



REL 326: Apocalypse: Now and Then Spring 2016

Prof. Shayna Sheinfeld

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Course day/time: T/TH 9:40-11:10

Location: Olin 109

Office: Crounse 438

Office Hours: W/F 8:30–10am, T/Th 2:30–3:30pm and by appointment

Course Description and Goals

This course focuses on a popular genre of texts called “apocalypse,” produced in the early development of Judaism and Christianity. Texts ranging from the Persian period into the second century C.E. will be analyzed in order to explore the worldview called apocalypticism and the apocalyptic literature associated with it. The course emphasizes a close study of both biblical texts (Daniel, Revelation) and extra-biblical texts—e.g. portions of *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, Dead Sea Scrolls. Placing these texts within the larger social and historical narrative of early Judaism and early Christianity, we will discuss function, social setting, and defining features of the genre apocalypse as well as postulate about the worldview that might have produced such texts. The apocalyptic narratives found in these texts are foundational to understanding the development of Second Temple Judaism into both early Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism

While the apocalypse fell out of popularity after some time, there has been a recent renewal in the interest of the apocalypse, both as a modern secular construct (such as an environmental apocalypse) and as a religious construct (Mayan calendar predictions from 2011; Harold Camping’s failed prediction of Jesus’ second coming in 2011). An analysis of apocalyptic origins in Judaism and Christianity will contribute to an understanding of the elements of modern apocalypses and discourses around them. To that end, we will examine contemporary examples of apocalyptic language throughout the semester through a variety of media. In addition, a few apocalyptic groups throughout history will be highlighted, including the Heaven’s Gate community (1997), the Jewish denomination Chabad, and the Islamic group known as ISIS (or Daesh or ISIL) in American media.

Course Goals:

By the end of the course, a diligent student will be able to

- engage on a critical level with primary source texts from the Second Temple and early Christian periods
- offer a definition of the genre apocalypse as well as a critique of the limitations of genre as a category of analysis
- identify and differentiate between apocalypse, apocalypticism, and eschatology
- note potential social settings and functions of apocalypses in early Judaism and Christianity
- identify and describe contemporaneous apocalyptic groups or groups with apocalyptic elements
- give a succinct multi-media presentation on a variety of subjects related to the apocalypse/apocalyptic groups
- construct a public and academic social media identity and interact professionally with the public through this identity
- apply their knowledge in a critical manner about the origins of apocalypticism to contemporaneous examples of apocalyptic groups

Required Texts

- John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (JJC on course calendar)
- *Apocalyptic Literature, A Reader*, ed. Mitchell G. Reddish (AL on the course calendar)
- Other materials (posted on moodle)
- Access to a Hebrew Bible (HB), Apocrypha (apocrypha), and New Testament (NT). You may choose to access one online (biblegateway.com), but be sure to use one that uses the NRSV or the RSV translation. You will also need to bring **printed copies** to class when reading from Daniel, Maccabees, or any New Testament text. If you choose to buy a Bible, I recommend the HarperCollins Study Edition (my preferred choice) or the Oxford Annotated Bible, both of which are available in the bookstore (look under REL 110) and through online booksellers.

Course Expectations:

- This course will be a mixture of interactive lecture, discussion, and in-class active learning. You are expected to actively engage in *all* aspects of the class.
- Readings are listed in the course schedule according to the date they will be discussed. Be sure to **read and annotate** the assigned reading before coming to class and bring copies of the readings to class for reference.
- My expectation is that you will spend at least three hours preparing for each hour that you are in class. Look ahead at your readings, as some readings will take more time than others.
- Electronic Devices: Laptops, tablets, cell phones, and other electronic devices are NOT allowed and must be silenced and stored out of easy reach during class.

Assessment

Attendance and Participation:	10%
Mini-Apocalypse & Reflection	10%
Guest Speaker Response (2 x 10%)	20%
Says/Does Papers (8 total)	15%
End of the World in-class responses (2 x 5%)	10%
Midterm exam	15%
Final paper:	20%

Attendance and Participation: Attendance and participation are a necessary component of learning in this course. You are expected to attend each class session. You may miss up to 2 classes without penalty as per Centre policy; three or more missed classes unless excused (with missed work completed) will result in a letter grade reduction in the final grade. Participation will be marked on active engagement during class (including clear engagement with the readings) as well as other short assignments that will be given throughout the semester.

