

Visions of the End: Early Judean and Christian Apocalypticism (HUMA 4819 3 credit version, Winter 2014)

- Go to the [discussion notes](#) for this course

General Information

- Instructor: Philip Harland, [click here to email me](#). Office hours (Vanier 248): Thursdays 3-4pm.
- Seminar: Thursdays 11:30-2:20 (BC 214 ~~BC 228~~)

Course description:

This course investigates the origins, development and legacies of apocalypticism within Judean culture and early Christianity. Beginning with the ancient context, we will focus on understanding: (1) the earliest apocalyptic literature (biblical and non-biblical); (2) apocalyptic or millennial movements within early Judaism and Christianity; and (3) the apocalyptic world-view, which centres on the notion of God's ultimate intervention in order to destroy evil and inaugurate an eternal perfect kingdom. As we proceed we will also survey the legacies of apocalypticism in religious movements, popular culture (including music and film), and artistic representation to the present day.

Required Books:

- The Bible with Apocrypha (modern translation such as RSV, NRSV, NIV, NEB, Jerusalem). *The HarperCollins Study Bible. New Revised Standard Version with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books* (in the bookstore).
- Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World To Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith*. 2nd edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Judean Apocalyptic Literature*. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Additional readings listed with links in syllabus below

Evaluation (also see end of syllabus for further descriptions of assignments):

- Ongoing participation in class discussions (20%)
- Presentations (15 minutes each) on legacies of ancient apocalypticism (15%)
- Assignment 1: Book review essay [with completed academic integrity test], due week 5 (15%)
- Academic integrity tutorial and test: http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/index.html. All students must go through the tutorial and complete the test before the first assignment, achieving a 10/10 (100%) and submitting a *hardcopy print-out of the results* of their test. Assignment 1 will not be accepted without a completed academic integrity test attached (due

week 5)

- Assignment 2: Major research paper *proposal* and critical bibliography, due week 7 (10%)
- Assignment 3: Major research paper, due week 12 (20%)
- In-class test, week 11 (20%)

Important things to know

- *Readings and participation:* Everyone is responsible for reading and studying works listed for a particular week before coming to class. Our principal focus for discussion will be the primary or ancient sources. Scholarly sources (esp. Collins and Cohn) will help us to make sense of the primary sources.
- *Penalties for lateness:* All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late submissions will be penalized by one full grade (e.g. from a B to a C) and a further grade for each additional day beyond the due date.
- *Academic honesty and plagiarism policies:* Absolutely no form of plagiarism will be tolerated. All cases will be prosecuted to the fullest. Students are responsible for reading the university policies concerning academic honesty at: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>. There is further information on how to achieve academic integrity at: http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/.
- *Cell-phones, laptops, and other devices:* All cell-phones and other hand-held devices must be completely turned off and remain unused during class and tutorial times. Laptops are permitted for note-taking only. Any other use of laptops (or other devices) for internet surfing or messaging is a distraction (both to you and to your fellow students) that will not be permitted.

DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

Unit 1: Orientation

Week 1 (Jan. 9)

- Introduction
- Antecedents and Influences: The Mesopotamian Combat Myth
- Readings: Cohn, chs. 1-3; Collins, ch. 1

Week 2 (Jan. 16)

- Antecedents and Influences: Mesopotamian Combat Myth (cont'd) / Persian and Zoroastrian Dualism
- Readings: "[Anzu](#)" (password required); Psalms 74:12-17; Psalms 89:5-18; Isaiah 51:9-11 (Bible); "[Plutarch, Isis and Osiris 370: Zoroastrianism Dualism](#)" (online); "[Verses from Yasna 30](#)" and "[Verses from Yasna 45](#)," from Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 35-36 (online at google books); Cohn, chs. 4-5

Week 3 (Jan 23)

- Antecedents and Influences: Israelite Prophetic and Wisdom Literature
- Readings: Ezekiel 37-39; Isaiah 24-27; Zechariah (Bible); Cohn 6-8

Unit 2: Earliest Judean Apocalypses

Week 4 (Jan 30)

- Literature Associated with Enoch: Otherworldly Journeys
- Readings: [1 Enoch 1-36](#) (password required); Genesis 5:21-24 and 6:1-8 (Bible); Collins, ch. 2, 6
- Presentations: Phrygian movement (Dan)

