



TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

**Course Syllabus
Fall 2013**

**REVELATION: Hope in the World Gone Wrong
NEWT 0526 W**

SEPTEMBER 9 – DECEMBER 6, 2013

WEB-BASED, INTERACTIVE COURSE, THERE ARE NO SET CLASS TIMES

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the Book of Revelation with a focus on its literary genre, theological themes and the various schools of interpretation. A detailed study of the argument with a view to teaching and preaching its contents. Prerequisite: BIBL 501. Recommended: NEWT 0522.

This course is designed to guide the student in a study of the final and somewhat unique book of the canon, namely, Revelation. Special emphasis will be placed on the genre issue, the different hermeneutical approaches to the book, crucial interpretive issues, the book's literary structure and artistry, and its distinctively high Christology. We will also discuss the important question of teaching and applying the book in our present-day, apocalyptically fearful/sensitive setting.

II. LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

By:

1. Reading the book of Revelation along with a series of extra-biblical apocalypses
2. Presenting two original-audience analyses of the "esoteric" apocalyptic visions and critically evaluating other student's presentations
3. Discussing the meaning of a number of challenging texts with colleagues
4. Researching and writing an interpretative issue paper
5. Reflecting upon course materials (lectures, handouts, textbooks, etc.)

students should be able to:

- Trace through the structure and argument of the book of Revelation.
- Identify the major interpretive issues and begin wrestling through the pros and cons for various options.
- Utilize the literary and metaphorical artistry of the book to clarify, rather than cloud, the author's intended meaning.
- Understand John's apocalypse within its literary genre and the milieu of extra-biblical apocalyptic writings. [Contrary to popular opinion Revelation does not present us with "tomorrow's newspaper" slid underneath our door today].
- Develop a more resolute faith (despite hardship, difficulties and setbacks) and be drawn irresistibly into the worship of the Lion and the Lamb.
- Begin feeling comfortable using the book in various ministry contexts as they better understand how the "strange visions" of John's apocalypse would have applied to the seven churches (a good starting place for all contemporary application).

- Trace through certain biblical themes—sacrifice, temple, holy war, God’s glory, creation, covenant(s), etc.—in order to see canonical development and how these apocalyptic visions provide closure to the broader storyline of Scripture.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

*Mounce, Robert H. *The Book of Revelation*. NICNT. Revised edition, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. [ISBN: 0-8028-2537-0]

*Osborne, Grant R. *Revelation*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. [ISBN:0-8010-2299-1]

*Note: Students may choose to read either Mounce or Osborne depending upon various considerations (see discussion below).

B. RECOMMENDED TEXTS

*Reddish, Mitchell G. ed., *Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995 [ISBN: 1-56563-210-9]

*Note: Reddish’s *Apocalyptic Literature* provides a handy collection of many 2TJ (second Temple Judaism) apocalypses and early Christian apocalypses. Unfortunately, it is not always in print. The extra-biblical apocalypses for reading in this course are available online or in numerous hard-cover volumes.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Reading (15%)

There are four areas of reading requirement for students: (a) the book of Revelation itself, (b) a commentary, (c) ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypses and (d) periodical articles and handouts that are provided online.

The Book of Revelation. The student is required to read the biblical text of Revelation four times during the course:

- twice before the 2nd week (complete book of Revelation)
- twice before each week’s lectures (only the portion to be studied)

A Commentary. A student must read through the appropriate portion of the course textbook once (either Mounce or Osborne) *before* each class period. Osborne’s commentary is 869 pages; Mounce is a mere 439 pages. Your choice between these two commentaries ought to be influenced by the following considerations:

- reading abilities
- how much do you want to “dig deeper” into the subject matter
- the grade you wish to achieve (see grading rubric)

Apocalyptic Literature. If one is to appreciate the literary genre of Revelation, s/he must have done at least a minimal amount of background reading in similar kinds of apocalyptic literature. By the 4th week, the student is to read one “sample piece” of apocalyptic literature (either 2 Baruch or 1 Enoch 1—36, which is known as, “The Book of the Watchers”). This sample reading anticipates our discussion of apocalyptic genre for that week. The student may choose to read a certain number of extra-biblical apocalypses based upon the reading grade that they wish to achieve (see grading rubric).

Periodical Articles/Handouts. All students must at least read Chisholm’s periodical article on prophetic genre in order to pass the course. Beyond this minimum reading requirement for this fourth category of periodical articles/handouts, consult the grading rubric for further details.

