

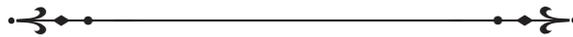
## History 382W/482. Apocalypse Now . . . and Then: A History of Apocalyptic Thought

TR, 11:05-12:20  
Plutzik Room, RBSCP  
Professor Laura A. Smoller  
office: Rush Rhees 369A  
office hours: Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00;  
Thursdays, 3:45-4:45; and by  
appointment  
email: [laura.smoller@rochester.edu](mailto:laura.smoller@rochester.edu)



The Whore of Babylon (Rev. 17), from the Epistolary and Apocalypse of Charles the Bold by Loyset Liédet and his workshop, ca. 1470. The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.68, f. 217r (detail).

*This seminar examines the history of beliefs about the end of the world in the western Judeo-Christian tradition. Readings will examine such topics as the birth of apocalyptic thought, the medieval development of various aspects of traditions about the End (such as the figure of Antichrist and millenarian expectations), apocalyptic influences on Europeans' initial contact with and colonization of the New World, millennial movements of the last two centuries (such as the Millerites and the Mormons), and contemporary apocalyptic scenarios. A major theme of the course will be the flexibility of apocalyptic language, its ability to interpret various historical situations, and its power to move people to acceptance or action.*



### August 31. Introduction to the course and assignments; overview of the history of apocalyptic thought

Today's class will introduce students to the course, its format, and the semester's assignments. In addition, a lecture will offer an overview of the history of apocalyptic thought and movements, from biblical times through to the present day. The assigned reading (which, for this class only, may be completed after class) offers an excellent introduction to the genre "apocalypse" and ways of reading apocalypses.

Please note that there are typically assignments and/or readings to complete before class meets. All deadlines are indicated in **boldface** type.

Reading:

Justin Jeffcoat Schedtler and Kelly J. Murphy, “Introduction—From Before the Bible to Beyond the Bible: Apocalypses through History,” in *Apocalypses in Context: Apocalyptic Currents through History*, ed. Kelly J. Murphy and Justin Jeffcoat Schedtler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 3-17 (ER).

September 5. Finding a topic; beginning research

Today’s class explains the “stacked” approach to historical research embedded in this semester’s research assignments, while at the same time addressing historiography, namely, the development of scholarship about apocalypticism (up to the year 1999, when Grafton’s article was originally published).

Reading:

Anthony Grafton, “From the Stacks: The Millennia-Old History of the Apocalypse,” *The New Republic*, July 15, 2014 (originally published November 8, 1999), <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/118702/anthony-grafton-left-behind-and-apocalyptic-thinking> (ER).

For further exploration: PBS Frontline, “Apocalypse!” (series originally airing in 1999, but still useful), <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/>.

September 7. Early apocalyptic

Today’s readings explore the apocalyptic strains in Judaism that would spill over into early Christianity, taking as example the book of Daniel. Daniel 7-12 is a classic example of the literary genre apocalypse, a type of writing that includes the disclosure of divine secrets in written form; the use of symbolic language, with dramatic, highly visual descriptions; a threefold pattern of crisis—judgment—salvation; pseudonymous authorship; and the incorporation of *ex eventu* prophecies (history disguised as prophecy). Reading Daniel will help demonstrate the elements of the genre, as well as the way in which such texts could speak to contemporary concerns, as it contains thinly disguised references to events surrounding the time of its composition.

Reading (please read in the order listed):

Eugen Weber, *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 1-26;

Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, Columbia Records of Civilization, 96 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 1-14;

Daniel, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), with the introduction by Amy C. Merrill Willis (at pp. 1249-50).