Week 5 (Feb 6)

- Discussion of Cohn's arguments
- Waiting for Armageddon (2009 documentary; 74 minutes)
- Presentations: Apostolics (Michelle); Antichrist in the middle ages (Matt); Hal Lindsey (Violetta)

Book review (of Cohn) due at the beginning of class

Week 6 (Feb 13)

- Book of Daniel: "Historical" Apocalypse
- Readings: Daniel 2, 7-12 (Bible); Collins, ch. 3; Cohn, chs. 9-10
- >Presentations: John Nelson Darby (Connie); Hung Hsiu-ch'uan's "Heavenly Chronicle" (Duane); Munster (Noam)

Reading week, Feb. 15-21 – no classes

Unit 3: Developments in early Apocalypticism (Judean and Christian)

Week 7 (Feb 27)

- The Apocalyptic Community at Qumran: Dualism and the Final Cosmic Battle
- Readings: [Community Rule](#) (1QS), especially columns 1-5 (password required); The Heavenly Prince Melchizedek; Collins, chs. 4-5
- Presentations: Millerites (Sophie); Seventh Day Adventists (Alissa); Thomas Müntzer and the peasant rebellion (Jessica)

Week 8 (March 6)

- Apocalypses Responding to the Destruction of the Temple (70 CE): 4 Ezra (= 2 Esdras 3-14)
- Readings: [4 Ezra](#) (pdf password required) or online [4 Ezra = 2 Esdras 3-14](#) (in the Apocrypha of the Bible); Collins ch. 7
- Presentations: Aum Shinri Kyo (Tad)

****March 7: Last date to drop a Winter course without receiving a grade on your transcript****

Week 9 (March 13)

- Apocalypses Responding to the Destruction of the Temple (70 CE), part 2: John's Apocalypse
- Readings: John's Apocalypse, esp. chs. 1-3, 12-18 (Revelation in the New Testament); 1 Thessalonians, esp. chs. 4-5 (for Paul's apocalyptic worldview); Collins, ch. 9; Cohn, ch. 11-13
- Presentations: Brethren of Jimmie T. Roberts (Eriel); Solar Temple (Daniel Bartfai)

Week 10 (March 20)

- "Apocalypse!: The Story of the Book of Revelation" (1999 documentary film; 120 minutes)

Week 11 (March 27)

- Student evaluations
- *In class test*

Week 12 (April 3)

- Legacies: "12 Monkeys" (1995) (129 min)
- Readings: Conrad Ostwalt, "Visions of the End. Secular Apocalypse in Recent Hollywood Film," Journal of Religion and Film 2 (1998) online: <http://avalon.unomaha.edu/jrf/OstwaltC.htm>

Assignments Descriptions

Book Review Paper (5 pages, no longer)

- *Step 1:* To familiarize yourself with the genre of the academic book review, read at least five book reviews that interest you in Review of Biblical Literature online at: <http://www.bookreviews.org/>
- *Step 2:* With a focus on the arguments and main points, read the book.
- *Step 3:* Write an academic book review of the book (in the form of an essay), which entails:
 - Outlining the main argument (or point) of the book and how the author builds up this argument in sub-arguments throughout the chapters.
 - Discussing the author's methods (or approach) and use of evidence to support his or her points.
 - Providing a critical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the book. Does the author achieve what she set out to do? Is the argument convincing or not, and in what ways? What theoretical assumptions and/or value judgements influence the author's reconstruction of history? Be sure to provide concrete examples (citing page numbers in parentheses) of the problems or strengths you discuss.

The review paper should have a *clear thesis statement* (concerning your evaluation of the book) which is supported throughout the paragraphs. The paper should be clearly written and structured with *no spelling or grammatical errors*. *Be succinct* and do not exceed the prescribed length.

Major research paper proposal and critical bibliography (2-3 pages)

Choose a topic relating to the course that interests you. Speak with me to confirm that the topic will work and to get advice on how to proceed. Write a succinct proposal and outline of the paper, which entails:

- Stating your topic, its relevance to the course, and the sort of material you expect to cover.
- Outlining your tentative thesis or main argument and how you expect to structure the paper.
- Discussing primary and secondary sources that will be useful in research. Provide a bibliography (following an accepted academic style of bibliography *correctly*).