The grading rubric for course readings will (a) assist in making decisions about how much course reading a student wishes to accomplish and (b) help in understanding exactly how one’s grade for this assignment is derived.

Due date for reading grade submission: see schedule below.

2. Two Inductive Study Forums [Echoes and Images, parts I and II] (30%)

In order to apply the apocalyptic visions of Revelation to today’s generation, one must think through what “sermonic/pastoral impact” the scroll would have had upon those who first encountered the text. The best measure of the intended impact on the original audience is to picture what would have gone through the minds of the various congregations, i.e., the seven churches (chps. 2—3) and John himself (chp. 1), as they listened to the letter being read aloud. What were these visions saying to them about how they ought to act/think/feel in their own life setting?

One way to gain this kind of first-audience perspective is to listen carefully in the text of chps. 4—22 for “echoes and images” that correlate with the seven letters. In other words, listen for where you detect a verbal link or a conceptual link between the chps. 1—3 (John and the seven churches) and chps. 4—22 (the apocalyptic visions). List all of these verbal links and conceptual links.

Echoes. For *verbal links* (we will call them, “echoes”), it is helpful to type out the visions portion of biblical text first. Below this material from chapters 4—22, type out the connecting section of the “John on Patmos and the letters” (chps. 1—3). Then, highlight in bold or italic the material that corresponds. For example, a clear verbal link obviously exists between 19:15 and 2:26-27:

19:15

Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. **He will rule them with an iron scepter.** He treads the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

2:26-27

To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—**he will rule them with an iron scepter**; he will dash them to pieces like pottery—just as I have received authority from my Father.

Images. For *conceptual links* (we will call them, “*images*”), simply type out both portions of text, underline or italics the related material in each, and specify (in your own words) the nature of the conceptual link. Such an example of conceptual linkage would appear to exist between 20:1-6 and 2:10:

20:1-7

I saw an angel . . . holding in his hand a **great chain**. He **seized** the dragon/devil . . . and **bound** him for a **thousand years**. . . . I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. . . . They came to life and reigned with Christ a **thousand years**. . . . they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his **prison** . . .

2:10

I tell you, the devil will put some of you [Christians] **in prison** to test you, and you will suffer persecution for **ten days**. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Link/point: contrast between a “short” time of persecution *versus* a “long . . . long” time of better things to come.¹ Cf. short time of devil’s persecution (imprisoning Christians) *versus* long time of his being imprisoned! Aside from the theme of eschatological reversal (one answer to theodicy) in terms of terms of imprisonment, there is a short-vs.-long dichotomy in the sentencing.

This assignment is to be completed as two separate forums:

- Inductive Study Forum #1 [Echoes and Images, part I] **(4:1—16:21)**
- Inductive Study Forum #2 [Echoes and Images, part II] **(17:1—22:5)**

Please organize the materials according to the progress of verse designations throughout the visions, i.e., according to the flow of the biblical text from 4:1 to 22:5 (not according to the church letters). Mix together the echoes and images as they naturally surface within the flow of the biblical text (no need to keep them in two distinct categories). In close proximity to the grading rubric for this two-part assignment, the professor will give a brief lecture covering a series of practical hints or tips for achieving greater success in this assignment. Unlike the final paper (see below), the form/style of these two forum assignments does not need to conform to Turabian/Chicago writing style.

A grading rubric will assist in understanding how the grade for this assignment is derived.

Due date: see schedule below.

¹Most examples will be comparative. However, you might want to think contrastively as well.

3. Research Paper (45%)

Students must write a research paper on some aspect of meaning in the book of Revelation. You may choose (a) an interpretive issue, (b) an ethical problem, or (c) a thematic development of a particular subject. The grade ceiling of “B” will most likely follow for the third option (thematic development) because a descriptive paper is *generally* easier than an interpretive-issue or an ethical-problem paper.

The paper must strive for excellence in three areas: research, writing style and argumentation. A discussion of these three areas along with a grading rubric will be provided. The paper should be 15 to 20 double-spaced pages (bibliography not included) and must conform to Turabian/Chicago style.

Due date: see schedule below.

4. Fun Forums (5% bonus on Research Paper)

Every course needs some fun. Students can achieve a 5% bonus (maximum) towards their exegetical paper by participation in some “fun forums” during the online semester. These are like interaction-type class discussions where you get graded simply on the basis of participation. If you contribute something to the fun forum, you have just earned yourself a 1% bonus. There are four fun forums but one fun forum has the potential for two contributions (2% bonus) so that is how it possible to get a 5% mark advantage on your final paper. I will mark your final research paper, give it a grade and then look to see what your Fun Forum bonus marks are. Hopefully I can add (up to) 5% to boost the grade on your research paper! So, join us for some fun.

