



## **Apocalypse: Jewish and Christian Movements and the End of Time (01:840:305:02)**

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Campbell Hall CA-A1  
T/Th 1:10-2:30

### **Course Description**

From the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation to prophecy-like warnings from today's supposed pundits, many texts and leaders threaten a time of global catastrophe and divine judgment. Although many of these traditions convey images of “*the apocalypse*” or “*the end*,” we will seek to understand these claims as products of diverse social-settings and cultural environments, not as evidence for a single over-arching religious event. Focusing especially on Jewish and Christian literature, this course aims to understand the way ancient and modern apocalyptic traditions reflect the values, aspirations, and anxieties of their writers, editors, and earliest audiences. The first part of the course sets Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature within relevant social, political, and mythic contexts, considers the evidence for apocalyptic or millenarian movements associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls and the origins of Christianity, and explores relevant historical and social-scientific methodologies. In the second part of the course, we will shift to consider how 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century traditions appropriate and re-imagine the thought and imagery of the biblical texts, especially relating them to recent millenarian cults and the Left Behind series of Christian thrillers.

This course will fulfill goals for the following writing intensive core requirements:

- a. (s2) Students will work at revision and peer-review of their writing in 3 ways: 1) in collectively producing and editing an analysis of a film's use of biblical traditions; 2) in peer review of at least one short writing assignment 3) by engaging in peer editing of a final paper draft. These assignments will teach students to respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers and the instructor through successive drafts and revision.
- b. The frequent reading responses, writing assignments, and group-work will teach students to communicate effectively in modes appropriate to the study of religion and apocalyptic movements and literature in particular.
- c. The midterm, final paper, and writing assignments will teach students to evaluate and critically assess sources for apocalyptic movements and literature and use appropriate conventions of attribution and citation.
- d. The midterm, final paper, and writing assignments focus on teaching students to analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

### **Course Organization and Policies**

Students should familiarize themselves with Rutgers' policies on academic integrity and plagiarism. All work must be your own, and violations will lead to academic discipline and potential failure of the course. Whenever you use someone else's work or argument, even if not quoting, you must cite it. *When in doubt, always cite.*

No use of cell phones or internet (other than class-related work) is permitted in class.

Bring a hard copy Bible (no electronic Bibles) to class every day.

### **A word on studying religion**

Studying religion explores matters that are deeply significant and sensitive to many. Be assured that no one will be judged or graded on the basis of his/her personal beliefs or the degree to which these beliefs align with those of the professor. Students are encouraged to express their views honestly throughout the course. Please do not hesitate to approach the professor with any questions or concerns you may have. Classroom conversation will be conducted with respect in a spirit of kindness and humility.

### **Requirements for the Course:**

1. Attendance: regular attendance and participation is a significant part of your grade. In the case of illness or emergency, please inform the instructor beforehand that you will not be able to attend class. In the case of more long-term illnesses or other issues, please provide a note from a health-care provider, or, if appropriate, from a dean. More than two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for attendance.
2. Email: Students must maintain a working e-mail account at all times and check this regularly for syllabus updates and announcements. When responses are required, please respond in a timely manner.
3. Reading responses: for some classes, students will complete a reading response for the assigned readings, post it to Sakai before 1 pm before the class meeting, and come to class ready to engage in discussion (bring hard copies of responses to class). Occasionally these responses will be discussed in peer review groups during class. Reading responses should wrestle with significant issues in the reading; you may think of them as first drafts of very short essays. Responses should be between 200–300 words and respond to one of the prompts on the syllabus. Students may opt to address an issue not raised in the prompts, but the issue must directly and critically engage the reading. Responses of appropriate length that are on time and address the prompt will receive at least a 9/10, so long as *writing is polished and proofread*. More than two typos will cause a 2-point deduction, more than five typos a 5-point deduction. Late responses, even if one-minute past the due time, will also have points deducted. The lowest two grades will be dropped. If you miss class due to illness or emergency, you may submit the assignment to me directly via e-mail.
4. Midterm exam: exam covering the first part of the course. It will consist of questions circulated in advance. Student essays can be prepared beforehand but must be only written in class during the 80-minute exam time.
5. Final paper (2400-2800 words) with peer review: A paper on a topic to be selected by the student, **due by 5 pm on Dec. 19**. By 5pm on 12/19 it must be uploaded to Sakai and sent to the instructor as an e-mail; unreadable attachments will not be accepted, and five points will be deducted at the beginning of each 30-minute increment papers are late (e.g., 1-29 minutes late=5 pt deduction). The prompts for reading responses provide launch points for a range of paper topics that build on coursework; students may choose to develop their own topic, but this must be approved well in advance by the instructor. The final paper should be a proofread, carefully argued, well-written essay with a clear thesis and properly cited supporting arguments. Make your thesis statement the last sentence of the first paragraph and underline it. Excessive typos (i.e., more than a couple) will result in point deductions.

