

HONORS 300—APOCALYPTIC VISION IN ANCIENT AND MODERN LITERATURE
FALL 2018

General Information

Participants—Cameron Dobrotka, Amber Gauss, Grace Mullen, Hannah Reynolds, Sierra Sanchez,
Madison Vanhook
Instructor—Dr. Barbara Kaiser
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Office Hours—M W F 1:30-3:30; Tu 9:00-11:00
Class meets MWF 11:45-12:50 in Hollenbeck 300. Bring Bibles and/or other assigned reading to class each day. Please turn off and put away cell phones and other electronic devices before coming to class.

Course Description

In this seminar we will first learn how to approach the esoteric apocalyptic literature from the Jewish and Christian traditions of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, such as 1 Enoch, Daniel, 4 Ezra, and Revelation. Having studied the ancient foundations of apocalyptic literature, we will consider how modern poets and fiction writers use, reinterpret, and sometimes subvert the forms, themes, structures, and imagery of the ancient apocalyptic texts. Throughout the semester we will ask: What are the strengths and enduring values of this kind of literature? What are some limitations and dangers of apocalyptic language?

Goals

In this course we will attempt to:

- read and analyze selected ancient and modern texts with apocalyptic forms, themes, or imagery;
- understand the historical context and development of ancient Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature;
- work on approaches to reading “eccentric” or esoteric literature;
- consider the ongoing legacy of apocalyptic vision, both positive and negative;
- improve writing skills;
- view all seminar participants as a community of learners sharing insights on a challenging topic.

Texts

Michael Coogan, editor. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible—New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, 4th or 5th edition
George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation*
Frederick J. Murphy, *Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World*
William Blake, *America: A Prophecy* (text out of print; available as used copies)
Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust*
Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*
Packet of duplicated material (supplied to participants)

Requirements and Assignments

1. Since you *are* the seminar, you are needed for every class session. In the case of illness or emergency, you should call or send an e-mail informing me of your absence before the class session begins.
2. To prepare for each seminar session, you must complete assigned reading and spend time rereading and thinking about the material and discussion questions.
3. You will be assigned short, typed responses (about 1 ½ -2 pages) to many of the readings in each section. These can be responses to discussion questions, write-ups of short oral presentations, or other analytical or creative contributions. These will be collected as they are assigned and will be the content of a portfolio due Friday, November 30. You may rewrite any of this material for the portfolio. This represents some of the most important work you will do for the course.
4. Take-home essays on Jewish apocalyptic literature are due on Wednesday, October 3.
5. You will write two research papers, one analyzing a short passage from an ancient Jewish or Christian text (5-7 pages), due November 5; and a longer paper (10-12 pages) on a modern apocalyptic text, due December 7. In each case you will share your discoveries in a class presentation.
6. For the final session you will reflect on the continuing legacy of apocalyptic vision in a short essay or creative writing (about 3-4 pages) and discussion with the seminar on December 13, 3:30-6:30.

Grades

Final grades are determined from these assignments:

- Portfolio—3/12 of grade (on the basis of on-time completion and quality of assignments)
- Take-home essays on Jewish apocalyptic literature—2/12 of grade
- Research papers on an ancient text—2/12 of grade
- Research paper on a modern text—3/12 of grade
- Essay or creative writing on the legacy of apocalyptic vision—1/12 of grade
- Participation—1/12 of grade (including attendance, timely arrival, attentiveness to others, contributions to discussion, observance of cell phone policy)

Since this is a Writing Intensive course, there is also a separate evaluation of writing skills (S/NC).

Special Needs

To arrange for accommodations and support with academic disabilities, contact Grace Whiteley, Disability Services Coordinator, at the COMPASS CENTER, Thomas Library, first floor (937-327-7891; whiteleyg@wittenberg.edu).

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential for our work together. Your signature on your work functions as your pledge of honesty, in accord with the Honor Statement printed below. Academic dishonesty on any assignment in this course usually results in failure of the entire course (grade of XF). Below is a copy from the first page of the Wittenberg University Code of Academic Integrity. You can find the complete document, including policies and procedures, at <http://www5.wittenberg.edu/Student Life/ Leadership and Policies/ Honor Council>.

Preface

Wittenberg University is dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and truth. At the heart of our search for knowledge is personal honesty, an honesty that makes possible an open and vibrant exchange of ideas. True community and academic excellence thrive at Wittenberg through honesty, trust, and mutual respect. It is the aim of this Code of Academic Integrity to foster an atmosphere in which each individual can reach their fullest potential as students and teachers and, ultimately, as human beings.