Optional for undergraduates (but incredibly useful): Casey Starnes, “Ancient Visions: The Roots of Judeo-Christian Apocalypse,” in *End of Days: Essays on the Apocalypse from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. Karolyn Kinane and Michael A. Ryan (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2009), 27-46 (ER). *Required for graduate students.*

Recommended additional reading for graduate students: 2 Esdras (= 4 Ezra) 3, 5:1-18, 7:1-35, 11-14, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

**Discussion assignment:** Comment on the book of Daniel, our major reading for the week, using Perusall. Post at least four comments (or replies) and two questions. Feel free to bring in insights from the secondary readings (Weber, McGinn, and Starnes). **All posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 6.**



September 12. Identifying secondary sources through specialized databases (with Lara Nicosia, history resource specialist)

**Research assignment:** **Submit on Blackboard by Sunday, September 10, at 11:59 p.m.,** a brief (1-2 sentence) description of a potential research topic. For example: “I would like to study how apocalyptic beliefs fueled conflict in seventeenth-century England. I will look at apocalyptic pamphlets that circulated during the English Civil War,” or “I am interested in changing interpretations of biblical apocalyptic. I would like to compare several medieval commentaries on the Book of Revelation.” (Your thoughts can be quite vague at this point, but a preliminary sense of your interests will help Lara Nicosia to tailor her demonstration to your research interests.)



September 14. New Testament apocalyptic

For all Christians, the starting point for speculations about the end of the world is found in Scripture. Amongst canonical Christian texts, the most important is the book of Revelation (Apocalypse) of John, written sometime in the late first century C.E., with not-so-veiled references to the Roman emperors. Other important information comes in the so-called “Little Apocalypse” found in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These texts, along with the Book of Daniel, provide the basis around which later authors developed their own apocalyptic scenarios. As you read these texts, think about what is there and what isn’t there (from any preconceptions you may have about the Christian view of Armageddon). How might the original audience have interpreted these books to give meaning to their own times? Who or what is being critiqued here?

Reading for discussion (please read in the order listed):

- Weber, *Apocalypses*, 40-44;
- Bernard McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 1-16;
- Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Book of Revelation,” in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, I: The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity, ed. John J. Collins (New York: Continuum, 1998) 384-414 (ER);
- Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation (complete), with introduction by Jean-Pierre Ruiz (at pp. 2203-05), in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

**Discussion assignment:** Comment on the New Testament readings (Matthew, Mark, Luke, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation) using Perusall. Post at least two comments, questions, or

replies to others on each of the shorter passages, and at least four comments (or replies) and two questions on the Book of Revelation, our major reading for the week. Feel free to bring in insights from the secondary readings (Weber, McGinn, and Collins). **All posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 13.**

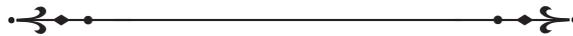


**The assignment to write your own apocalypse, with commentary (for undergraduates) must be submitted on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, September 17. (See instructions under Assignments and Papers on Blackboard.)**

**Graduate students instead will submit a book review (1000-1250 words) of a monograph relating to their research interests.**



September 19. Locating and working with primary sources (with Autumn Haag, Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation)



*Students should schedule an individual conference with the instructor this week or next.*



September 21. Millenarians and anti-millenarians of the patristic period

Most early Christians assumed that they were living near the end of time, but interpreters disagreed over whether that End was imminent or centuries away. Controversy also raged over the notion that the end would be preceded by a reign of peace on earth. As you read the church fathers' thoughts on these topics, consider how they are interpreting the scriptural tradition. What other sorts of sources are they bringing to bear upon their considerations of the end? Richard Landes's studies of chronological systems and his concept of "owls" and "roosters" provide an intriguing scholarly approach to this topic. What use does he make of sources? What can we learn from what authors do not say?

Reading for discussion (please read in the order listed):

- Weber, *Apocalypses*, 27-40; 45-47;
- McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 14-18, 25-27;
- Richard Landes, "Owls, Roosters, and Apocalyptic Time: A Historical Method for Reading a Refractory Documentation," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 49 (1995): 49-69 (ER);
- Lactantius, from *Divine Institutes*, in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* 17-28, 55-80 (that is, skip VII.2-13, at pages 28-54);
- Augustine, *City of God*, book XVIII, chaps. 52-54 only; book XX, chaps. 7, 8, 11-13, 19, 23, and 30 (selections) only (ER);

Graduate students should also read: Richard Landes, "Lest the Millennium be Fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronography, 100-800

CE,” in W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst, and A. Welkenhuysen, eds., *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 137-211 (ER);

and, rebutting Landes’s arguments: James Palmer, “Calculating Time and the End of Time in the Carolingian World, c. 740-c. 820,” *English Historical Review* 129, no. 523 (2011): 1307-31 (ER).

