

Prof. Wasserman
Department of Religion
70 Lipman Drive
Office: Loree 110
Phone: 848 932 6834
wasserm@rci.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Tues 12:00–1, 5:30–7
and by appointment

Apocalypse Now: Religious Movements and the End of Time (01:840:393:01)

From the book of Revelation to recent whispers about the year 2012, many leaders and texts speak about a coming time of great violence, upheaval, and judgment. The course compares ancient, Medieval, and contemporary apocalyptic literature and movements. Case studies will include the Jewish apocalyptic movement associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pauline Christianity, Medieval apocalypticism surrounding the Crusades, and contemporary ones like Jonestown, Jihadi Terrorism, and the Left Behind series of Christian thrillers. One goal will be to test certain theories of apocalypticism and millenarianism in these different cases; another will be to situate these texts and movements within relevant historical, social, and literary contexts.

Requirements for the Course:

1. Attendance: regular attendance and participation is a significant part of your grade and missed pop-quizzes cannot be made up. In the case of illness or emergency, please inform the instructor as soon as possible 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 three unexcused absences will result in a zero grade for attendance.
2. Reading responses: for every class, students will complete a reading response for the assigned readings, post it to Sakai before class begins, and bring a copy to class to facilitate discussion. Responses should normally be at least 100 words and include 1 discussion questions. The reading responses will be graded based on whether or not it shows knowledge of the assigned readings; the lowest 2 grades will be dropped. If you miss class due to illness or emergency, you may submit the reading assignment to me directly via e-mail.
3. Exams: A mid-term and a take-home final exam covering the second half of the course.
4. Paper: An 6–8 page paper on a topic to be selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. You must also provide a draft of the paper in April and work with other students in draft reading groups.

Assignments will be weighted as follows:

- a. Midterm 25%
- b. Final 25%
- c. Paper 20%
- d. Reading Responses and participation 20%
- e. Attendance 10%

Books required for purchase:

Harper Collins Study Bible, ed. Harold W. Attridge
Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*
Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown*
Jim Jones, *Blood that Cries out From the Earth*

Suggested: Nickelsberg and VanderKam, 1 Enoch

Part I: Apocalypticism, Millenarianism, and Cargo Cults

- Tues 1/18 Introduction to the Course
- Thurs 1/20 Charismatic and Other Forms of Authority
Max Weber, "Types of Authority," 329–373 from *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Sakai)
- Tues 1/25 Cargo Cults and Charismatic Movements
Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, ix–xxxix; 11–31 (Sakai)
- Thurs 1/27 Cargo Cults
Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, 32–93; 114–145 (Sakai)
- Tues 2/1 Cargo Cults
Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, 183–194; 221–56 (Sakai)
Ton, Otto, "What Happened to Cargo Cults? Material Religions in Melanesia and the West" *Social Analysis* 53.1 (2009) 82–102 (Sakai)
- Thurs 2/3 Apocalypse, Crisis, and Global Capitalism
Comaroff and Comaroff, "Millennial Capitalism: First thoughts on a Second Coming," *Public Culture* 12 (2000) 291–343 (Sakai)

Part II: Ancient Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism

- Tues 2/8 Jewish Apocalyptic Literature: 1 Enoch and Daniel
Daniel 7–12 (also read the introduction to Daniel in your study Bibles)
1 Enoch 1–36 (*The Book of the Watchers*)

*Recommended: you may consult selections from Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (98–115, on Daniel; 43–84, on 1 Enoch, both on Sakai)
- Thurs 2/10 Screening: *The Late, Great, Planet Earth*
Group activity analyzing use of Biblical passages.
- Tues 2/15 Jewish Apocalyptic Literature: 1 Enoch and Qumran
1 Enoch 92–105
War Scroll (Sakai)
- Thurs 2/17 An Apocalyptic Sect of Judaism
Rule of the Community (Sakai)
Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 1–11; 79–87 (Sakai)
- Tues 2/22 An Apocalyptic Type of Judaism: Paul and Earliest Christianity
1 Thessalonians; 1 Corinthians
Stowers, "What is Pauline Participation?" 1–15 (Sakai)
- Thurs 2/24 Romans: Apocalypse and Self
Romans; 2 Cor 4–5
- Tues 3/1 The Gospel of Mark

Gospel of Mark
Gager, "The End of Time and the Rise of Community," in *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity*, 20–49 (Sakai)

Thurs 3/3 Midterm Exam

Tues 3/8 Book of Revelation
Revelation
Gager, "The End of Time and the Rise of Community," 49–57 (Sakai)

Part III: Medieval Apocalypses

Thurs 3/10 Introduction to the Crusades
Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, Introduction; 19–36
McGinn, *Visions of the End*, selections (Sakai)

Tues 3/15 *No Class, Spring Recess*

Thurs 3/17 *No Class, Spring Recess*

Tues 3/22 Pseudo-Methodius and the Crusades
Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius (Sakai)
Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 37–108

Thurs 3/24 Joachim of Fiore, the Joachites, and the Flagellants
Joachim of Fiore (excerpts in McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 126–141; Sakai)
Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 108–147

Tues 3/29 The Spiritual Libertines
Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, 148–197

1 Paragraph description of paper topic due in class.

Part IV: Contemporary Apocalypses

Thurs 3/31 Jonestown
David Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown*, xvii–50

Tues 4/5 Jonestown
Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, 51–104

Thurs 4/7 Paper draft due; paper working groups meet during class.

Tue 4/12 Jonestown
Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, 105–169

Thurs 4/14 *Screening of Left Behind Film*

Tues 4/19 Left Behind: Historical and Psychological Approaches
Frankholm, *Rapture Culture*, 13–37; 106–129
Jim Jones, "Eternal Warfare: Violence on the Mind of American Apocalyptic Christianity," in *The Fundamentalist Mindset*, 91–103 (Sakai)

Thurs 4/21 Psychological Approaches to Apocalypticism
The Fundamentalist Mindset, 11–43 (Sakai)
Quinby, “The Unsettling of the Fundamentalist Mindset: Shifts in Apocalyptic Belief in Contemporary Conservative Christianity,” *The Fundamentalist Mindset*, 120–135 (Sakai)

Tues 4/26 Psychological Approaches
Jim Jones, *Blood that Cries Out from the Earth*, 29–70, on Jihadism,
71–87, on Shinrikyo

Thurs 4/28 Apocalypses and Narrative
Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*, 3–31 (Sakai)

Final paper due.

Final Exam due by 5:00 on Monday, May 9th (uploaded to Sakai)