

Apocalypse Now?

Religious Movements and the End of Time

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Class Times: Tu/Fr 10:55AM-12:15PM
Class Location: HSB 206
Office Location: Loree Building 134
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1PM-3PM



Course Description

"It's the end of the world as we know it!" Those words have been shouted for thousands of years, and apocalyptic expectations continue to this day across the world. What, exactly, does the word "apocalypse" mean? How have different religious, social, and political movements envisioned apocalypses throughout history? What are the stakes involved in how people talk about the apocalypse? In this class, beginning with ancient "apocalyptic" texts from the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and ending with contemporary expectations of the end of time, we will consider these questions and more.

Required Books

- Matthew Avery Sutton, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-0674048362
- Alex Ross and Mark Waid, *Kingdom Come*. DC Comics, 2008. ISBN: 978-1401220341
- *Harper Collins Study Bible*. New York: HarperOne, 2006. ISBN: 9780-060786847 (Strongly Recommended)

Requirements for the Course

Blogging the Apocalypse

- Blog posts of 250-350 words, are due each week by end of the day Monday. Must cover at least one of the previous week's readings.
- Students must analyze the reading and make an argument about it. But can be creative (use memes, tweets, animated gifs, videos, BuzzFeed-style lists, etc.)
- Throughout each week, students must leave *short comments on at least 2 other student blogs*. Comments should engage arguments/ideas/content of the blog.
- There are 13 possible blog entries, and *you must do at least 10*.

Exams

- There are two sit-down written exams: one mid-term and one final.
- The exams will each consist of a series of essay questions.
- The essays will ask that you connect and synthesize major ideas from class with the readings.
- The Mid-Term is in class on Friday Oct. 21.
- The Final Exam is scheduled for December 23, 8AM-11AM.

Participation

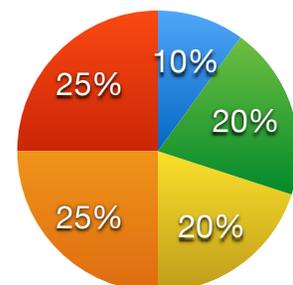
- Students must come to class each required Tuesday and Friday having completed all assigned readings or other outside activities for that day.
- Students should bring textbooks to class when readings from them were assigned for that day.
- Students must be attentive to lectures, active during all in-class activities, and full participants in class discussions.
- The use of laptops and cell phones is permitted only for class activities (note taking, electronic readings, etc.).

Final Paper

- Students will compose a 6-8 page argument-driven paper, focused on something related to "the Apocalypse."
- Students will email the professor their paper *Topic* by Friday, Sep 23.
- Students will then conduct research and email an *Annotated Bibliography* with at least 4 outside sources to the professor by Friday, Oct 14.
- Students will then compose a preliminary *Thesis and Outline* for the paper, emailed to the professor by Friday, Nov 4.
- Students will exchange papers for peer editing on Nov 18 (returned by Nov 29).
- The *Final Paper* must be turned in on Sakai by Tuesday, Dec 13.

Grading

- Attendance/Participation - 10%
- Mid-Term - 20%
- Final Exam - 20%
- Blogs - 25%
- Final Paper - 25%



Writing Intensive Core Requirements Fulfilled by this Course

- Students work on writing development, revision, and peer review in 3 ways: (a) scaffolded writing for final paper taking ideas through research, outlining, argumentation, and drafting with feedback from professor; (b) receiving peer feedback on draft of final paper; (c) providing peer feedback on another student's final paper.
- Weekly Blog Posts, final paper, exams, and class discussions will teach students methods of engaging with complex and foreign texts in ways fitting to the academic study of religion, apocalypticism, and academic engagement more broadly.
- 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.
- The midterm, final, and writing assignments focus on teaching students to analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

Course Schedule

Tuesday, September 6 - Introduction

- Introduction to Course

Friday, September 9 - Endings and Beginnings

- Genesis 1-6:9
- Daniel chapter 7
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11
- *American Apocalypse*, 1-7

Tuesday, September 13 - Beginnings

- (Online) *Enuma Elish*

Friday, September 16 - Beginnings

- Genesis chapters 1-12
- (Online) Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 1-25.

Tuesday, September 20 - Enoch

- (Online) 1 Enoch chapters 1-36

Friday, September 23 - Daniel and Ezra **(EMAIL PROFESSOR CHOICE OF TOPIC FOR FINAL PAPER)**

- Daniel chapters 7-12
- 2 Esdras chapters 3-14
- (Online) Martha Himmelfarb, "The Book of Daniel and the Kingdom of the Holy Ones" in *The Apocalypse: A Brief History*, 31-48.

Tuesday, September 27 - Qumran

- (Online) *Rule of the Community*

- (Online) *War Scroll* columns 1 and 10-19
- (Online) David Flusser, "The Dead Sea Sect and Its Worldview," in *Judaism of the Second Temple Period: Qumran and Apocalypticism*, 1-24.