\*Students will submit a first draft \*via Sakai [\*or just email?] by Dec. 1, which will count for 5% of the final grade (=1/8 of paper grade). This will be graded mainly on effort. At this time, students will be paired together randomly and provide substantial peer review for each other by Dec. 8 (worth another 5%). Peer review of another student's first draft entails proofreading for typographical and grammatical errors, marginal comments and suggestions for improving style and argumentation, and a paragraph (<150 words) assessing the

paper's strengths and areas for potential improvement. Do not include a grade, and always make your critiques constructive. You may do peer review on a hard copy of your partner's paper or via electronic comments, e.g., MS Word (do not use Adobe comments as they cannot be viewed without certain software). Peer review – i.e., your partner's first draft with your comments – must be turned in to the professor via email or hard copy by 5pm Dec. 8.

Assignments will be weighted roughly as follows:

- a. Midterm 20% (possible essay questions will be distributed in advance)
- b. Final Paper 40% (1<sup>st</sup> draft 5%, peer review of another's first draft 5%, final draft 30%)
- c. Reading Responses 25%
- d. Attendance and participation 15%

Books required for purchase:

- 1) David Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown* (rev. ed. 2003)
- 2) You must own a *hard copy* modern translation of the Bible (NRSV, RSV, NIV, ESV, NASB). Please bring a physical (not electronic) Bible to class every day.

### Creation and Battle in Ancient Mediterranean and West Asian Traditions

Tues 9/6 Introduction to the Course

Thurs 9/8 Read: Gen 1:1–6:9; Dan 7; 1 Thess 4:13–5:11; Mark 13; Matt 25:31–46; Rev 1–4; 20–21  
Compare: 1) Mark 9:1 with Luke 9:27  
2) Mark 14:62 with Luke 22:69 and Acts 1:1–9  
3) Romans 6:4–5 with Col 2:12

The above surveys some of the most famous biblical texts about creation and destruction. Pay attention to their similarities and differences. (Differences are often just as important as similarities.) Take notes as you read, especially marking issues that seem clear, confusing, or difficult to understand.

**All:** Write a 200–300 word response on one of the following:

1. How does Genesis 1–2 seem to imagine the relationships between God and the world, as compared with Dan 7, Mark 13, or Rev 20–21? (Compare Genesis to at least one other text.)
2. How do these texts imagine divine warrior figures? E.g. how do the texts describe them and how do they relate to other divine or human beings? (Discuss at least three different texts.)
3. How do these texts envision the gods, divine beings, or the world of divinity generally? E.g. if you had only these texts to go on, how would you explain the main features of the gods to an alien from outer-space? (Compare at least three different texts.)

Tues 9/13 Myths and the Question of Defining “Myth”  
An extrabiblical myth of creation: the Babylonian Enuma Elish (Sakai; read p. 15–17 [intro]; 37–59 [for the text] but skip 18–36)  
Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*, 141–159 (Sakai)

The Enuma Elish is the Babylonian epic of creation. This text is helpful for understanding ancient myths about creation and battle; although important in its own right, it has often been used to explore similar patterns in biblical and non-biblical apocalypses. The Lincoln reading is a theoretical/interpretative piece that begins with an overview of certain important 20<sup>th</sup> century theories of myth and then develops an alternative and applies this theory to some

interesting examples. Try not to get bogged down in the first part; it is important to understand that our theories and interpretations do not come from nowhere, but you should focus on his theory and his application of this theory to myths drawn from Tain Bo, Pindar, Plato, and Empedocles.

**All:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following:

1. Interpreters have often characterized the Enuma Elish as a myth about creation as well as about divine kingship and rule (i.e. the eventual rise of Marduk as king of the gods). In what ways does the text make Marduk central?
2. What are the most characteristic features of the gods in the Enuma Elish? How do they relate to one another and to the cosmos as a whole? Can you see any hints of how this might be interpreted as “taxonomy in narrative form,” to use Lincoln’s term?
3. What does Lincoln mean by theorizing myth as “a taxonomy” in narrative form? Try to develop a clear, concise statement of his theory. You may quote directly from his text at times but do not over-use direct quotes; you should be trying to understand the theory by putting it into your own words.
4. Discuss the most important features of Lincoln’s interpretations of the myths of Táin Bó, Pindar, Plato, and Empedocles (consider at least 2).

