

MILLENNIUM SEMINAR

Rels A804-051

Rels A442-051

TR 4:55 – 6:10

Bobet 217

Dr. Catherine Wessinger

Bobet 406

office: 865-3182

wessing@loyno.edu

<http://www.loyno.edu/~wessing>

**OBJECTIVES:** To understand the diversity of religious patterns that scholars have termed millennialism, the expectation of an imminent transition to a collective state of salvation either earthly or heavenly. Significant millennial patterns include catastrophic millennialism (apocalypticism), progressive millennialism, and nativist millennial movements (which can be either catastrophic or progressive). Among millennial groups that become involved in violence, three types will be distinguished: assaulted millennial groups, fragile millennial groups, and revolutionary millennial groups. This study of millennialism will be cross-cultural with an emphasis on recent and contemporary movements.

Texts:

Stephen Hunt, ed., Christian Millenarianism: From the Early Church to Waco (Indiana University Press, 2001). HUNT

Daniel Wojcik, The End of the World As We Know It: Faith, Fatalism, and Apocalypse in America (New York University Press, 1997). WOJCIK

Catherine Wessinger, How the Millennium Comes Violently: From Jonestown to Heaven's Gate (Seven Bridges Press, 2000). WESSINGER on ERES (Ereserves)

Additional articles on Ereserves (ERES).

To get to Ereserves, go to <http://library.loyno.edu>; select reserves; select Electronic Reservations; select Wessinger. You will see a folder for Millennium Seminar. The chapters of WESSINGER in pdf format are located in a folder here.

T Jan. 13      Introductory Class  
Discuss objectives of class, syllabus, course requirements, basic terms.

R Jan. 15      Definition of Categories of Millennialism

HUNT: Stephen Hunt, "Introduction," 1-11; Malcolm B. Hamilton, "Sociological Dimensions of Christian Millenarianism," 12-25.  
WESSINGER: Jayne Seminare Docherty, "Foreword," x-xiii; "Introduction," 1-11.

- T Jan. 20     Introduction to American Millennialism  
WOJCIK: Chapter One, "Approaching Doomsday: The Contours of American Apocalyptic Belief," 1-20; chapter two, "The American Apocalyptic Legacy," 21-36.
- R Jan. 22     website construction class – room to be announced  
(Instructor out for surgery.)
- T Jan. 27     **TERM PAPER TOPICS APPROVED BY THIS DATE.**  
Early Christian, Medieval, and Reformation Millennialism  
HUNT: Stanley E. Porter, "Millenarian Thought in the First Century Church," 62-76; Diane Watt, "Medieval Millenarianism and Prophecy," 88-97; Andrew Bradstock, "Millenarianism in the Reformation and the English Revolution," 77-87.
- R Jan. 29     Christian Dispensationalism  
HUNT: Mark Patterson and Andrew Walker, " 'Our Unspeakable Comfort': Irving, Albury, and the Origins of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture," 98-115.  
WOJCIK: chapter three, "Signs of the Endtimes: Hal Lindsey and Dispensationalist Prophecy Beliefs, 37-59; chapter seven, "The Transformations of Apocalyptic Traditions in the Post-ColdWar Era," 148-74.  
VIDEO IN CLASS: "60 Minutes: Zion's Christian Soldiers"
- T Feb. 3     Catholic Millennialism  
HUNT: Massimo Introvigne, "En Route to the Marian Kingdom: Catholic Apocalypticism and the Army of Mary," 149-65.  
WOJCIK: "Apocalyptic Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in New York City," 60-96.
- R Feb. 5     Pentecostal Millennialism  
HUNT: Margaret Poloma, "The Millenarianism of the Pentecostal Movement," 166-86.  
Hebraist Millennial Movements  
HUNT: Damian Thompson, "A Peruvian Messiah and the Retreat from Apocalypse," 187-95.  
ERES: Christine Steyn, "Millenarian Tragedies in South Africa: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement and the Bulhoek Massacre," 185-202.
- T Feb. 10     EXAM #1