Discussion assignment: Comment on the selections from Lactantius and Augustine, using Perusall. Post at least three comments, questions, or replies to others on each of these readings. Feel free to bring in insights from the secondary readings (Weber, McGinn, and Landes). **All posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 20.**



September 26. Initial presentations: scholarly encyclopedia article/book chapter, primary source.

Make a brief presentation in which you share with the class a primary source on which you hope to work, as well as a potential research question drawn from your reading of an encyclopedia article or book chapter.

Research assignment: **Submit the following on Blackboard by Monday, September 25, at 9:00 a.m.:**

- 1) a properly-formatted bibliography entry (Chicago “notes and bibliography”/Turabian style) for a chapter or encyclopedia article relating to a potential research topic chosen from a volume on the list of “Encyclopedias and helpful essay collections” on the list “Some Resources to Get you Started,”
- 2) a possible research question suggested by your reading of that chapter or article,
- 3) at least one primary source mentioned in that chapter or article (or that you have located in some other way) that is relevant to your topic. If that source is written in a language you do not read, please note whether the author of your chapter or article mentions a translation into a language you can read.



September 28. The Last World Emperor and the Muslim enemy

Part of the power of apocalyptic language is the way in which it can be adapted to symbolic reinterpretation. This week’s readings show us how late antique and medieval authors adapted the End time cast of characters in terms of their own times. As the Roman Empire became Christianized, new apocalyptic roles were envisioned for Augustus’s (and Nero’s) successors. And, with the rise of the apocalyptically-inflected religion of Islam and major conquests by Arab forces in lands of the old Roman empire, Christian eschatological scenarios had to be adjusted to incorporate a major new adversary. The texts attributed to the Tiburtine Sibyl and to the third-century martyr Methodius (hence the appellation pseudo-Methodius) were among the most widely read eschatological works throughout the Middle Ages and into the early modern period. This fact should remind us that texts have a history apart from the milieu in which they were composed.

Reading for discussion (please read in the order listed):

McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 18-25, 28-36;

Weber, *Apocalypses*, 83-98;  
 “The Tiburtine Sibyl,” in McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 43-50;  
 pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse* [also known as *Revelationes*], in *Apocalypse, Pseudo-Methodius. An Alexandrian World Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Benjamin Garstad, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), vii-xviii; 75-139 (odd pages only) (ER);

Graduate students should also read: Stephen J. Shoemaker, “‘The Reign of God Has Come’: Eschatology and Empire in Late Antiquity and Early Islam,” *Arabica* 61, 5 (2014): 514-58, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43306385> (ER) [previewing arguments in his *The Apocalypse of Empire: Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018)].

Discussion assignment: Comment on the selections from the Tiburtine Sibyl and on the Latin pseudo-Methodius, using Perusall. Post at least two comments, questions, or replies to others on the Tiburtine Sibyl and at least four comments or replies to others and at least two questions on pseudo-Methodius. Feel free to bring in insights from the secondary readings (Weber, McGinn, and Shoemaker). **All posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 27.**



October 3. Diagramming one’s research for creative brainstorming, I

Research assignment: Make a presentation to the class in which you share a diagram or mind-map of your research project as it stands thus far. (These presentations will take place this week and next week, so as to allow ample time for questions and discussion.)

**Diagrams (hand drawn is fine!) should be posted on Blackboard by 9:00 a.m. on October 3.** If you wish to present a diagram in the format of a mind-map, there are several free applications available to help you do so, e.g., <https://app.mindmup.com/map/new/1596730702594>.