Major Research Paper (12 pages double spaced)

This paper will build upon your earlier proposal, demonstrating research and analysis of both primary and secondary sources. A good research paper includes the following characteristics (and more):

Form:

- Opening paragraph that provides context by noting the broader relevance of the topic. Ease the reader into the subject, yet get to your main topic or point promptly.
- Clear thesis statement that encapsulates your main argument or point.
- Clearly structured paragraphs, with each paragraph addressing a specific point (or sub-thesis) that helps to support your overall thesis.
- Clearly written sentences that communicate your ideas in a direct and succinct manner (without repetition).
- Succinct concluding paragraph that pulls things together without merely repeating what has already been said.
- No spelling or grammatical errors.
- Complete *bibliography* listing all sources consulted or cited in the paper. Follow an accepted academic format of bibliography (do not create your own variations).

Content:

- Early indication of your purpose, the way you will be approaching your topic, and the *methods* you will be using (e.g. historical, sociological, anthropological, psychological)
- Discussion of a *range of material* relevant to your topic and purpose.
- Provision of historical and cultural *context*. Where does your topic fit within the broader historical trends of the period you are studying? How does your topic relate to political, social or cultural developments of the time?
- Thorough *references* to the sources (both primary and secondary) of your information throughout

the paper (using an accepted form of citation). Find out what plagiarism is and avoid it like the plague.

- Critical use and analysis of *primary sources* (that is, materials from the period you are studying produced by contemporary participants or observers). Primary sources include not only writings but also visual and artefactual materials (e.g. archeological findings, buildings, artistic productions, films in the modern context).
- Critical use and analysis of *secondary sources* (that is, scholarly materials). Demonstrate that you have read relevant scholarly sources. Show that you are aware of the key issues of debate among scholars and *take sides* in the matter. Which scholarly positions do you agree or disagree with and *why*?

Possible topic areas for research paper

- What is the story of Marduk vs. Tiamat (in the Babylonian *enuma elish*) and how does it illustrate the “combat myth”?
- Isaiah 24-27 is often called the “apocalypse”. In what ways is this passage in the Hebrew prophets a precursor to apocalypticism and in what ways is it different?
- What end-time scenarios are found within Zoroastrian literature (i.e. what happens when Ahura Mazda triumphs)?
- What is the importance of the fallen angels story in *1 Enoch* for the origins of Satan?
- What do scholars mean by an “otherworldly journey apocalypse” and in what ways is *1 Enoch* a good example?
- What do scholars mean when they call Daniel 7-12 an “historical” apocalypse?
- How does the vision of the beast in Daniel relate to the Maccabean revolt?
- What was the importance of periodization in the apocalyptic worldview as illustrated by the so-called “apocalypse of weeks” in *1 Enoch* (93:1-10 + 91:11-17) and by the four kingdoms in Daniel?
- In what ways do the Dead Sea Scrolls provide a window into an apocalyptic *community* that lives out the apocalyptic worldview?
- What expectations did some members of the Dead Sea sect have for one or more end-time functionaries of God (e.g. anointed ones)?
- What role did the members of the Dead Sea sect expect to play in God’s final intervention (e.g. the final war)?
- What is the importance of the “Teacher of Righteousness” and the “Wicked Priest” for the Dead Sea Scroll community and how does this relate to apocalyptic expectations?
- What sort of figure is the “Son of Man” in the Similitudes / Parables of *Enoch* (*1 Enoch* 37–71)?
- What are the Judean and Christian *Sibylline Oracles* and how do they combine apocalypticism and politics?
- In what ways is *4 Ezra* a response to the destruction of the Judean temple in 70 CE?
- In what ways is *2 Baruch* a response to the destruction of the Judean temple in 70 CE?
- What images do *4 Ezra* and John’s Apocalypse (Revelation) use for the Roman empire and what

are the implications regarding their political views?