Thurs 9/15 A Greek Myth of Creation, Battle, and Kingship  
Hesiod’s *Theogony* (Sakai, pp. 61–89)

Scholars attach the name Hesiod to the *Theogony* (and to the *Works and Days*, see below) but these works more accurately compile a body of Greek poetry that likely dates to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries bce and has no single author.

**All:** Instead of a reading response, write a short 200–300 word analysis of *Theogony* that applies Lincoln’s theory of myth to some text, theme, or motif of the *Theogony*. Print out and bring reading response to the *Theogony* class for in-class peer review during the 1<sup>st</sup> 20-30 minutes of class.

Tues 9/20 Biblical Accounts and their Influences  
Genesis 1–12:3  
Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 1–25

Chapters 1–12:3 of Genesis give an account of creation, decline, and restoration in various forms, e.g. the expulsion of Adam and Eve; their descendants; Noah and the flood; and the selection of Abraham, who will become the patriarch of Israel. The Levenson readings understand these myths, especially the creation account and the flood, in light of other ancient near eastern myths; he also argues that many of these motifs are relevant to other biblical texts (e.g. Isa 51, 54; Ps 74, 82, 104; Job 40). As you read, try to pay particular attention to his careful ways of relating the biblical and non-biblical materials, especially his cautions about understanding the biblical texts as evidence for some uniform, unique (against Kaufman, especially), linear, and unambiguous theology.

**Last names A – M:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following questions (note: everyone should come prepared to discuss):

1. In what ways is Genesis similar to and different from myths about Baal and Marduk, according to Levenson? (You may choose only one or two of the most important texts or issues for comparison.)

2. According to Levenson, what is the “combat myth” and how does it influence the creation story of Genesis and at least 2 other later biblical texts he discusses (e.g. Isa 51, 54; Ps 74, 82, 104; Job 40)?
3. Comment on some aspect of the way gender/sex and lineage/reproduction function in this text. E.g. To what extent does the text make Eve responsible for the expulsion from the garden? Does the text attribute responsibility to gender/sex? In what ways does the text make lineage and reproduction important? (You can focus on the expulsion of Adam and Eve if you choose but should also discuss issues that arise later in the text.)

Thurs 9/22 A non-Canonical Myth: Fallen Watchers, the Giants, and the Flood  
 The Book of the Watchers: 1 Enoch 1–36 (Sakai)  
 A Greek myth of creation and decline: Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 1–425 (Sakai, p. 23–35)

This section of 1 Enoch is likely written around 300 bce by an unknown author and tells the story of the fall of some heavenly beings (Watchers) and its results for world and cosmic history. The text is occasionally repetitive and confusing, in part because it weaves together at least two different traditions about the Watchers. Hesiod’s *Works and Days* is a Greek tradition of creation and decline, and some interpreters have likened the pessimism of the myth to apocalyptic literature.

**Last names N – Z:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following:

1. Compare how the writers of *1 Enoch* and *Works and Days* characterize the world of divinity. How do they portray the major divine characters, e.g. what are their personalities like and what powers do they have? Select a few important features rather than describing every aspect of the gods in these texts.
2. Some scholars have thought of Hesiod’s myth of decline as similar to apocalyptic myths. Based on these readings, can you see any merit to such ideas? Why or why not?