Friday, September 30 - Paul

- 1 Thessalonians (whole letter)
- 1 Corinthians chapter 15
- 2 Corinthians chapter 12
- Galatians chapter 1
- (Online) Krister Stendahl, "Call Rather Than Conversion," in *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 7-23.

Tuesday, October 4 - Jesus and the Gospel of Mark

- The Gospel of Mark

Friday, October 7 - The Book of Revelation **(TURN IN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FINAL PAPER)**

- The Book of Revelation (aka, The Apocalypse of John)

Tuesday, October 11 - Revelation Redux

- (Online) Stephen D. Moore, "Revolting Revelations" in *God's Beauty Parlor*, 173-199.
- (Online) Barbara R. Rossing, "For the Healing of the World: Reading *Revelation* Ecologically," in *From Every People and Every Nation*, 165-182.

Friday, October 14 - Other Revelations

- (Online) *The Apocalypse of Peter*
- (Online) Martha Himmelfarb, "Tours of Paradise and Hell and the Hekhalot Texts," in *The Apocalypse: A Brief History*, 97-100.

Tuesday, October 18 - Review

- Review for Mid-Term Exam

Friday, October 21 - Mid-Term

- MID-TERM EXAM

Tuesday, October 25 - Classical Islam **(NO BLOG DUE)**

- (Online) Quran, Surah 10
- (Online) Said Amir Arjomand, "Islamic Apocalypticism in the Classic Period," *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* Vol 2, pp 238-283.

Friday, October 28 - Apocalyptic Terror **(TURN IN THESIS AND OUTLINE FOR FINAL PAPER)**

- (Online) Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic* (March 2015): <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>
- (Online) Jack M Jenkins, "What the Atlantic Gets Dangerously Wrong About ISIS and Islam," *ThinkProgress.com* (published 02-18-2015): <https://thinkprogress.org/what-the-atlantic-gets-dangerously-wrong-about-isis-and-islam-820a18946e97>

Tuesday, November 1 - Dispensationalism

- *American Apocalypse*, 8-47.

Friday, November 4 - Fundamentalism

- *American Apocalypse*, 79-113.

Tuesday, November 8 - Branch Davidians

- (Online) William L Pitts, "The Davidian Tradition," *The Council for the Societies for the Study of Religion Bulletin*, 22 no 4 (Nov 1993): 99-101.
- (Online) Kenneth G C Newport, "A Mad Man In Waco': David Koresh in Popular Perspective," in *The Branch Davidians of Waco: The History of an Apocalyptic Sect.* pp 1-19

Friday, November 11 - Branch Davidians

- (Online) Lee Quinby, "On Waco: A Monday Morning Wake-up Call," in *Anti-Apocalypse: Exercises in Genealogical Criticism*, 155-162.
- (Online) James Tabor, "The Waco Tragedy: An Autobiographical Account of One Attempt to Avert Disaster," in James R. Lewis, ed., *From the Ashes: Making Sense of Waco*, 13-22.

Tuesday, November 15 - Apocalyptic Culture Wars

- *American Apocalypse*, 114-147

Friday, November 18 - The Cold War **(Rough Draft of Final Paper Due to Professor and Fellow Student)**

- *American Apocalypse*, 293-325.

Tuesday, November 22 - Signs of the Times **(NO CLASS)**

- Watch: *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Online, link on Sakai)
- Read: *American Apocalypse*, 326-365

Friday, November 25 **(NO CLASS)**

Tuesday, November 29 - Rival Apocalypses **(Return Rough Draft Feedback)**

- *American Apocalypse*, 367-374.
- (Online) James Parker, "Our Zombies, Ourselves: Why We Can't Get the Undead Off our Brains," *The Atlantic* (April 2011)

Friday, December 2 - Zombie Apocalypse

- (Online) Elizabeth McAlister, "Slaves, Cannibals, and Infected Hyper-Whites: The Race and Religion of Zombies" *Anthropological Quarterly* 85 no 2 (2012): 457-486

Tuesday, December 6 - Kingdom Come

- Begin reading *Kingdom Come*

Friday, December 9 - Kingdom Come

- Finish reading *Kingdom Come*
- (Online) Robert M Price, "The Seven-Sealed Comic: The Book of Revelation in the Graphic Novel Kingdom Come" *Journal of Unification Studies* Vol. 13, 2012 - Pages 215-233.

Tuesday, December 13 **(FINAL PAPER DUE)**

- Review for Final Exam

Policies

Religious Holidays:

It is University policy (University Regulation on Attendance, Book 2, 2.47B, formerly 60.14f) to excuse without penalty students who are absent from class because of religious observance, and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation shall not be counted for purposes of reporting. *Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule.*

Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 mandate that reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities. If a student has a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact the instructor early in the semester so that she can provide or facilitate in providing necessary accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. The student must register with the Office of Disability Services. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Academic Integrity:

Students will be expected to adhere to the University policy on Academic Integrity (available online here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf), regarding plagiarism, cheating, academic sabotage, etc.

Student-Wellness Services:

Just In Case Web App

<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and lastly engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.