Mini-Apocalypse & Reflection: For class on Tuesday 2/9 you will prepare a 1-page mini-apocalypse based on the definition of apocalypse provided in Collins. The content of the apocalypse is open—please be creative! Funny, serious, contemporary, ancient, etc. content is all welcome. The only guidelines are that you 1) attempt to follow Collins' definition, 2) type up the paper, and 3) use proper grammar, spelling, and syntax. **Bring a hard copy of your apocalypse to class and be prepared to share/discuss it in class.** On Thursday 2/11 you will write up a 1-page reflection of the challenges of writing your apocalypse using Collins' definition. You may include material from our discussion on 2/9 in your reflection.

Guest Speaker Reflections: We will have four guest speakers during the course of the semester. Three of those speakers will also be giving convocations. You are required to attend two (2) of the three convocations. You should write a 1–2 page reflection on the speaker's content (in-class and/or convocation) and its relationship to apocalypses, apocalypticism, and/or eschatology. *You may write this reflection for any of the four guest speakers.* Note that only the first two will be graded. Guidelines will also be posted to moodle.

Convocations:

- “Heaven’s Gate: America’s UFO Religion,” Dr. Benjamin Zeller
Thursday, February 25, 7pm, Weisiger Theatre
- “Reading and Writing Scripture in New Religious Movements,” Dr. Eugene Gallagher
Wednesday, April 6, 7pm, Newlin Hall
- “Zombie Apocalypse: The World is (Always/Never) About to End,” Dr. Kelly Murphy
Tuesday, April 12, 7pm, Young 113

Says/Does Papers: On 8 of the 10 readings marked in the course calendar you will compose a 1-page formal written analysis of the reading and bring it to class. Late papers or papers submitted *in absentia* will not be accepted. If you opt to turn in more than 8 responses, you may drop your lowest score(s). Papers should be approximately 300-350 words in length, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Guidelines will also be posted to moodle. This assignment will be discussed in class.

- Primary Sources (marked **): For these sources you will write:
 - a. three sentences to describe the main points/topic, neutrally, of the primary source (i.e. “what it says”).
 - b. three sentences that describe the purpose/function of the topic within the text (i.e. “what it does”).
- Secondary Sources (marked ^^): For these sources you will describe:
 - a. The thesis of the article, stated in 1 sentence.
 - b. Three sentences to describe the main points/topic, neutrally, of the article (i.e. “what it says”)
 - c. Three sentences that describe the purpose/function of the topic within the article (i.e. “what it does”). Please be sure to include page numbers (inserted in parentheses).

End of the World in-class responses: You will be responsible for bringing two (2) newsworthy items relating to the end of the world/apocalypses to class. You will present their findings to the class, as well as connecting it with the materials we have covered thus far. While current news items are ideal, you are welcome to bring in something from any historical period and any religion and/or secular/environmental apocalyptic/eschatological references, *as long as it is something that has not yet been covered in class*. Presentations should take approximately 5 minutes and will take place at the beginning of class. Guidelines are available on moodle. **Sign-up will take place in class on Feb 11.**

Midterm Examination: The midterm exam will be a take-home exam. More details will be given closer to the date of the exam.

Final Paper: The final paper should be an original analysis of one or two primary sources and/or modern apocalyptic groups, and should clearly demonstrate a critical integration of both your own argument and secondary sources. Papers will be 8-10 pages in length; additional guidelines will be posted on moodle. I will also post paper topic suggestions, but you are welcome to address a question or interest that occurred to you at any point throughout the class. **Topics should be cleared with me by April 19.**

Additional Information:

Late Policy: All assignments are due at the start of class on the date specified on the syllabus unless otherwise noted. Late written assignments will be penalized by one full letter grade (10%) for each day the assignment is late, unless you contact me BEFORE the due date and documentation of the illness or emergency is provided.

Academic Honesty: Students are required to observe the honor code. Plagiarism—any attempt by a student to represent the work of another as one's own—will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, all of the following: copying the answers of another student on an examination, copying or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in any oral or written work without citing the appropriate source, and collaboration with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution. All instances of plagiarism will be dealt with according to university policy, no matter how minor.

Learning Challenges: Students who may need additional assistance due to learning differences or learning challenges are expected to see me as early as possible in the semester. I am willing to make accommodations whenever possible, but only if proper documentation has been provided *and you see me in advance*. If you need accommodations but are not certain how to find them, I can assist you by helping you reach the College's coordinators for disabilities, Dr. Mary Gulley (x5223) who will prepare a signed Accommodation Notice. Note that in any course the instructor must sign the back of the Accommodation Notice before any necessary accommodations can take effect.