October 5. Antichrist, apocalypse, and the church reform movement of the high Middle Ages

An evolving Antichristology (to match theologians’ Christology) saw medieval authors elaborating on a handful of scriptural passages to flesh out the career of Antichrist, a powerful adversary with whom Jesus Christ would have to battle in the Last Days. (The term “Antichrist” appears only four times in scripture: 1 John 2:18, 1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:3, and 2 John 1:7. Daniel, Revelation, and 2 Thessalonians represent other important sources.) This process resulted in the first full-blown biography of Antichrist, by the tenth-century reformist Cluniac monk Adso of Montier-en-Der, a work drawn upon by numerous later authors. The language and imagery of Antichrist (and Last World Emperor), as we will see in this week’s readings, could also be harnessed for political ends, whether in service of a single political dynasty or as propaganda in the pope-emperor struggles unleashed by the church reform movement.

Reading for discussion (please read in the order listed):

Adso of Montier-en-Der, "Letter on Origin and Time of Antichrist," in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 81-96;

Richard K. Emmerson, "The Representation of Antichrist in Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*: Image, Word, Commentary, and Visionary Experience," *Gesta* 41, no. 2 (2002): 95-110 (ER);

Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, Eleventh Vision of the Third Part, in Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, trans. Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop; introduction by Barbara J. Newman; preface by Caroline Walker Bynum, 491-513 (ER).

Graduate students should also read: Michael A. Ryan, "Antichrist in the Middle Ages: *Plus ça change . . .*," *History Compass* 7/6 (2009): 1581-92 (ER);

Bernard McGinn, "Portraying Antichrist in the Middle Ages," in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology*, 1-48 (ER).

Discussion assignment: Please post at least one question and at least two comments on each of the following readings, using Perusall: Adso's letter on Antichrist, Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*, and Richard Keith Emmerson's article about Hildegard. **All postings are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, October 4.**

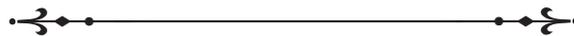


October 10. Diagramming one's research for creative brainstorming, II

Research assignment: Make a presentation to the class in which you diagram your research project as it stands thus far (if you did not present on October 3). **Diagrams should have been posted on Blackboard by 9 a.m. on October 3.**



October 12. Work-day to prepare your prospectus (no class)



October 17. Fall break (no class)



**Prospectus for the research paper must be submitted to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. on October 17. (See instructions posted on Blackboard under Assignments and Papers).**



October 19. Apocalyptic rhetoric and the Crusades

Apocalyptic rhetoric (including discussions of Antichrist and the Last World Emperor) proved to have an irresistible propaganda value. Our two readings this week show the flexibility of that language. Jay Rubenstein's article, taking up themes from his book *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse* (New York: Basic Books, 2011),

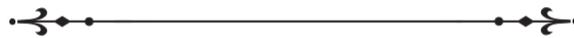
argues that First Crusade (1095-99) was understood by participants (and observers) as inherently apocalyptic. Philippe Buc's essay shows that an apocalyptic worldview could equally serve to support or to condemn crusading. Their essays both lead us to ponder as well to what extent eschatology propelled current events (in addition to sharpening political rhetoric). They also will offer us a vehicle with which to examine other scholars at work. Think about the ways in which each historian analyzes primary sources to make an argument and situates his thesis within a larger scholarly conversation about the topic.

Reading for discussion (please read in the order listed):

Jay Rubenstein, "Lambert of Saint-Omer and the Apocalyptic First Crusade," in *Remembering the Crusades: Myth, Image, and Identity*, ed. Nicholas Paul and Suzanne Yaeger (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 69-98 (ER);

Philippe Buc, "Crusade and Eschatology: Holy War Fostered and Inhibited," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 125 (2017): 304-339 (ER).

Discussion assignment: Comment on the two assigned readings, using Perusall. Post at least four comments, questions, or replies to others on each. **All posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, October 18.**



October 24. Close readings of primary sources, I

Research assignment: Make a presentation (this week and October 31) offering a close reading of a key passage or passages from a primary source you are using in your research. **Post a copy of your passage on Blackboard by 9 a.m. on October 24.**



October 26. Joachim of Fiore: Prophecy as history; history as prophecy

Beginning in the twelfth century, a number of scholars have argued, a major shift in apocalyptic thinking occurred, as commentators applied a historical approach to the interpretation of Revelation. The central figure in this new interpretation of the apocalypse was the Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore, whose ideas, scholars long claimed, provided a means for a revival of millenarian aspirations that had lain dormant since the time of Augustine. (More recent scholars have disputed this contention.) For Joachim, prophecy (especially the Book of Revelation) became a means of ordering the past, and history a way of thinking about the future. His powerful prediction of the appearance of new spiritual men was quickly seized upon by the beleaguered Spiritual wing of the new Franciscan order, while his promise of "one pastor, one flock" in the upcoming Third Age (or Third *status*) fueled dreams of a united Christian empire.