- What is the meaning of “Babylon” for both *4 Ezra* and John’s Apocalypse (Revelation)?
- What are the scholarly debates about whether the historical Jesus was apocalyptic or not? Do you agree with E. P. Sanders or John Dominic Crossan?
- What was Paul’s apocalyptic worldview and what role did Jesus play within that worldview?
- What are the origins of Leviathan and what importance does that figure play for John’s Apocalypse (Revelation)?
- How do God and the Lamb relate to Satan and the Beast in John’s Apocalypse (Revelation)?
- What is the background and meaning of the two beasts in chapter 13 of John’s Apocalypse?
- What is the meaning and historical context of “worshipping the Beast” in John’s Apocalypse?
- What is the meaning and historical context of Babylon the whore in John’s Apocalypse?
- How important was the *Apocalypse of Peter* for the development of “hell” and punishment of the wicked?
- How does the principle of the “law of retaliation” (*lex talionis*) function in the *Apocalypse of Peter*?

- What was the nature of any one of the following movements or incidents and what role did apocalyptic ideas and expectations play within the movement or incident: Phrygian or Montanist movement; Apostolics and Dolcino; Lollards; Münster as the New Jerusalem; Thomas Müntzer and the peasant rebellion; Hung Hsiu-ch’uan and the Taiping rebellion; Antonio Conselheiro and Canudos in Brazil; Millerites; Peoples Temple at Jonestown; Heaven’s Gate; Order of the Solar Temple in Quebec and Switzerland; Aum Shinri Kyo in Japan

- What was the story and/or image of Antichrist in the middle ages and how did this develop?
- Who was Joachim of Fiore and what was his apocalyptic worldview?
- Who was John Nelson Darby and what was the nature and significance of his doctrine of “the rapture”?
- What method does Hal Lindsey (in *The Late Great Planet Earth* [1970]) use to construct his apocalyptic scenario and what influence did this have on strands of Protestant Christianity in the USA?

Useful Resources for Finding Primary and Secondary (Scholarly) Sources for the Research Paper

York University Library Searchable Online Databases for Journal Articles and Other Sources

- JSTOR
- ATLA

Scholarly overviews (check the footnotes and bibliographies in these works for further resources)

John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

John J. Collins, Bernard McGinn, and Stephen J. Stein, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (3 vols.

New York: Continuum, 2000).

Primary source collections

James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Volume 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (New York: Doubleday, 1983). (A collection of ancient Judean and Christians sources)

Bernard McGinn, ed., *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979). (A collection of medieval primary sources)

Presentation topics on legacies of apocalypticism

You will each present for 15 minutes on a topic relating to the history of apocalypticism. This will require you to find and study at least four academic articles and/or books and at least two primary sources from the period in question. These sources should be directly referred to during the presentation.

Focus questions: What is the apocalyptic worldview of a particular person or movement? What, if anything, actually happens as a result of this worldview (how does it affect behaviour)? What connections or innovations are evident in relation to ancient apocalypticism? For each presentation, you will want to explain the movement or its leader, provide some historical and cultural context, and describe the role of apocalyptic ideas or practices within the movement.

- The Phrygian movement (Montanism) (2nd century)
- Joachim of Fiore's apocalyptic worldview (12th century) – AVAILABLE
- The Apostolics and Dolcino (13th century)
- The figure of the Antichrist in the middle ages (medieval)
- The Lollards (14th century) – AVAILABLE
- Münster as the New Jerusalem (16th century) – AVAILABLE
- Thomas Müntzer (NOTE SPELLING) and the Peasant rebellion (16th century)
- John Nelson Darby and the doctrine of the rapture (19th century)
- Hung Hsiu-ch'uan's "Heavenly Chronicle" and the Taiping rebellion (19th century)
- Antonio Conselheiro and Canudos in Brazil (19th century)
- Children of Peace in Toronto (19th century) – AVAILABLE
- Millerites (19th century)
- Seventh Day Adventists (19th-20th century)
- Jehovah's Witnesses (20th century)
- Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* (20th century)
- Peoples Temple (Jonestown; 1970s)
- The Brethren of Jimmie T. Roberts (1970s on)
- Heaven's Gate in USA (1990s)
- Order of the Solar Temple in Quebec and Switzerland (1990s)
- Aum Shinri Kyo in Japan (1990s)

- Left Behind phenomenon (1990s-2000s)
-