Tues 9/27 Dan 7–12

Daniel is the only apocalyptic text found in the canon of the Hebrew Bible. It contains strange visions, monstrous creatures, and sometimes elusive allegories for historical events in the author’s time, especially the events surrounding the Maccabean revolt (167 bce). The larger political-religious history of the preceding centuries is important for understanding this revolt. In outline, Judeans had a period of monarchic self-rule in Palestine that ended decisively with the Babylonian exile in 586 bce and the destruction of their (only) temple. The Jews were eventually allowed to return and rebuild the Temple (roughly 70 years later), but they never achieved self-rule again except for the ca. 100-year rule under the Hasmoneans (ca. 164 bce–63 bce). The Jews in Palestine are a subject people of a series of larger empires, first the Persians (who conquer the Babylonians and allow them to rebuild the Temple), the Greeks (after Alexander the Great, Judea falls under two competing Greek empires, the Ptolemaic and the Seleucid), and the Roman (beginning in 63 bce). The Maccabean revolt was a successful revolt in the 160s bce against foreign rule (specifically a Seleucid ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes IV), was lead by Judas Maccabeas in response to the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem. Certain Hellenizing reforms under Antiochus seem to have led to the revolt, but this was sparked by something that Antiochus did in the temple which made it impure (perhaps sacrificing a pig on the altar) and therefore meant that sacrifices and offerings to God could not continue. The revolt was successful and in 164 the temple was rededicated (Hanukkah). Judea, for the next 100 or so years, was ruled by a Jewish monarchy descended from the Maccabeans known as the Hasmoneans.

**Last names A – M:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following:

1. Write on some aspect of the way this text characterizes the divine world. Focus especially on chapters 7 and 12: Who does the “one like the son of man” seem to be? What is the role of the archangel Michael in Dan 12?

Thurs 9/29

An Apocalyptic “Community” at Qumran?

*Rule of the Community* (aka 1QS or *Serekh ha-Yahad*) (Sakai)

The Community Rule is one of many texts found in the caves of Qumran, these texts being called Dead Sea Scrolls. The collection (and this text) appears to be part of a library belonging to an apocalyptic separatist group living in the desert on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. The settlement probably dates from ca. 159 bce to 70 ce, when it is destroyed in the Roman-Jewish war. (The war was an uprising of the Jews against Roman Rule that resulted in the defeat of the rebels, the burning of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple). The library contains copies of biblical texts, commentaries on them, and original texts such as the Community Rule and War Scroll. Among the original texts scholars have noticed certain prominent ideas such as their opposition to the Jerusalem temple and specifically the legitimacy of its calendar and priests. This is especially important because the Jerusalem temple was the very center of Jewish religious practice. Many of the texts suggest that at least some of the leaders expected an imminent apocalypse, that they focused authority on a particular leader of the community (the teacher of righteousness), and expected two Messiahs—a military figure and an interpreter (probably the teacher of righteousness).

**Last names N – Z:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following:

1. Comment on some aspect of the admissions process for new members. E.g. How does the admission process work, according to 1QS? What do you make of the intensive examination this involves and the giving up of property?
2. How does this text imagine the community members spending their time? What kinds of events organize and regulate time and social relationships?

Tues 10/4

Text, Canon, and Early Christianity

1 Thessalonians

Ehrman, “Do We Have the Texts of the New Testament?” 487–500

Ehrman, “The World of Early Christian Tradition,” 29–47

**All:** Come prepared to discuss the following questions:

1. As clearly as possible, explain what Ehrman means by “textual criticism of the Greek New Testament.” E.g. what are the problems that TC tries to solve? How does it try to solve them?
2. What is the canon and the Greek text of the NT? You will also want to outline, briefly, the challenges of reconstructing the Greek text of the canonical New Testament, as per #1.
3. What are the most important features of Greco-Roman religion, according to Ehrman, and why does he use the term “Greco-Roman” in this way?

Thurs 10/6

An Apocalyptic Type of Judaism: Paul and Earliest Christianity

Galatians

K. Stendahl, “Call Rather Than Conversion,” 1–23 (sakai)

Recommended (Ehrman, “The Jewish Context,” 49–56, Sakai); for those who have not taken Rel 202, this is required. \*Beker/Käsemann/Martyn?

The authentic letters of Paul are our earliest source for the later movement that becomes Christianity. The Christian tradition believes that Christianity begins with the Jesus of the canonical Gospels (Matt, Mark, Luke, and John). Yet the Gospels were likely composed 40-65 years after Jesus' death, contain remarkable differences, and reflect the interests of later Christian communities in portraying his life, teachings, and relationship to Judaism in the wake of the catastrophic Roman-Jewish war (66-73 ce). On the other hand, all of Paul's letters pre-date the war. Many scholars hold only 7 or 8 of the canonical letters to come from Paul himself, but these remain multiple texts from a single early Christian leader working in the decades just after Jesus' death. The letters say very little about Jesus' life and teachings but rather address groups or churches of mostly Gentile Christ-followers scattered around the ancient Mediterranean in cities like Corinth, Thessalonica, and Rome.

