TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES:
“IT’S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT”:
APOCALYPSE IN THE BIBLICAL WORLD
Washington University in St. Louis
L23 ReSt 380 01 / L75 3800/580
MW 2:30-4:00 PM, Siegel Hall 306

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

How did the popular Judeo-Christian expectation of a cataclysmic end of the world originate? What historical and social factors contributed to the development of apocalyptic beliefs? How can understanding ancient apocalypticism help us to understand later apocalyptic movements, including contemporary examples? This course will explore the emergence of Jewish and Christian apocalypticism from the 6th century BCE through the first century CE. By reading and studying the background and interpretations of biblical apocalypses, such as the book of Daniel and Revelation, as well as early non-biblical apocalypses, such as 1 Enoch and 4 Ezra, we will gain a better appreciation for apocalyptic literature and its enduring legacy in Jewish and Christian civilization.

COURSE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES:

The goal of this course is for students to gain a solid understanding of the nature and development of Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic literature, so as to be capable of thinking, speaking, and writing critically on the topic. The objectives of this goal are 1) to understand the basic characteristics and distinguishing features of apocalyptic literature; 2) to become familiar with recent scholarly debates concerning the origins of apocalyptic literature; 3) to develop the necessary skills for reading and interpreting ancient Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature; 4) to master the basic content and historical-critical study of major Jewish and Christian apocalypses; and 5) to demonstrate competence in the field by writing a major research paper on a topic to be determined in consultation with the professor.

COURSE TEXTS.

4. Other readings as distributed by the professor
ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage of final grade</th>
<th>Points per assignment</th>
<th>Total points for the course</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>100 points (x 1)</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>100 points (x 1)</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>100 points (x 1)</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>50 points (x1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>50 points (x1)</td>
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Grading Scale for the Course

Letter grades for the course will be assigned as follows:

- 94%–100% = A
- 90%–93% = A-
- 87%–89% = B+
- 83%–86% = B
- 80%–82% = B-
- 77%–79% = C+
- 73%–76% = C
- 70%–72% = C-
- 60%–69% = D
- 0%–59% = F

1. **Mid-Term and Final Exam.** The course will include a semi-comprehensive mid-term and a semi-comprehensive final exam. These exams will consist primarily of essay questions (blue book), with a few ID terms and/or short answer questions. Each exam is worth **100 points (25% of final grade)**.

2. **In-class/Homework Assignments and Class Participation.** Throughout the course there will be several short writing assignments, class discussions, and group projects. It is expected that you will complete all assigned work, regardless of whether or not it is to be turned in. We will go over assigned work in class, and your preparedness in class will be noted as a factor in determining your class participation grade, alongside any assignments you turn in and class attendance. Class participation accounts for **50 points (=12.5%) of your final grade**.

3. **Research Paper.** In consultation with the professor, you will choose a topic for a major research paper relating to the subject of apocalyptic literature. Your topic may be interdisciplinary, i.e., it may approach apocalyptic literature from the perspective of some other field of study, but it must relate in some way to the course topic. Papers should show evidence of significant research beyond the assigned course reading, and **no more than 2 sources may be internet sources** (i.e., sources that exist only online). Exceptions to this rule may be granted at the discretion of the professor. **For undergraduate students, papers should be 8-10 pages in length and must draw on at least 8 sources.** **For graduate students, papers should be 12-15 pages in length and must draw on at least 10 sources.** Papers are worth **100 points (=25% of final grade)**.
4. **Class Presentation.** Near the end of the semester, you will deliver a short in-class presentation based on your research paper. The purpose of this assignment is 1) for you to develop your skills as a public speaker, and 2) for the rest of the class to learn more about the topic of your paper. Presentations should be about **15-20 minutes**, followed by about **5-10 minutes** of questions from the class. You are encouraged, but not required, to use supplemental tools (handouts, power point, etc.) in your presentation. Presentations are worth **50 points (=12.5% of final grade)**.

**POLICIES.**

1. **Reading.** This is a reading intensive course. The vast majority of homework will be reading of primary and secondary sources, both from the course textbooks and from supplemental texts distributed by the professor. You are expected to complete all reading assigned for the week prior to the last day of class that week (usually Wednesday).

2. **Attendance.** You are expected to attend all class meetings. If you need to miss class due to illness, family emergency, or some other valid reason, you must notify the professor ASAP. Excessive absences will negatively impact your grade, both through lowered performance and through loss of class participation credit.

3. **Tardiness.** Prompt arrival for class is expected. Students who arrive late disrupt class, distract others, and disrespect the professor. There will be a **5 minute** window of “grace” at the beginning of class. After that, you will need to see me after class to sign in and you will be recorded as tardy. **Three tardies will equal one absence.** This applies both to the attendance requirements for passing the course and to extra credit for good attendance.

