

## **Apocalypse: Christian Movements and the End of Time (01:840:305:01)**

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Office hours:

Tuesday, 12–1:00, 5:30–7  
and by appointment

Rutgers University, Spring 2013  
Loree 131  
T/Th 2:15–3:35

### **Course Description**

From the book of Revelation to recent whispers about the year 2012, many leaders and texts speak about a coming time of great violence, upheaval, and judgment. The course treats Christian apocalypticism in ancient, Medieval, and contemporary contexts. Drawing on social scientific and literary approaches such as those developed by Leon Festinger, Peter Worsely, and Frank Kermode, the course treats Jewish apocalyptic movement associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline Christianity, Medieval apocalypticism surrounding the Crusades, and contemporary evangelical forms of Christianity such as those related to the Left Behind series of Christian thrillers. One goal will be to test certain theories of apocalypticism and millenarianism in these different cases; another will be to situate these texts and movements within relevant historical, social, and literary contexts.

### **Course Learning Goals**

This course will fulfill goals for the following writing intensive core requirements:

- a. (s2) Students will work at revision and peer-review of their writing in 3 ways: 1) in collectively producing and editing an analysis of a film's use of Biblical traditions; 2) by engaging in peer editing of a short 8-10 page paper draft 3) in responding to the instructor's comments on their paper-draft. These assignments will teach students to respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers and the instructor through successive drafts and revision.
- b. The daily reading responses, writing assignments, and group-work will teach students to communicate effectively in modes appropriate to the study of religion and apocalyptic movements and literature in particular.
- c. The midterm, final, and writing assignments will teach students to evaluate and critically assess sources for apocalyptic movements and literature and use appropriate conventions of attribution and citation.
- d. The midterm, final, and writing assignments focus on teaching students to analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

### **Requirements for the Course:**

1. Attendance: regular attendance and participation is a significant part of your grade. In the case of illness or emergency, please inform the instructor as soon as possible that you will not be able to attend class. In the case of more long-term illnesses or other issues, please provide a note from a health-care provider, or, if appropriate, from a dean. More than three unexcused absences will result in a zero grade for attendance.
2. Reading responses: for every class, students will complete a reading response for the assigned readings, post it to Sakai before class begins, and come to class ready to facilitate discussion. Responses should normally be at least 100 words and include 1 discussion question. The reading responses will be graded based on whether or not it shows knowledge of the assigned readings; the lowest 2 grades will be dropped. If you miss class due to illness or emergency, you may submit the reading assignment to me directly via e-mail.
3. Exams: A mid-term and a final exam covering the second half of the course. The final is scheduled for Monday, May 13, from 8:00–11:00 am.

4. Paper: An 6–8 page paper on a topic to be selected by the student, due on the last day of the semester (5/6). You must also provide a draft of the paper in April and work with other students in draft reading groups.

Assignments will be weighted roughly as follows:

- a. Midterm 25%
- b. Final 25%
- c. Paper 25% (1<sup>st</sup> draft counts for 5%, to be graded mainly on effort)
- d. Reading Responses 15%
- e. Attendance and participation 10%

Books required for purchase:

*Harper Collins Study Bible*, ed. Harold W. Attridge  
Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*  
Festinger, et al. *When Prophecy Fails*

### Introduction to the Course

Tues 1/22 Introduction to the Course

Thurs 1/24 Screening: *The Late, Great Planet Earth*  
*Students must complete a group activity analyzing the presentation of the Bible in this film using the discussion forum on Sakai, to be completed by Sunday, 1/27 by 9 pm. You must post a (minimum) 200-word response to the film in the forum and respond to at least two other posts.*

### Part I: Apocalypticism and Millenarianism: Social Scientific Approaches

Tues 1/29 Charismatic and Other Forms of Authority  
Max Weber, “Types of Authority,” 329–373 from *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Sakai)

Thurs 1/31 Cargo Cults and Charismatic Movements  
Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, ix–xxxix; 11–31 (Sakai)

Tues 2/5 Cargo Cults  
Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, 32–93; 183–194 (Sakai)

Thurs 2/7 Cargo Cults  
Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, 221–56 (Sakai)  
K. Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth*, 3–14

Tues 2/12 Apocalypse, Crisis, and Global Capitalism  
Comaroff and Comaroff, “Millennial Capitalism: First thoughts on a Second Coming,” *Public Culture* 12 (2000) 291–343 (Sakai)