Course Calendar:

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due Date
Thursday 2/4	Syllabus Assignment, Historical Overview, How to Read a Text	
Tuesday 2/9	History and Taxonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Apocalyptic Imagination</i>, 1-42 (JJC) • Due: 1-page Apocalypse
Thursday 2/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Enoch Literature: Book of the Watchers (<i>1 Enoch</i> 1–36) • Sign up for in-class responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 6:1–4 (HB) • AL 146–162 • JJC 43–59 • Due: Reflection on mini-Apocalypse
Tuesday 2/16	Early Enoch Literature: Animal Apocalypse (<i>1 Enoch</i> 85–90)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **AL 43–53 • JJC 59–79
Thursday 2/18	Daniel; Introduction to the Maccabean Revolt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **<i>Daniel in toto</i> (HB) • JJC 85–115
Tuesday 2/23	Social Settings of Apocalyptic Literature *Bring AL to class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I Maccabees (apocrypha) • II Maccabees (apocrypha) • “Jewish Apocalyptic Literature as Resistance Literature,” Anathea Portier-Young (moodle)
Thursday 2/25	Guest Lecture 1: Dr. B. Zeller, Heaven's Gate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBA
Tuesday 3/1 (cont. on nx page)	Dead Sea Scrolls I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **AL 224–240

Tuesday 3/1 (cont.)	Dead Sea Scrolls I (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JCC, 145–176 • Due: Zeller reflection
Thursday 3/3	Dead Sea Scrolls II: The Eschatological Banquet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Messianic Rule 1QSa (moodle) • Schiffman, “The Eschatological Banquet” (moodle)
Tuesday 3/8	Jesus and Eschatology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gospel of Matthew <i>in toto</i> (NT) • Mark 13 (NT) • 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 (NT) • JJC 256–268
Thursday 3/10	Revelation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **Revelation <i>in toto</i> (NT) • JJC 269–279
Tuesday 3/15	After the Destruction: 4 Ezra & 2 Baruch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **AL 61–96 • **AL 99–142 • JJC 194–225
Thursday 3/17	Later Christian Apocalypses: The Apocalypse of Peter & the Apocalypse of Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **AL 243–254 • **AL 291–325 • Mid-term Exam Assigned
Spring Break	March 19–27	
Tuesday 3/29	Guest Lecture 2: Dr. Matthew Pierce, Islamic Eschatology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading TBA • DUE: Mid-term Exam
Thursday 3/31	Themes: Messianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Messianism and Apocalypticism,” James C. VanderKam (moodle) • Due: Pierce Reflection
Tuesday 4/5	Themes: Ascent and Descent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ^“When Going on a Heavenly Journey, Travel Light and Dress Appropriately,” Carla Sulzbach (moodle)
Thursday 4/7	Guest Lecture 3: Dr. Gene Gallagher, Brand Davidians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading TBA
Tuesday 4/12	Guest Lecture 4: Dr. Kelly Murphy, Zombies I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Evolution of the Zombies: The Monster that Keeps Coming Back,” Shawn McIntosh (moodle) • Due: Gallagher Reflection
Thursday 4/14	Varieties of Modern Apocalypses I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ^“Apocalyptic America: Buying the End Time,” Robert H. von Thaden Jr. (moodle) • Due: Murphy Reflection
Tuesday 4/19	Varieties of Modern Apocalypses II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Apocalypticism in Contemporary Christianity,” Amy Johnson Frykholm (moodle)

Thursday 4/21 ¹	No class: Shaker Village Guided Field Trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Before going on the trip, spend some time exploring the history of the Shakers online</i> • Topics for Final Papers Due
Tuesday 4/26	Modern Judaism & Eschatology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ^^Michal Kravel-Tovi, “To see the invisible messiah: Messianic socialization in the wake of a failed prophecy in Chabad” (moodle)
Thursday 4/28	Apocalypticism and Popular Culture I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Apocalypticism and Popular Culture,” Lorenzo DiTommaso (moodle)
Tuesday 5/3	Apocalypticism and Popular Culture II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ^^“Revelatory Film: Apocalyptic Themes in Film and Cinematic Apocalypses” Matthew Rindge
Thursday 5/5	Environmental Apocalypse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Planet’s Apocalypse: The Rhetoric of Climate Change,” Ingrid Esther Lilly (moodle)
Tuesday 5/10	Your Favorite Apocalypse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in class discussion and reflection

Final papers due (note that we will meet during this time): Friday May 13, 8:30-11:30

¹ This class session will be made-up through our field trip to Shaker Village. Note that dates of the visit are pending and will be solidified closer to the trip. Any adjustments/updates to the syllabus will be discussed in class & a new version will be posted to moodle.