Many hold 1 Thessalonians to be the earliest letter by Paul and Romans to be the latest, with the others somewhere in-between, spanning 49-58 ce. Jesus died around 30 ce, while the gospels (with the possible exception of Mark) all post-date the Jewish war in 66-73 ce that destroys the central institution of Judaism, the Temple. Paul is famously known as the apostle to the Gentiles, the non-Jews, and a major concern of some of his letters – esp. Galatians and Romans – is to negotiate the inclusion of non-Jews into the chosen people of God.

**All:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following:

1. According to 1 Thess, how does Paul view his work as a leader, and what are the new beliefs he claims to have taught the Thessalonians? Can you get a basic sense of his core teachings about God and Christ?
2. What is the significance of the coming wrath in general? According to 1 Thess 5, what are his expectations about when Christ will be returning? To what extent does 2 Thess 1-2 seem to tell a different story? (Note, many scholars think that 2 Thess may be pseudonymous, but it contains some fascinating material for thinking about Paul's possible apocalyptic views.)
3. What is the difference between a "call" and a "conversion" according to Stendahl? You should be able to clearly define these terms. Does Gal 1-2 suggest a call or conversion? (This reading will be important for the exam.)
4. Gal 1-2 is the earliest and best source we have for understanding the leadership of the earliest movement. What do Paul's brief comments here suggest about the early movement?

Tues 10/11 1 Corinthians

1. 1 Corinthians discusses a (dizzying) range of issues that Paul seeks to address. Choosing only one or two of them (e.g. factionalism, Paul's authority), explore the logic of Paul's argument, with particular attention to how they develop Paul's authority relative to that of others.
2. Though Paul explores important aspects of the apocalyptic future in 1 Cor 15, esp. 15:23-28, how do expectations of Christ's imminent return shape other parts of the letter? E.g. see language about the "day of Christ" or think about the way the letter evokes time and immediate expectations to discuss Paul's rivals or ethical norms.

Thurs 10/13 Romans 1-11; 1 Cor 15 (again); compare also Romans 6:4-5 with Col 2:12

**All:** Write a 200-300 word response on the following:

1. Romans is Paul's most famous, difficult, and theologically dense letter. Where do you find apocalyptic ideas coming out most directly (focus on chs. 1-11) and how do they seem to be shaping his thinking? E.g. in what ways do temporal expectations (e.g. the broad unfolding of a divine plan for history) shape Paul's claims e.g. in chaps. 1-2, 4, 6 or

Tues 10/18 Apocalyptic Thought in the Gospels  
 Gospel of Mark  
 Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 105–112 (on the Synoptic Problem, Sakai)

Remember the basic timeline for the gospels and Paul: first the authentic letters of Paul (only source prior to the destruction of the Temple in 70 that survives), then Mark writing during or just after the war and the destruction of the Temple, then later Matt and Luke (who both know and use Mark's gospel plus some other material). Mark is the earliest gospel but lacks many famous portions of the gospel narratives and teaching, esp. a birth and infancy story about Jesus' early life and large chunks of teaching material like the sermon on the Mt.

**Last names A – M:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following:

1. The motifs of secrecy, misunderstanding, and abandonment appear prominent in the gospel of Mark, but are sometimes omitted in Luke and Matthew (see the Ehrman reading for discussions of the relationships between these texts). How do these motifs shape the broader image of who Jesus was and what he did? (Use specific examples).
2. What are Jesus' teachings about the end time (see esp. Mark 13); are there other texts in Mark where these expectations appear on the horizon? (Use concrete examples).
3. If you were going to make a film out of the Gospel of Mark, what would be the challenges of doing so?

Thurs 10/20 Synoptic Comparisons  
 Luke (whole gospel); Acts 1  
 Compare also: Mark 9:1 with Luke 9:27; Mark 14:62 with Luke 22:69 and Acts 1:1–9

**Last names N – Z:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following:

1. In what ways do Jesus' teachings about the end time shape the images of Jesus in Luke? E.g. in what contexts do such expectations appear on the horizon? (Use concrete examples).
2. Scholars have often noted a shift away from imminent expectations of Christ's return in the gospel of Luke and Acts. Focusing on at least three texts for comparison, does this view seem to have merit?
3. If you were going to make a film out of the Gospel of Luke, what would be the challenges of doing so?

