the Ten Commandments; and,
6. form an educated opinion about the use of religious concepts used in *The Twilight Saga*.

Secondary Learning Outcomes

Although our main objective is to analyze religious information presented in *The Twilight Saga*, there are several other outcomes that naturally flow from this:

1. to analyze data, and to reach and form opinions, about religious matters based upon reliable sources; and,
2. to develop an awareness of the problems involved in obtaining reliable sources when doing religious studies research.

Textbooks

Required John Granger’s *Spotlight: A Close-up Look at the Artistry and Meaning of Stephenie Meyer’s Twilight Saga*


The films based upon the novels will also be treated as texts.

Course Oddities and Requirements

1. Class attendance is mandatory. The university attendance policy will be followed and your grade will be lowered by 5 pts. (1/2 of a letter grade) for each class you miss over the allowed amount. For a course that meets once a week, this is 1½ classes. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for the material that was covered.
2. In following the phenomenon initiated by Meyer and *Twilight* fans, the class will be divided up into two teams (Team Edward and Team Jacob).
3. Each student will research one item to be presented to the class. You will be given an information sheet and a choice of items to choose from at the second class. A bibliography of works consulted (minimum of four) will be submitted to the Professor. You must use scholarly works!
4. It is assumed that because you have registered for this course you are an inquisitive student who has a thirst for knowledge, a desire for truth, and are motivated to study and learn. You are expected to do all of the assignments, to think theologically, and to contribute to class discussions.
5. There will be an occasional unannounced quiz to be sure that you are motivated to learn the material and have completed the assignments.
Grading

Your grade will consist of your research item (15%), 3 tests (20% each = 60%), class participation (2%) and pop quizzes (5%), and the exam (20%). The grading scale is: A+ = 100; A= 95; B+ = 88-89; B = 85; C+ = 78-79; C = 75; D+ = 68-69; D = 65; F = 59-0.

Extra Credit Opportunity: First, to go http://listgeeks.com and sign up. Listgeeks is a brand-new social network for dynamically creating, sharing and comparing lists of things. You can check out this brief video, which will give you a better idea of how to quickly get started once you’re signed up: http://www.vimeo.com/listgeeks/intro.

You will need to make two list - 1 pt. for a list about “Best Things about the Twilight Saga” or “Worst Things about the Twilight Saga” and 1 pt. for a list “Best Things About the Univ. of S. C.” My user id is googleprof – you can search for me and make your list by clicking from my lists. Be sure to email me after you’ve registered to send me your user name so I can give you credit.

Please note: The following Course Outline is not written in stone. It is subject to change should students want to spend more time on a topic or should the Professor discover new information that would benefit students’ education.

You should have received an email in June asking that you read Twilight before the beginning of the semester; it will be assumed that you did. If you did not, you will need to read quickly! It will not be enough to assume you know the novels if you have read them in the past. You are reading now looking specifically for religious motifs.

The Twilight Saga
Course Outline and Assignments

Course Introduction
Assignment of teams
Who is Stephenie Meyer?
The Twilight Saga titles and symbols
The Characters
Recognizing the Bible and religious motifs
Genesis 2:17 & 3:22-24 (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil)
Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18-24, 3:20 (Eve)
The Soul

Assignment for next class:
Read Twilight if you haven't already
Read Granger Ch. 5 “Twilight as the Work of a Mormon Artist” and Ch. 6 “Twilight as the Work of a Mormon Apologist”
Vampires
Hebrew Estrie
Rev. Montague Summers
Rousseau
History Channel *Vampire Secrets*
Werewolves/Shape Changers
Genesis 6:1 – 9:17 (Noah and the Ark)
Isaiah 11:6 & 65:25 (the lion and the lamb)
Choice of research items

Assignment for next class:
Finish reading *Twilight* if you haven’t already
Read Granger Ch. 7 “Twilight a the Work of a Mormon Apostate”

View *Twilight*
Discussion: novel vs. film

Assignment for next class:
Test on *Twilight*, Granger, and all material covered in class.

Test
The Soul in *Twilight*

Assignment for next class:
Begin reading *New Moon*
Read Granger Preface “Why We Love Bella”

Heaven – student presentations
Heaven in Judaism
Heaven in Christianity
Heaven in Pop Culture

Hell – student presentations
Hell in Judaism
Hell in Christianity
Hell in Pop Culture

Angels – student presentations
What is an angel?
Angels in Pop Culture

Demons – student presentation
Visions and Dreams
Pagan god of beauty
Immortality
Acts 20:35
Suicide
Faith, God, religion, Lutheran, Worship
St. Marcus Day
Rosary/Cross

Assignment for next class:
Continue reading *New Moon*
Read Granger Ch. 1 “The Surface Layer of Meaning”

View *New Moon*
Novel vs. Film

Assignment for next class:
Read Roger Ebert’s review at
Test on *New Moon*

Test
The Soul in *New Moon*

Assignment for next class:
Begin reading *Eclipse*
Read Granger Ch. 2 “The Moral Layer of Meaning”

Supernatural
Miracles – Student presentations
What is a miracle?
Contemporary uses of “miracle”

The Ten Commandments
I Kings 3:16-28 – Solomon and the two women

Assignment for next class:
Continue reading *Eclipse*

View *Eclipse*
Novel vs. Film

Assignment for next class:
Test on *Eclipse*
Assignment for next class:
Begin reading *Breaking Dawn*
Read Granger, Ch. 3 “The Allegorical Layer of Meaning”

Meyers vs. other works in popular culture
Living in sin
Sex and the Twilight Saga
Omniscience
Devout people
Religious devotion
The wedding
The birth
Christmas
The other side of death
Bearing false witness
The Soul in *Breaking Dawn*

Assignment for next class:
Continue reading *Breaking Dawn*
Read Granger Ch. 4 “The Anagogical Layer of Meaning”

Analyzing the Twilight Characters
Midnight Sun and “The Prodigal Son”
Prayer (T421; BD421)

Assignment: Finish reading *Breaking Dawn*

View *Breaking Dawn*
Novel vs. Film

Assignment: Finish reading *Breaking Dawn*
Read Granger Conclusion to Part I “The Meanings of the Breaking Dawn Finale”

View the PowerPoint Lecture posted on Blackboard
The importance of the soul in *The Twilight Saga*
Overview of the Soul (from Egyptian mythology to today)

**Final Exam**
Your exam is a test on *Breaking Dawn* and the concept of the Soul (accumulative).