

**Preaching Apocalyptic Texts**  
**KNP3371HS**  
**Toronto School of Theology/Knox College**  
**Syllabus**  
**Spring Term, 2007**  
**Class Sessions: Mondays, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

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**Office Hours: Generally, Mondays between 10 AM and 1 PM**

Learning Goals:

The purpose of this course is to help students gain competence in exegetical and homiletical methods that aid Biblical preaching. It sets the following learning goals:

1. understanding the genre apocalypse and its related forms,
2. applying exegetical methods that focus on the text's form or genre,
3. using a variety of homiletical methods which focus on the form of the text,
4. and reflecting on how to use the above skills in a sermon.

To meet these learning goals, the instructor is more than happy to help students individually.

Required Texts:

Buttrick, David. *Preaching the New and the Now*. Louisville: WJKP, 1998.

Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination*. 2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Jacobsen, David Schnasa. *Preaching in the New Creation*. Louisville: WJKP, 1999.

Reddish, Mitchell, ed. *Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader*. Nashville: Hendrickson, 1990.

**This text is available on reserve only. Please also see vol. 1 of Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 in the reference section of the library as an alternative reading source.**

Rogers, C., J. Jeter, eds. *Preaching through the Apocalypse*. St. Louis: Chalice, 1992. (On reserve)

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elizabeth. *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

Recommended Texts:

Pippin, Tina. *Death and Desire*. Louisville: WJKP, 1992.

Talbert, Charles. *The Apocalypse*. Louisville: WJKP, 1994.

Grading:

The percentage of the final grade goes up with each assignment. One goal of this course is to set a trajectory for learning. It values especially students' improvement over time. Students need not fret that a difficult first review or presentation dooms them to homiletical purgatory. In fact, as the semester progresses, the opportunities for growth and improvement only increase. Nonetheless, since pastors almost always have to produce weekly sermons regardless of circumstances, late papers of any sort will result in an automatic reduction of grade by one letter.

M.Th. and doctoral students will be expected to perform at a higher level and will be asked to complete extra work. Attendance at extra discussions for advanced students may also be required.

CLASS SCHEDULE

First Hour: Introductions & Discussion of Syllabus  
Second Hour: "Biblical Preaching and the Form of the Text"  
For next class: Read *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*

Session 2, 1/15  
First Hour: Hand in Assignment 1, Discuss *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*  
Second Hour: "Preaching and Exegetical Method"  
For next class: Read *Preaching through the Apocalypse* (on reserve)

Session 3, 1/22  
First Hour: Discuss *Preaching through the Apocalypse*  
Second Hour: "Apocalypses in historical and social view"  
For next class: Read materials in Reddish or Charlesworth.

Session 4, 1/29  
First Hour: Student presentations (Assignment 2): Daniel 7-12, 1 Enoch 1-36  
Second Hour: 1 Enoch 37-71; 85-90; and 93:1-10, 91:11-17  
For next class: Read rest in Reddish or Charlesworth

Session 5, 2/5  
First Hour: Student presentations: T. Levi, 4 Ezra  
Second Hour: 2 Baruch, T. Abraham, related works from Qumran  
For next class: Read *The Apocalyptic Imagination*

Session 6, 2/12  
First Hour: Hand in Assignment 3, Discuss *The Apocalyptic Imagination*  
Second Hour: Discussion: What's the impact of literature for NT?

2/19 Reading Week. No Class!

Session 7, 2/26  
First Hour: Lecture: The Genre Apocalypse in Biblical Studies  
Second Hour: Discussion: How well does Revelation fit genre?

Session 8, 3/5  
First Hour: Lecture: "Homiletic Approaches to Apocalyptic Literature"  
Second Hour: Lecture: "Homiletic Approaches, continued"  
For next class: Read *Preaching in the New Creation*

Session 9, 3/12  
First Hour: Lecture: "A Contemporary Approach to the Issue"  
Second Hour: Lecture: "A Contemporary Approach, cont."

Session 10, 3/19  
Assignment 4, Sermons

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Session 11, 3/26  
Assignment 4, Sermons

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Session 12, 4/2

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For next class: Read *Preaching the New and the Now*

Session 13, 4/9

Discuss *Preaching the New and the Now*

Evaluations

### Assignments:

#### 1. Book Review

Write a two page book review of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* to hand in at the beginning of class, Session 2. The book review should include (1) a summary of her work, (2) some critical engagement and (3) an evaluation or critical appreciation of her contribution to understanding Revelation for today. Be sure to read the book of Revelation alongside the commentary. Don't sweat it. Brief is good.

Due Date: Session 2, January 15--Percentage of Grade: 10%

#### 2. Presentations on Jewish Apocalypses

For two weeks students will need to present on Jewish apocalypses and related literature. The presentations should be about twenty minutes in length. Use this presentation as a way of becoming familiar with apocalypses as a literary genre. Take note of things like characters, plots, type scenes but also look at the proposed date, provenance and likely historical context(s) of these books. Feel free to consult commentaries and other resources to help you. However, be sure to cite any sources you consult.

Due Date: Sessions 4-5, January 29 and February 5--Percentage of Grade: 25% each

#### 3. Book Review

Write a two page book review of J. Collins' *The Apocalyptic Imagination* to hand in at the beginning of class, Session 6. The book review should include (1) a summary of the work, (2) some critical engagement of Collins' argument (3) and an evaluation of the book's significance for preachers studying apocalyptic texts. Don't sweat it. Even in October, brief is still good.

Due Date: Session 6, February 12--Percentage of Grade: 10%

#### 4. Sermon on an Apocalyptic Text with Exegetical and Homiletical Rationale.

Students will write out a sermon (approximately 15 minutes in length) to preach before the class based on the exegesis of a text chosen from Revelation or another apocalyptic text in the NT. Whether you use one or not in the pulpit, a full manuscript must be handed in one week in advance of preaching sessions. In addition to the sermon itself, students should also prepare a paper that explains how they exegeted the text (five pp.) and how the form of the text influenced the shape of the sermon in a homiletical rationale (2 pp.) and hand that in the day of the sermon. Students will need to agree on a selected text with the professor prior to preaching and can thus expect the professor to help them locate resources that might be helpful in preparing the sermon.

Due Date: One week before Sessions 10-12, March 12, 19, and 26--Percentage of Grade: 50%

#### X. Attendance and Group Participation

In order to learn preaching together regular attendance is expected. More importantly, however, we will attempt to learn how to preach as part of a community. Preachers can expect to benefit homiletically by studying and reflecting with their sisters and brothers in the pulpit and out. By struggling together with our papers and sermons we will also grow together in ways that we can hardly imagine. This aspect of our time together will necessarily require the voicing of perspectives that some of us often ignore. Yet this is the

greatest blessing preachers can receive. After all, the Gospel may not come to us who are called to preach, unless it comes first through the voice of Another. How did Paul put it?: faith comes by hearing.

Due Date: Every Class--Percentage of Grade: 5%

#### FINAL NOTES:

Students with disabilities or special needs are advised to contact UT for information regarding its services and resources. Students are encouraged to review the Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus.

Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form and have it checked for plagiarism.