- R Feb. 12      Apocalyptic Violence  
WESSINGER: chapter two, “How the Millennium Comes Violently,” 12-29; chapter three, “1978—Jonestown,” 30-55
- T Feb. 17      **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND OUTLINE OF TERM PAPER ARE DUE. 10 PTS. WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM THE PAPER’S FINAL GRADE IF THESE ARE NOT TURNED IN ON THIS DATE.**  
Seventh-day Adventism  
HUNT: Kenneth Newport, “The Heavenly Millennium of the Seventh-day Adventists,” 131-48.  
Branch Davidians  
WESSINGER: chapter four, “1993—Branch Davidians,” 56-119.  
HUNT: Eugene Gallagher, “‘All I Am Is Religion’: David Koresh’s Christian Millenarianism,” 196-208.
- R Feb. 19      Branch Davidians  
GUEST: Lee Hancock, *Dallas Morning News*  
VIEW outside of class (see Viewings Schedule): “Waco: The Rules of Engagement”  
READ: Articles by Lee Hancock posted on BLACKBOARD.  
BLACKBOARD: Catherine Wessinger, “The Branch Davidians and Religion Reporting: A Ten-Year Retrospective.”
- T Feb. 24      Off – Mardi Gras
- R Feb. 26      Off- Mardi Gras break
- T Mar. 2      Revolutionary Millennial Movements: Taiping Rebellion and the Euro-American Nativist Movement  
HUNT: Stephen Hunt, “The Revolutionary Dimension of Millenarianism: the Case of the T’ aiping Rebellion,” 116-30.  
WESSINGER: chapter six, “1996—Montana Freeman,” 158-217.
- R Mar. 4      Alternative and New Age Millennialism  
HUNT: Susan J. Palmer, “Peace, Persecution and Preparations for Yahshua’s Return: The Case of the Messianic Communities’ Twelve Tribes,” 209-23; Michael York, “New Age Millenarianism and Its Christian Influences,” 224-38.  
ERES: Catherine Wessinger, “Annie Besant and the World-Teacher: Progressive Messianism for the New Age,” 60-69.
- T Mar. 9      UFO Millennialism  
WOJCIK: chapter eight, “Emergent Apocalyptic Beliefs about UFOs and Extraterrestrial Beings,” 175-208.

WESSINGER: chapter seven, “1997, 1998—Heaven’s Gate,” 229-52; chapter eight, “1998—Chen Tao: Assessing the Potential for Violence,” 253-63.

- R Mar. 11     Aum Shinrikyo  
HUNT: Ian Reader, “Violent Millenarianism with a Christian Touch: Syncretic Themes in the Millennial Perspective of Aum Shinrikyo,” 239-54.  
WESSINGER: chapter five, “1995—Aum Shinrikyo,” 120-57.

(F Mar. 12 – MID-TERM GRADES DUE)

- T Mar. 16     **ROUGH DRAFT OF TERM PAPER IS DUE. 10 PTS. WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM THE PAPER’S FINAL GRADE IF THE ROUGH DRAFT IS NOT TURNED IN ON THIS DATE.**  
A Violent Catholic Millennial Group: Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God  
ERES: Jean-François Mayer, “The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God,” 203-10.  
RESERVE DESK (HARD COPY): Article by John Walliss on the MRTCG forthcoming in *Nova Religio*.

- R Mar. 18     Apocalyptic Sources for al-Qaida  
ERES: David Cook, “Suicide Attacks or ‘Martyrdom Operations’ in Contemporary Jihad Literature,” *Nova Religio*, 7-44.

- T Mar. 23     Chinese Pacifist Millennialists Court Martyrdom  
ERES: Catherine Wessinger, “Introduction and Glossary,” 215-22; David Ownby, “A History for Falun Gong: Popular Religion and the Chinese State since the Ming Dynasty,” 223-43; Gareth Fisher, “Resistance and Salvation in Falun Gong: The Promise and Peril of Forbearance,” 294-311.

- R Mar. 25     Secular Apocalypticism  
WOJCIK: chapter five, “Secular Apocalyptic Themes in the Nuclear Era,” 97-132; chapter six, “Fatalism and Apocalyptic Beliefs,” 133-47.