Tues 10/25 Revelation 1-12

As you read Revelation, you may find it helpful to consult the introduction in your study Bibles as well as the footnotes. Here is a brief outline that you may find helpful:

- I. Introduction and letters to the 7 churches (1–3)
- II. What is to come: chapters 4–22
  - o prophet taken up to heaven through window in sky
    - § God worshipped by hundreds of heavenly beings
    - § scroll scene: no one able to open, then lamb opens
  - o 7 seals: each seal broken brings catastrophe: war, famine, death
    - § 6<sup>th</sup> seal: sun turns black, moon turns to blood, stars fall



- § 7<sup>th</sup> seal: silence before 7 more disasters
- o 7 angels and trumpets: natural disasters, dreaded beasts, terrible suffering
- § 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet: beginning of end; coming of antichrists and false prophets
- o 7 more angels with bowl of wrath: disease, misery, and death
- o whore of Babylon destroyed in chap. 17 (18–19, rejoicing in heaven)
- o final cosmic battle between Christ and the antichrists (thrown into lake of fire)
- § Satan imprisoned in a pit
- o Christ and saints rule for 1000 years followed by judgment
- o new heaven and earth, new Jerusalem

**All:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following:

1. What are the major concerns raised in the opening letters to the 7 churches? How does the writer characterize his relationship with the implied readers of the text? How do these letters fit (or not fit) with the subsequent texts?
2. What kinds of persons can you imagine writing this text or being interested in hearing/reading it? (Use concrete examples to show that you have done the reading).
3. If you were going to make this into a movie, what might be some of the challenges?

Thurs 10/27 Revelation (reprise)  
Jan Willem van Henten, “Dragon Myth and Imperial Ideology in Revelation 12–13,” 181–203

1. Explore some aspect of the discussion about Jesus’ apocalypticism as developed in Dale Allison, “the Eschatology of Jesus,” 267-302.
2. According to van Henten, what are the potential problems of other interpretations of Rev 12–13? How does his alternative attempt to fix these problems?
3. Evaluate the strength of van Henten’s basic argument (or set of arguments), especially focusing on how he tries to shed light on the text of Rev 12–13.
4. What is “imperial ideology” according to van Henten, and in what ways might this be important for understanding Revelation?

Tues 11/1 **Midterm Exam** – Essay exam responding to questions circulated in advance. Students may prepare notes beforehand but must write the entire essay during the 80-min class period. The questions \*\*will be focused on primary texts (i.e., biblical texts, *Enuma Elish*, *Theogony*, *Rule of the Community* [=1QS], *Book of the Watchers* [=1 Enoch 1-36]).

## Part 2: 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Millenarianism

Thurs 11/3 In-class screening: *The Late, Great Planet Earth*  
*Group activity analyzing use of Biblical passages. Students will split into groups and (working together) reflect on some aspect of the film’s use of biblical literature. Students must post their individual 200-300 word responses to the Sakai forums before 9 pm on 11/4.*

Tues 11/8 Charismatic and Other Forms of Authority  
Max Weber, “Charismatic Authority,” 358–373 from *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Sakai)  
Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, ix–xxxix (Sakai)

*Warning: Don’t become theory panicked! Many students find reading theory intimidating because it tends to be abstract, use unfamiliar terms, and engage in debates with other*

*theorists that may not be fully explained. If you find the readings difficult, just try to take it slow and figure out the main ideas he is raising; we can work much of this out in class.*

1. According to Weber, how do charismatic forms of authority establish their legitimacy? What is charisma and how does routinization tend to transform the early phase of the charismatic movement? What basic social and economic factors does he see as driving routinization?
2. How does Worsley attempt to refine Weber's theory? What does Worsley mean when he writes, "Charisma, therefore, sociologically viewed, is a social relationship, not an attribute of individual personality or a mystical quality" (xii)? Why does Worsley stress the idea that the relationships between leader and followers are more important than the claims of the leader alone?

### **Worsley on Religion:**

Theoretical work on religion has tended to debate certain types of questions, many of which are explicitly or implicitly alive in Worsley's analysis. For instance, theorists have long noticed that their conceptions of what religion is tend to be shaped by certain Western assumptions about the cosmos (e.g. the empirical world we live in is the world of cause and effect, science, and is rationally knowable to human beings; the supernatural realm is totally other and outside the scientific cosmos of planets, stars, matter, and energy) and certain specifically Christian notions of what religion is (especially a system of beliefs, doctrines, and rituals). A major question is, then, how do we develop understandings of religion that are not determined by Western and Christian assumptions? Another major issue is whether or not religions are essentially symbolic expressions of the social order that *functions* to promote group solidarity and social control by enforcing a variety of culturally determined norms and sanctions. Such views, often associated with Durkheim, have been criticized for over-emphasizing stability and function. Another major issue is whether or not definitions of religions should say something about gods or super-human agents; Worsley will agree with Spiro that it should, but others have tended to say that religion is about some panhuman yearning for the sacred or the mysterious (a view especially associated with Eliade, whom we will read shortly).