Due dates: see website weekly schedule for the timing of the four fun forums.

5. Grading Summary

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Reading | 15% |
| Two Inductive-Study Forums [Echoes and Images] | 30% |
| Research Paper | 45% |
| <u>Fun Forums [bonus added to RP grade]</u> | <u>*5% bonus (maximum)</u> |
| Total | 100% |

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Submissions. Kindly email your final paper as an attached file (either MSWord or PDF formats are fine) to the professor: bwebb@tyndale.ca

Late FORUM Submissions. The initial “assignment” post for an Inductive Study Forum is due between Monday and Thursday (midnight, Eastern Standard Time) of the first week. Two subsequent “critical interaction” posts are due by the end of the first week—i.e., Sunday (midnight, Eastern Standard Time). Any interaction the following week is encouraged but optional. *The penalty for late Inductive Study Forum submissions is one letter grade reduction per day late* (rather weighty) since these submissions play an educational component for *all* students within the course.

Late RESEARCH PAPER Submissions, part I: ON OR BEFORE the “Last Day of Exams” [LDOE] Deadline. The last day of exams in a semester is the official deadline for any late submissions. After that day the professor cannot accept late work without the explicit/written approval of the Registrar’s Office (see below). If student recognizes that a late submission on or before the LDOE deadline does not involve clear extenuating circumstances (defined below), they may submit the material to the professor as **(i) a late submission with penalty** until midnight of the LDOE. In this case there is no need to contact the professor for approval. For every day late, the grade will be reduced by a half letter grade (i.e., a 5% deduction per day late). Part of a day late is considered the whole day. On the other hand, if there are clear extenuating circumstances, the student may ask the professor for **(ii) a late submission without penalty** (or with partial penalty). By clear extenuating or mitigating circumstances I mean something along the following lines. Suppose I as your professor were to take your circumstances to the class (hypothetically, not in reality) and ask them the following question, “Should I treat this student differently regarding late penalties than I would treat the rest of you based upon their particular [mitigating?] circumstances?” If the class were to respond with an overwhelming, “Yes, of course,” then you have a case of clear mitigating circumstances. If you wish to ask for this sort of late submission without penalty (or with only partial penalty) where the submission is on or before the LDOE, please contact the professor. The student must take the initiative in this matter.

Late RESEARCH PAPER Submissions, part II: AFTER the “Last Day of Exams” [LDOE] Deadline. Any submissions after the LDOE require a formal process of appeal to the registrar’s office (not to the professor). Requests for such extensions beyond the LDOE must be (a) submitted in writing using the Tyndale Extension Forms, explaining the reason why the extension is needed and (b) submitted to the dean before the LDOE unless there are reasons why this was not possible. No assignments will be accepted after the LDOE unless the student has a valid reason for an extension. In that case, the student must apply for an extension to the registrar (again, not to the professor). Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to a heavy work load, other assignments, professional or ministry obligations or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

Academic Honesty. Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different

classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic polices on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) and the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.46 to 10.51 and 14.253 to 14.254. Turabian style includes title page, headings, paragraph form, block quotes, footnotes, etc.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE

| Week#/Date | Lecture/Subject | Assignments/Reading |
|---------------|---|--|
| Week 1 | Syllabus Authorship, Date, Origin/Destination, & Setting Excursus: "A Biblical Theology of Suffering—Derived From Revelation" | |
| Week 2 | Literary Structure 1:1-20 | Reading Revelation (2x) |
| Week 3 | 2:1—3:22 Seven Churches Excursus: "The Overcomers: All Christians or Some Christians?" Excursus: "The Rapture Question" | |
| Week 4 | 4:1—5:14 Excursus: "The Literary Genre of 4:1—22:5" Excursus: "Methods of Interpreting 4:1—22:5" Excursus: "Who are the 24 Elders?" | 2 Baruch; 1 Enoch 1—36 Chisholm (article) |
| Week 5 | 6:1-17 Excursus: "The Structure of the STBs—Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls" Excursus: "Apocalyptic Cosmic Catastrophe—Literal or Figurative?" | |
| Week 6 | 7:1-17 Excursus: "Who are the 144,000?" Excursus: "Who are the Great Multitude?" | Echoes and Images Forum #1 |
| Week 7 | 8:1—9:21 10:1—11:14 | |

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