- T Mar. 30     Apocalyptic Themes in Movies: “The Matrix”  
VIEW: “The Matrix” outside of class (see Viewings schedule).  
ERES 2004 MEDIA & RELIGION: Michael Brannigan, “There Is No Spoon: A Buddhist Mirror,” 101-10.  
BLACKBOARD: Francis Flannery-Dailey and Rachel Wagner, “Wake Up! Gnosticism and Buddhism in the Matrix,” also at <<http://www.unomaha.edu/~wwwjrf/gnostic.htm>>

- R Apr. 1      Nazi Millennialism  
VIEW: “Triumph of the Will” by Leni Riefenstahl outside of class (see Viewings schedule).  
ERES 2004: Robert Ellwood, “Nazism as a Millennialist Movement,” in Wessinger, *Millennialism, Persecution, and Violence*, 241-60. READ THE ARTICLE BEFORE VIEWING THE MOVIE.
- T Apr. 6      NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
- R Apr. 8      NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
- T Apr. 13     When Prophecy Fails  
ERES: Lorne L. Dawson, “When Prophecy Fails and Faith Persists: A Theoretical Overview,” *Nova Religio*, 60-82.  
ERES: Douglas E. Cowan, “Confronting the Failed Failure: Y2K and Evangelical Eschatology in Light of the Passed Millennium,” *Nova Religio*, 71-85.
- R Apr. 15     Conclusions  
WOJCIK: “Conclusion,” 209-215.  
WESSINGER: 282-84.  
ERES: Catherine Wessinger, “New Religious Movements and Conflicts with Law Enforcement,” in Derek H. Davis and Barry Hankins, *New Religious Movements and Religious Liberty in America*, 89-106, 201-4.
- T Apr. 20     EXAM #2
- R Apr. 22     **TERM PAPERS ARE DUE. 10 PTS. WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR LATE PAPERS. TO BE ON TIME, TWO HARD COPIES MUST BE TURNED INTO THE INSTRUCTOR AND THE TERM PAPER MUST BE UPLOADED TO THE STUDENT’S WEBSITE BY THIS DATE.**  
Student Presentations
- T Apr. 27     Student Presentations
- R Apr. 29     Student Presentations
- T May 4      Student Presentations
- EXAM        Tuesday, May 11, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The 3 exams (50 pts. each) count half of the final grade. The remaining half of the final grade will consist of the term paper (50 pts.), discussion in class (50 pts), and discussion on the discussion board (50 pts.).

GRADING SCALE: A - 92%; B - 83%; C - 71%; D - 65%.

There will be no make-up exams except in cases of severe illness or if there is a family emergency. In either case, the instructor should be notified at once.

The course is a seminar, therefore discussion in this course is essential. The discussion grade also will be determined by the student's attendance record. The discussion grade will include a 10-minute presentation of the student's research and class discussion of that research at the end of the semester.

In order to continue discussions beyond the classroom and to promote further consideration of the materials, a discussion board will be set up on Blackboard. To get credit for full participation on the discussion board, the student should log on at least twice a week and leave a thoughtful message: observations, questions, sharing news articles. Students should feel free to initiate their own threads (discussion themes); the instructor will post new threads relating to each class.

The research paper should be 10-12 pages typed and double-spaced. The instructor must approve the student's term paper topic. The topic must be one for which there are adequate resources for a substantive research paper. Bearing this consideration in mind, the student will have freedom to select a topic relating to millennialism in which she or he has a particular interest. At the end of the semester, the term papers will be put on reserve in the library and content from the term papers will be part of the final exam.

The Internet is an abundant source of information on millennial groups. Students will be encouraged to utilize the Internet in researching their papers and to share information about relevant Web sites with the class.

A bibliography and outline of the term paper are to be turned in on **February 17**. Students are to keep the instructor informed of their progress on the research paper. A rough draft of the term paper is required to be turned in on **March 16** for comments by the instructor. The final draft of the term paper is on **April 22**, the first date of class presentations. To be on time, the term paper must be uploaded to the student's website and two hard copies turned into the instructor on this date. **Ten points will be deducted from the grade of a paper when the deadlines are not kept.**

Since most of the assigned readings relate to "catastrophic millennialism" (the expectation that there will be a catastrophic transition to the imminent collective salvation), the students will be encouraged, but not required, to research examples of "progressive millennialism" (the expectation that there will be a noncatastrophic but still imminent transition to the collective salvation) for their term papers. Progressive millennialism is understudied by scholars, but it is a significant millennial pattern.