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Office Hours: Tues 4–5 and by appt.
(just ask!); at office or on CAC

Fall 2017
Tues, 12:35–3:35
Loree, 121 (DC)

Apocalypse: Millennial “Madness” and Myths of Utopia from Revelation to Jon Frum

From the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation to the Hidden Mahdi, the Taipei Rebellion, and the “Cargo Cults” of Micronesia, many figures, texts, and movements identify a time of transformation and divine judgment that will unfold on an all-encompassing world stage. Though many of these traditions claim to reveal images of “*the* apocalypse” or “*the* end,” this course seeks to understand these claims as products of diverse social-settings and cultural environments, not as evidence for a single over-arching religious event. One goal will be to analyze apocalypses as types of myths and to understand the interests, values, aspirations, and anxieties of their writers, editors, and audiences. Another will be understand the apocalyptic thought that runs through much of the Christian New Testament and to appreciate some of this ways that these texts, images, and motifs have been appropriated in new and changing contexts.

Requirements

1. Participation: regular attendance and participation is key to the success of this seminar. One of the main goals of the seminar is to create an ongoing discussion that is reflective, critical, informed, respectful, and generous, whether towards other students, the instructor, or the diverse subjects, texts, and scholars we will explore together during the semester. Graduate students will be also initiate/facilitate discussion of a particular reading twice during the semester. Preparation 15%; participation 15%
Attendance: 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.
2. Reading responses: for most classes, students will write a reading response for the assigned readings and *post it to Sakai before the class meeting (by 11:30 am)*. Reading responses should attempt to wrestle (as coherently as possible) with significant issues in the reading; you may think of them as first drafts of very short essays or as reading reflections and/or notes. Responses should normally run between 300–400 words for undergraduates; 500–600 for MA students. You may opt to explore issues raised in the prompts on Sakai but, in general, your posts should demonstrate a good-faith attempt to understand the readings, not to avoid or skim them. 20%
3. Final paper or Take-Home Exam: Undergraduate students may opt to complete a take-home essay exam or to write a paper that builds on one or more of the course readings (10–15 pages; Times New Roman, 12 pt., normal margins). Graduate students will write a longer research paper (20–25 pages; Times New Roman, 12 pt., normal margins) that explores materials of particular relevance for their area of study. Students who choose the final paper option must begin planning by early November, meet with the instructor to discuss the topic and plan, and submit an outline of this plan by early December. 30%
4. Presentations: Towards the end of the course, each student will choose a piece of literature, religious text, or film relevant to the study of apocalyptic thought and give a 10–15 presentation about what they take to be its most interesting features. Graduate students will also facilitate discussion of one of the assigned readings twice during the semester. 20%

****Plagiarism and cheating will be handled in accordance with university policy.** See <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#plagiarism>

One book is required for purchase: *The Harper Collins Study Bible* or the *Oxford Annotated Bible*

* In case of a system outage, you may contact me at my personal Gmail: wasserm1@gmail.com

- 10/31 Tues Revelation and the Early Christian Millennium
1. Revelation (again)
 2. K. Burrige, *New Heaven, New Earth*, 3–14
- 11/7 Tues Cargo Cults
1. Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, 11–48
 2. Comaroff and Comaroff, “Millennial Capitalism: First thoughts on a Second Coming,” *Public Culture* 12 (2000): 291–343
- 11/14 Tues Cargo? The Case of Jon Frum
1. Screen excerpts of W. Herzog, *Into the Inferno* (2016) on John Frum
 2. Paul Raffaele, “In John they Trust,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 2006
 3. J. Bonnemaïson, “John Frum People,” in *The Tree and the Canoe*, 220–40
 4. Joel Robbins, “On the Critique in Cargo and the Cargo in Critique: Toward a Comparative Anthropology of Critical Practice,” in *Cargo, Cult, and Culture Critique*, 242–59
- In-class presentations*
- 11/21 Tues The Millennium Meets the Bomb (no formal class-meeting)
1. Screen *Dr. Strangelove* (Kubrick, 1964) (at the department or the Douglas library)
 2. Read Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown*, xvii–11, 51–79
 3. Post reading responses to the online forums by the end of the normal class-period; respond to at least 3 of your peers by the end of the day.
- 11/28 Tues Jonestown
- D. Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown*, 80–128
- In-class presentations*
- 12/5 Tues Millenarianism and Evangelical Culture: Left Behind
1. Screen film from the *Left Behind* series
 2. *Left Behind* (excerpts of popular fiction)
 3. Frykholm, *Rapture Culture*, 3–37; 106–129
- In-class presentations*
- 12/12 Tues Evangelical Culture: From Apocalyptic Fiction to Christian Zionism
1. Frykholm, *Rapture Culture*, selections
 2. Spector, *Evangelical and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism* (selections)
- In-class presentations*
- 12/22 Weds *Final Papers (or Take-Home Exams) due Weds, Dec 22, uploaded to Sakai by 5 pm.*

Standards for Grading Student Participation in Class Discussions

A:
A student who receives an **A** for participation in discussion typically comes to every class with questions about the readings in mind. An **A** discussant engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others, and consistently elevates the level of discussion.

B:
A student who receives a **B** for participation in discussion typically does not always come to class with questions about the readings in mind. A **B** discussant waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some discussants in this category, while

courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.

C:
A student who receives a C for participation attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant, or an obstreperous one.

D:
A student who fails to attend regularly and prepare adequately for discussion risks the grade of **D**

Or even F

[These standards are adapted only slightly from those officially adopted by the Princeton University Department of History in 1998. They were authored primarily by Andrew Isenberg.]

Other Important links:

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 / www.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 / www.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/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. 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>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Scarlet Listeners

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

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