1. According to Worsley, what are the promises and limitations of studying the Cargo Cults as species of religion? (This is broad, so you will need to down-size to focus on a particular point or issue.)

Thurs 11/10 Jonestown  
David Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown*, xvii–11, 51–78

**All:** Write a 200-300 word response on one of the following:

1. What does Chidester mean by trying to "humanize" the Jonestown movement and in what ways does this contrast to other responses?
2. Chidester writes: "A religion, in this sense, is a way of being a human person in a human place" (xix). What do you make of this definition? What does he mean by "a culture of redemptive sacrifice"?
3. Chidester writes: "The classification system of the People's Temple created a symbolic universe within which superhuman resources could be located that could elevate victims of a subhumanizing social system into a fully human identity" (51). What do you make of this? What are the three strategies he finds in Jones' negotiation of the idea of salvation?

- Tues 11/15     Jonestown  
Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, 79–128
1. Chidester writes: “Human beings do not simply occupy space. They live in a meaningful space that is ordered, organized and experienced through a variety of strategies of spatial orientation” (79); these allow people (Downs and Stea) to “acquire, code, recall, and manipulate information about the nature of their spatial environment” (79). What do you make of this? What is "body space"?
  2. What does it mean to claim (as Hubert and Mauss do) that “there is no universal timescale” (105)
- Thurs 11/17     Jonestown and Its Aftermath  
Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide* 129–169
1. According to Chidester, how does Jones seek to control time for his followers? To what extent do you find the other cases of religious suicide helpful for understanding the Jonestown event?
  2. Chidester writes: “What a fluid thing is a *human*. Located in a network of classification, carved out of space, synchronized in time, a human identity is a detailed process of negotiation. A religious worldview sets the terms and conditions with which a human identity may be negotiated. Religions are irreducible experiments in being human; they are enterprises of meaningful and powerful symbolic negotiation—generating, appropriating, manipulating, rejecting, and inverting symbols of classification and orientation that locate human beings as human” (169). What do you make of this?
- Tues 11/22     *No Class*
- Thurs 11/24     *Thanksgiving – No Class*
- Tues 11/29     Apocalypse, Crisis, and Global Capitalism  
Comaroff and Comaroff, “Millennial Capitalism: First thoughts on a Second Coming,” *Public Culture* 12 (2000) 291–343 (Sakai)
- A few notes on the terms used in this essay:     Comoroff and Comoroff (a husband and wife team of anthropologists) often use "interrogate" in place of "analyze" or "explain."     Economic analysis: They focus on material issues (i.e. those having to do with money, goods, and the economy) and especially some of the core insights of Marxist analysis. (Many scholars find some of Marx's basic analysis quite convincing while eschewing his thoughts on revolution.)     Neoliberalism: Neoliberal capitalism typically refers to economic systems that idealize the freedom and autonomy of markets, the free-flow of capital (i.e. free of government regulation), and the central role of private enterprise in generating economic stability and order rather than states and laws.     By "subject position" they mean something like, "one of the many ways that we come to experience ourselves as 'ourselves' e.g. as mother, wife, athlete, bad singer in the shower, etc; instead of being singular and stable, we have long noted that they tend to be multiple, multi-determined, and fluid.
1. What is the basic argument of the Camaroff essay?
  2. In what sense do they understand global capitalism as messianic or millenarian in nature?
  3. How has consumption functioned in Western nation states and in what ways has it "eclipsed" production? How has consumption become a site "for the fabrication of self and society?"
- Thurs 12/1     In-class screening: Left Behind

Paper Drafts Due to peer review partner and to Dr. Dixon by 9 pm.