Honor Statement

Academic work submitted at Wittenberg will carry the honor statement: *"I affirm that my work upholds the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity at Wittenberg, and that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance."*

Definitions of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of community standards. It undermines the bonds between members of the community and defrauds those who may eventually depend upon our knowledge and integrity. Such dishonesty includes:

Cheating

Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or assistance in any academic exercise.

Fabrication

Falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitating academic dishonesty

Helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this code. Facilitating academic dishonesty includes failing to act on knowledge of academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism

Representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, either knowingly or through negligence.

Writing Center

The following is a message from Dr. Mike Mattison, Director of the Writing Center:

The Writing Center provides friendly, professional support for all types of writing projects: from academic and professional papers to personal statements and fiction or poetry. Trained student advisors work with writers at every stage of the writing process—brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing. The Writing Center is located in 112 Hollenbeck Hall and can be reached at 327-6154. For more information, and to access our online calendar, please visit our website: <http://www.wittenberg.edu/administration/writingcenter.html>.

Note: This syllabus is an outline of the *intended* schedule for the course and is subject to change if necessary.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE: DEFINITIONS AND CONTEXTS (August 20-27)

- M Introduction to Seminar Participants and to the Course: The Power and Danger of Apocalyptic Language
- W Defining *Apocalypse* and *Apocalypticism*
Reading—Murphy, “Definitions and Origins,” 1-26
- F Ancient Context: Near Eastern Combat Myth and Biblical Traditions
Reading—Murphy, “Proto-Apocalyptic Biblical Texts,” 27-66
- M Hellenistic Historical Context: Resistance to Empire
Reading—Schiffman, “The Hellenistic Age,” *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple & Rabbinic Judaism*, 60-79 (Resource Book=RB)
Portier-Young, “Hellenistic Rule in Judea: Setting the Stage for Resistance,” *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism*, 49-77 (RB)

II. ENOCH: APOCALYPTIC TRANSGRESSION, COSMOLOGICAL ORDER, AND MILITANT RESISTANCE (August 29-September 10)

- F 1 Enoch 1-16 in Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 1-3, 19-38 (Book of the Watchers)
Murphy, “Ancient Jewish Apocalypses,” 125-131
Portier-Young, “Symbolic Resistance in the *Book of the Watchers*,” *The Watchers in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, 39-49 (RB)
- M 1 Enoch 17-36 in Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 38-49 (Book of the Watchers)
Murphy, “Ancient Jewish Apocalypses,” 131-133
1 Enoch 72-82 in Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 6-7, 96-115 (Book of the Luminaries)
- W Historical Context: Introducing Antiochus IV Epiphanes
Reading—Portier-Young, “Seleucid State Terror,” *Apocalypse against Empire*, 140-175 (RB)
- F Historical Context: Antiochus’s Reign of Terror
Reading—Portier-Young, “The Edict of Antiochus: Persecution and the Unmaking of the Judean World,” *Apocalypse against Empire*, 176-216 (RB)
- M 1 Enoch 83-90, in Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 8-9, 116-135 (Enoch’s Dream Visions)
Murphy, “The Animal Apocalypse,” 88-91

III. DANIEL: NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE TO EMPIRE (September 12-17)

- W Daniel 1-6
Selections from Smith-Christopher, commentary on Daniel, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*
Murphy, “Daniel and the *Animal Apocalypse*,” 67-79
- F Daniel 7-12
Murphy, “Daniel and the *Animal Apocalypse*,” 79-88, 91-92
- M Selections from secondary literature on Daniel

IV. QUMRAN: AN APOCALYPTIC COMMUNITY (September 19-24)

- W Video—BBC documentary on Dead Sea Scrolls (watch before class)
Horsley, “Roman Conquest and Roman Rule,” *Revolt of the Scribes*, 107-121 (RB)
- F The Community Rule, from Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 97-117 (RB)
Murphy, “The Dead Sea Scrolls,” 197-226

- M War Scroll, from Vermes, *Complete DSS*, 159-183 (RB)
Horsley, "The War against the 'Kittim': The Covenant Community at Qumran," *Revolt of the Scribes*, 123-141 (RB)