4. **Excused Absences and Make-ups.** All make-ups must be requested in writing (by email) and, when at all possible, in advance. The written request should include 1) the student's name and 2) reason for missing class, and 3) should be accompanied by the required documentation (signed doctor's note, letter from a University official, etc.). Excused absences and make-ups for tests and quizzes are generally granted only for illness of the student, serious illness or death of a family member, serious family emergency, or participation in a university-sanctioned event. Excused absences for any other reason are granted solely at the discretion of the professor.

   The procedure for requesting a make-up is as follows: The student must send an email to the instructor as soon as possible. (1) For an illness, the email must be sent as soon as you recover from your illness (before you return to class) and the doctor's note must be provided to the instructor as soon as you return to class. (2) For a University-sanctioned event, the student must send the email request and give the letter to the instructor in class at least a week before the test. (3) For a family emergency, send the email request to the instructor as soon as possible, before the missed class period, if possible.

5. **Academic honesty.** Students are expected to fulfill all responsibilities honorably and with integrity. All work evaluated for a grade is expected and assumed to be your own without any assistance or collaboration from other students, professors, or other individuals, except for group projects. (Group study for tests, of course, is acceptable.) Cheating, plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty is a serious academic,
moral, and ethical offense and, should it occur on any assignment, will result in a grade of “F” for the course.

6. **Class decorum.** Students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible adults in a university environment. Any student whose behavior the instructor judges to be offensive or disrespectful may be required to leave class and may be dismissed from the course. Please, remember to silence cell phones before class.

7. **Changes to syllabus.** If it becomes necessary to make changes to the syllabus and schedule, the instructor will announce such changes in class. Knowledge of such changes is the student's responsibility, whether or not the student was in class when the announcement was made.

Class Schedule and Assignments

**Week 1 (01/13-01/15):** Introduction
Syllabus; Bandstra, 442-445 (Blackboard); Nickelsburg, 8-14 (Blackboard)

**Week 2 (01/22):** Definitions: Apocalypse, Apocalyptic, and Apocalypticism
Collins, 1-14

**Week 3 (01/27-01/29):** Roots of Apocalyptic Thought
Collins, 14-42; Cook, 1-18 (Blackboard)
Genesis 1-3; 6-9; 11:1-9; Enuma Elish (Blackboard); Bahman Yasht (Blackboard)

**Week 4 (02/03-02/05):** Emergence of Apocalypticism
Cook, 19-54
Ezekiel 38-39; Zechariah 1-6; 12-14; Isaiah 24-27

**Week 5 (02/10-02/12):** The Book of Watchers (1 Enoch 1-36)
Collins, 43-59; Sacchi, 47-61 (Blackboard)
1 Enoch 1-36

**Week 6 (02/17-02/19):** The Astronomical Book (1 Enoch 72-82); The Book of Dreams (1 Enoch 83-91)
Collins, 59-62, 67-70; VanderKam (Blackboard)
1 Enoch 72-91; Genesis 1-9 (skim); 1 Maccabees 1

**Week 7 (02/24-02/26):** Daniel
Collins, 85-115
Daniel 1-12

**Week 8 (03/03-03/05):** Epistle of Enoch (1 Enoch 92-107); Mid-Term Exam
Collins, 62-67; Nickelsburg, 110-115
1 Enoch 92-107
**Mid-Term Exam: 03/05**
NO CLASS 03/10-03/14 (Spring Break)

Week 9 (03/17-03/19): Apocalypticism at Qumran
Collins, 145-167
*The Community Rule* (1QM) (Blackboard); *The War Scroll* (1QM) (Blackboard)

Week 10 (03/24-03/26): *The Similitudes of Enoch* (1 Enoch 37-71); *Testament of Abraham*
Collins, 177-193, 251-255
1 Enoch 37-71; *Testament of Abraham* (Blackboard)

Week 11 (03/31-04/02): 4 Ezra; 2 Baruch
Collins, 195-225
4 Ezra (2 Esdras 3-14); 2 Baruch (Blackboard).

Week 12 (04/07-04/09): Early Christian Apocalypticism
Collins, 256-268
Mark 13; Matthew 24-25; Luke 21:5-38; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 1 Corinthians 15;
Romans 8:18-30; 2 Peter 3

Week 13 (04/14-04/16): Revelation
Collins, 269-279
Revelation 1-22

Week 14 (04/21-04/23): Student Presentations
Collins, 280-283

Week 15 (04/28/-04/30): Student Presentations

Final Exam: 05/05, 3:30-5:30