Eschatology: [Gk \textit{eschatos} last, farthest] 1. a branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or of mankind.

The approach of each millennium has brought fraught with uncertainty and anxiety for many societies. As we approach the year 2000, some religious groups in the U.S. herald the hastening of the End Times, when a Messiah will appear to cleanse the earth of all unrighteousness.

This course examines various American eschatologies and the religious communities that imagine them. Among the topics we will discuss will be Americanism, or the ways groups imagine the United States to be favored by God, Religious politics (both Christian and Jewish fundamentalists), and the ways that American eschatologies are gendered and racialized. The End Times in Pop culture will be considered through various novels and films.

We will focus on selected societies in U.S. history including Millerites, Jehovah's Witnesses, Afro-Christianities, Rastafari, various Judaisms, Christian Fundamentalists, to end with contemporary millenarian movements including Branch Davidians, the Nation of Islam and Christian Identity.

Requirements: Each Wednesday a one-page response paper will be due. Students will also be responsible for a mid-term, and three 5 page written assignments. Each student will also join a small team of students to research one American group. Note: I will show films on several evenings at 8:00, so please schedule your semester accordingly.

You must find access to a copy of the Bible, the King James Version. If you do not have one, you can find it on the web at \url{http://ccel.wheaton.edu}

**EXAMINATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Midterm, final, three essays.

\textbf{Week One}

January 21 Introduction

\textbf{Week Two}

January 26 \textit{Apocalypse as genre}

The Book of Daniel
--Memorize at least one line from Daniel to recite in class

"Let the End Begin" and "Shards of Apocalypse" in Mark Kingwell, Dreams of

January 28

"Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism." in Gershom Scholem, The

Week Three

Feb 2 Christian Revelation

The Book of Revelation

"Apocalypse, a History of the End of the World" in Philip Lamy, Millennium Rage:
Survivalists, White Supremacists, and the Doomsday Prophecy. New York: Plenum

Feb 4 America in Prophecy: Israel or Egypt?

Conrad Cherry, God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny,

Jonathan Edwards, "The Latter-Day Glory is Probably to Begin in America."

Albert J. Raboteau, "African Americans, Exodus, and the American Israel." in Hackett,
Religion and American Culture.

Week Four

Feb 9 The End of the World is a Dud: The Great Disappointment

Numbers and Butler, eds. The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the

Feb 11 Jehovah's Witnesses

M. James Penton, Apocalypse Delayed: The Story of Jehovah's Witnesses. Toronto:
University of Toronto Press, 1985. pp. 184-208, 253-302

Week Five

Feb 16 The Rise of Premillennial Dispensationalism

Paul Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in American Culture.

Paul Benware, "The View of Premillennialism" in Understanding the End Times.

Feb 18 Christian Fundamentalists: An Ethnography

Nancy Ammerman, Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World. New

Paper One Due in my box in the Religion Department Friday Feb 20 by 4:00

Week Six

Feb 23 Nuclear Secular Apocalypse


Film at 8:00 pm "Dr. Strangelove"

Feb 25 Apocalyptic fiction


Week Seven

March 2

Octavia Butler, The Parable of the Sower (novel)

8:00 Film On the Beach

March 4 Midterm

Spring Break

Week Eight

March 23 Christian Nuclear Visions


Hal Lindsey, Late Great Planet Earth (novel)
March 25 Apocalyptic Utopia

David Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide, An Interpretation of Jim Jones, the People’s Temple, and Jonestown*

Week Nine

March 30 African American Apocalyptics


Elijah Muhammed, “Message to the Blackman in America” and “An Independent Black Nation and America’s Downfall.”

April 1 Rastafari Revelations


**Paper Two due in my box in Religion by 4:00 on Friday April 3**

Week Ten

April 6 Catholic Apocalypticism

Daniel Wojcik, “Apocalyptic Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in New York City” from Wojcik, *The End of the World As We Know It*

April 8 Film

Week Eleven

April 13 Contemporary Jewish Messianism

Lis Harris, *Holy Days: The World of a Hasidic Family*. Ch. 3


April 15 Critical Feminists and the End Times


Film at 8:00 pm Blade Runner
Week Twelve

April 20 Survivors and Christian Racists


April 22 Race War and Apocalypse

Week Thirteen

April 27 Christian Identity Cult Fiction

William Pierce, *The Turner Diaries* (novel)

April 29


Week Fourteen

May 4 New Agers and Alien Abductees


Paper Three due in my box by 4:00 Friday May 8