V. PARABLES OF ENOCH: REVELATION OF THE SON OF MAN (September 26-October 3)

- W Book of Parables, in Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 3-6, 50-71
Murphy, "The Similitudes of Enoch," 137-141
- F Book of Parables, in Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 71-95
Murphy, "The Similitudes of Enoch," 141-143
- M No Class Session—Work on Take-home Exam Essays
- W **Essays due**—share insights with class (October 3)

VI. JESUS: APOCALYPTIC PROPHET (October 5-12)

- F Mark 1-10
Murphy, "The Gospels, Q, and the Acts of the Apostles," 227-237
- M Mark 11-16
Murphy, "The Gospels, Q, and the Acts of the Apostles," 237-243
- W The Theoretical "Sayings Gospel Q" (handout)
Murphy, "The Gospels, Q, and the Acts of the Apostles," 244-251
- F Murphy, "Jesus the Apocalyptic Prophet," 281-305

[FALL BREAK—October 15-16]

VII. REVELATION: APOCALYPTIC VISION AND WORSHIP (October 17-22)

- W Revelation 1:1-8:5
Murphy, "The Book of Revelation," 93-108
Barr, "The Apocalypse of John as Oral Enactment," *Interpretation* (1986): 243-256 (RB)
- F Revelation 8:6-15:4
Murphy, "The Book of Revelation," 108-117
- M Revelation 15:5-22:21
Murphy, "The Book of Revelation," 117-123
Collins, "The Power of Apocalyptic Rhetoric—Catharsis," *Crisis and Catharsis*, 141-163 (RB)

VIII. 4 EZRA: APOCALYPTIC VISION AND THEODICY (October 24-31)

- W 4 Ezra (=2 Esdras) 3:1-6:34
Murphy, "Ancient Jewish Apocalypses," 143-146
- F 4 Ezra 6:35-9:25
Murphy, "Ancient Jewish Apocalypses," 146-147
- M 4 Ezra 9:26-14:48
Murphy, "Ancient Jewish Apocalypses," 147-151
- W The Great Theodicy Debate: Ezra vs. Uriel

- IX. SHORT RESEARCH PAPERS ON AN ANCIENT TEXT** (November 2-5)
- F No Class—Work on papers
- M Presentation of Papers to Class
Papers due (November 5)
- X. APOCALYPSES OF THE EARLY CHURCH: TOURS OF HEAVEN AND HELL**
 (November 7-9)
- W Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah, in Reddish, *Apocalyptic Literature*, 277-290 (RB)
 Apocalypse of Peter, in Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures*, 280-287
 Carey, “Christian Ascents: What Are They Good For?” *Ultimate Things*, 207-222 (RB)
- F Apocalypse of Paul, in Reddish, *Apocalyptic Literature*, 291-325 (RB)
 Carey, “Christian Ascents,” *Ultimate Things*, 222-227 (RB)
- XI. APOCALYPTIC IMAGERY IN POETRY: “FIERY JOY,” A “ROUGH BEAST,” AND
 THE “RAINBOW’S EPITAPH”** (November 12-16)
- M Blake, “America: A Prophecy,” Preludium, Plates 1-8
- W Blake, “America: A Prophecy,” Plates 9-16
- F Yeats, “The Second Coming” (handout)
 Lowell, “The Rainbow’s End” (handout)
- XII. NATHANAEL WEST: PARODY OF APOCALYPSE AND THE COLLAPSE OF
 MEANING** (November 19-26)
- M West, *Day of the Locust*
- [WF November 21-23—THANKSGIVING BREAK]
- M West, *Day of the Locust* (including parts of the video)
- XIII. POST-APOCALYPTIC HORROR** (November 28-30)
- W McCarthy, *The Road*
- F McCarthy, *The Road*
 Selections from literary critics
Portfolios due (November 30)
- XIV. RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS: APOCALYPTIC VISION IN MODERN LITERATURE**
 (December 3-7)
- M _____, _____
- W _____, _____
- F _____, _____
Research papers due
- XV. YOUR VISION AND CELEBRATION OF THE END** (December 13)
- J. Collins, “The Legacy of Apocalypticism,” *Encounters with Biblical Theology*, 155-166
 (RB)
- Murphy, “The Ongoing Legacy of Apocalypticism,” 379-386
- Horsley, “Rethinking Apocalyptic Texts/ Then and Now,” *Revolt of the Scribes*, 203-207
 (handout)
- Final Essay** and discussion