### Part II: Ancient Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism: Historical Approaches

Thurs 2/14 Jewish Apocalyptic Literature: 1 Enoch  
1 Enoch 1–16 (*The Book of the Watchers*)  
Genesis 1–6  
*Theogony* (selections, Sakai)

- Tues 2/19 Jewish Apocalyptic Literature: Daniel  
Daniel 7–12 (also read the introduction to Daniel in your study Bibles)  
*The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 98–115 (Sakai)
- Thurs 2/21 An Apocalyptic Sect of Judaism  
*War Scroll* (Sakai)  
*Rule of the Community* (selections, Sakai)  
Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 1–11 (Sakai)
- Tues 2/28 An Apocalyptic Type of Judaism: Paul and Earliest Christianity  
1 Thessalonians; 1 Corinthians  
Stowers, “What is Pauline Participation?” 1–15 (Sakai)
- Thurs 2/28 Apocalyptic Thought in the Gospels  
Gospel of Mark  
Selections, Gospel Parallels (Sakai)
- Tues 3/5 Book of Revelation  
Revelation, 1–16  
*Enuma Elish*, (selections, Sakai)
- Thurs 3/7 Revelation and Its Appropriation  
Rev 17–22  
Koester, “Interpreting the Mystery,” from *Revelation and the End of All Things*, 1–40 (Sakai)
- Tues 3/12 Midterm Exam

### **Part III: Medieval Christian Movements**

- Thurs 3/14 Introduction to the Crusades  
Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, “Introduction” and 19–36  
McGinn, *Visions of the End*, selections (Sakai)
- Tues 3/19 Spring Break, no class
- Thurs 3/21 Spring Break, no class
- Tues 3/26 Pseudo-Methodius and the Crusades  
*Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius* (Sakai)  
Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 37–108
- Thurs 3/28 Joachim of Fiore, the Joachites, and the Flagellants  
Joachim of Fiore (excerpts in McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 126–141; Sakai)  
Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 108–147  
  
1 Paragraph description of paper topic due in class.
- Tues 4/2 The Spiritual Libertines  
Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 148–197

#### **Part IV: Contemporary Apocalyptic Movements: Continuity and Change in Small-Scale Movements**

- Thurs 4/4 A Non-Christian Case: Marion Keech  
*When Prophecy Fails*, 7–134 (you may skim 50–134)
- Tues 4/9 A Non-Christian Case: Marion Keech  
*When Prophecy Fails*, 135–180
- Thurs 4/11 The Branch Davidians and Waco  
Hall, et al. *Apocalypse Observed*, 44–76 (Sakai)  
Faubion, *The Shadows and Lights of Waco*, 37–53 (Sakai)
- Tue 4/16 Ways of Knowing among the Branch Davidians  
*The Shadows and Lights of Waco*, 53–115 (Sakai)

#### **Part V: Evangelical Apocalypses in America**

- Thurs 4/18 Christian Apocalypse and Politics: Christian Zionism  
*Evangelicals and Israel*, 1–35  
  
*Paper draft due to working groups and Prof. Wasserman, 7 pm (send via e-mail)*
- Tues 4/23 Christian Apocalypse and Politics: Christian Zionism  
*Evangelicals and Israel*, 37–75  
  
*Responses to paper due to working groups and Prof. Wasserman (send via e-mail)*
- Thurs 4/25 Left Behind: In-class Screening; Online Project for Discussion of Reading  
In-class screening, Left Behind  
Frykholm, *Rapture Culture*, 13–37; 106–129  
  
*Students must post responses to the Frykholm reading using the discussion forum on Sakai, to be completed by Sunday, 4/28 by 9 pm. Instead of posting a standard reading response, post a (minimum) 100-word response to the reading in the forum and then read and respond to at least two other posts.*
- Tues 4/30 Psychological Approaches to Apocalypticism:  
Strozier, et al., *The Fundamentalist Mindset*, 11–43 (Sakai)  
Jim Jones, “Eternal Warfare: Violence on the Mind of American Apocalyptic Christianity,”  
in *The Fundamentalist Mindset*, 91–103 (Sakai)
- Thurs 5/2 Apocalypses and Narrative  
Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*, 3–31 (Sakai)

*Final papers due on 5/6, uploaded to Sakai by 5 pm; extensions granted in unusual circumstances and only with permission.*

*Final Exam: Monday, May 13, 8:00–11:00 am, in our normal meeting room.*