- Tues 12/6 Left Behind  
Frykholm, *Rapture Culture*, 13–37; 106–129
1. What does Frykholm mean by ‘broader mythological structures’ that *Left Behind* participates in?
  2. What is dispensationalism? What is the significance of the fact that the readers of the *Left Behind* books tend to identify themselves as ‘evangelical’ Christians?
  3. How do believers treat the books in relation to the Bible and how does this relate to other reading practices and to consumer culture and technology, according to Frykholm?
- Thurs 12/8 Responses to paper due to peer review partner and Dr. Dixon (send via e-mail)  
Left Behind  
Frykholm, *Rapture Culture*, 129–151.  
Jim Jones, “Eternal Warfare: Violence on the Mind of American Apocalyptic Christianity,” in *The Fundamentalist Mindset*, 91–103 (Sakai)
1. What does Frykholm mean by writing “truth is ideological”? How does this shape her interpretation of LB?
  2. Discuss some of the ways that LB readers deal with the “truth of fiction” versus the “truth of the Bible” as explored by Frykholm.
  3. According to Jones, what are the most significant parallels between the motivations for violence, religious violence in particular, and the *Left Behind* series and video-games especially?
- Tues 12/13 Martin Luther King, Jr.  
“Our God is Marching On,” “MIA Mass Meeting,” “Birth of a New Nation,” “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop”
- All:** Write a 200-300 word response on the following:
- Based on definitions we have explored in this course – and not based on popular stereotypes of the term – would you consider Dr. King an “apocalyptic” thinker? Cite specific examples from his speeches and defend your response.
- Mon 12/19 Final Paper due on Sakai and email before 5pm
- Final paper extensions granted in only unusual circumstances and with permission.

**Paper topics, Part 1:**

1. Drawing on reading from Jon Levenson’s *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, critically evaluate 2-3 ways in which other ancient Near Eastern myths inform Genesis.
2. Critically analyze the theorization of myth in Lincoln’s work on myth and relate this proposal to one of the following: Theogony, Enuma Elish, Anzu, or the Baal Cycle.
3. Explore the arguments of \*James VanderKam, “Prophecy and Apocalyptic in the Ancient Near East,” 2083–2094 and Richard Clifford, “The Roots of Apocalypticism

- in Near Eastern Myth,” with particular focus on a \*subset of the primary texts (which you must read independently).
5. Explore some aspect of \*Steven Friesen’s argument in, “Sarcasm in Revelation 2–3: Churches, Christians, True Jews, and Satanic Synagogues” . \*The “Synagogue of Satan”: Crisis Mongering and the Apocalypse of John”
  6. Critically evaluate the arguments of Edith M. Humphrey, “To Rejoice or Not to Rejoice? Rhetoric and the Fall of Satan in Luke 10:17–24 and Rev 12:1–17.”
  7. Critically evaluate the arguments of David L. Barr, “The Lamb Who Looks Like a Dragon? Characterizing Jesus in John’s Apocalypse.”
  8. Compare and critically analyze Stowers versus Hays (“What Is ‘Real Participation in Christ’? A Dialogue with E. P. Sanders on Pauline Soteriology,” 336–351) on the issue of “Participations in Christ.”
  10. Critically evaluate the arguments of Richard Horsley, “Rhetoric and Empire—and 1 and 2 Corinthians,” 72–102.
  11. Explore early Christian apocalyptic thought as types of “Millenarian movements” and its application to the gospels by G. Gagers, *Kingdom and Community*, 20–65, e.g. evaluate and apply his theory to one or two early Christian texts.

### ***Paper Topics Part 2***

1. How does Alexandre Koyré (*From the Closed to the Infinite Universe*, 5–27) characterize ancient cosmologies as different from modern ones?
2. What does Koyré mean by “closed” universe and why does he stress the idea of a hierarchy of substance and value?
3. Compare and contrast the millenarian or utopian thought of two of the following: Joachim of Fiore, the Free Spirit, or the Egalitarian state of nature discussed in chapter 5 of Norman Cohn’s *The Pursuit of the Millenium* (e.g. in Ovid, Seneca, and Later Medievals).
4. In *Apocalypse Observed*, John Hall writes: “because of culturally programmed failure to learn from Jonestown, cultural opponents of David Koresh could invoke and rework narratives about mass suicide from Jonestown and bring them to bear on the Branch Davidians in ways that proved central to how the tragedy at Mt. Carmel unfolded” (46). Explain what he means here and outline the supporting arguments he offers to this end; you should pay particular attention to his use of “narratives” above and throughout the essay.
5. Compare Martin Luther King, Jr.’s use of biblical texts with one or two apocalyptic figures or texts (ancient or modern) we have examined in this course. Cite specific biblical texts and their interpretation by these figures in order to support your thesis.