Reading for discussion (please read in the order listed):

Weber, *Apocalypses*, 52-60;

Brett Whalen, *Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 100-24, 270-79 (ER);

"Joachim of Fiore," in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 97-112, 120-48

McGinn, *Visions of the End*, sections 17 (Joachim of Fiore), 19 (The Joachite Movement before 1260), and 24 (The Franciscan Spirituals).

Discussion assignment: This week's discussion assignment will make use of Blackboard's discussion board. Choose one quotation or passage from each of the primary texts listed below that you would like to discuss with the class. Post your quotation (please include page numbers), along with a brief (1-2 sentence) explanation of why you chose that particular passage or quotation. Feel free to bring in insights from Weber and Whalen. **All posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, October 25.** Texts for which to choose quotations: Joachim of Fiore, "The Book of Concordance" (Selection C in *Apocalyptic Spirituality*), "The Seven-Headed Dragon" (Selection D in *Apocalyptic Spirituality*), "The Twelfth Table" ((Selection E in *Apocalyptic Spirituality*), and "Commentary on an Unknown Prophecy" (*Visions of the End*, section 17, pp. 130-33); "The Joachite Movement before 1200" (*Visions of the End*, section 19, pp. 161-67); "Peter Olivi, *Commentary on Revelation*" (*Visions of the End*, section 24, pp. 208-11). **Do not post quotations from McGinn's own introductions to the texts.**



October 31. Close readings of primary sources, II

Research assignment: Make a presentation (if you did not on October 24) offering a close reading of a key passage or passages from a primary source you are using in your research. **You should have posted a copy of your passage on Blackboard by 9 a.m. on October 24.**



November 2. Political apocalyptic in the later Middle Ages

With the turmoils of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we frequently see apocalyptic language put to political use, whether to support or to criticize secular or religious leaders, as seen in the two sets of papal prophecies translated by McGinn. With Savonarola, the figure of the New Jerusalem becomes a goal to be realized in a reformed Florence. Is apocalyptic language "mere rhetoric" or a means of making sense of one's own world? We also will see the centrality of apocalyptic thought in the Columbus's voyages to the New World. How does this insight square with any mental picture you may already have of Columbus? Of the Renaissance? Of modernity?

Reading for discussion (please read in the order listed):

McGinn, *Visions of the End*, pp. 194-95, 234-36 ("The Papal Prophecies. First Set" and "The Papal Prophecies. Second Set");

Pauline Moffitt Watts, "Prophecy and Discovery: On the Spiritual Origins of Christopher Columbus's 'Enterprise of the Indies,'" *American Historical Review* 90, no. 1 (1985): 73-102 (ER);

Columbus, *Book of Prophecies*, letter to Ferdinand and Isabella (at pp. 105-11, odd numbers) (ER);

"Savonarola," in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, 183-275.

Graduate students should also read: Bernard McGinn, “Angel Pope and Papal Antichrist,” *Church History* 47, 2 (1978): 155-73; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3164731>.

Discussion assignment: This week’s discussion assignment will make use of Blackboard’s discussion board. Choose one quotation or passage from each of the primary texts listed below that you would like to discuss with the class. Post your quotation (please include page numbers), along with a brief (1-2 sentence) explanation of why you chose that particular passage or quotation. Texts for which to choose quotations: Savonarola’s *Compendium of Revelations*; McGinn’s *Visions of the End*, “Papal Prophecies”; and Columbus’s letter to Ferdinand and Isabella. Do not post quotations from McGinn’s introductions. Feel free to bring in insights from Watts’s article. **All posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, November 1.**



November 7. Getting a handle on historiography, I

Research assignment: Submit on Blackboard a properly formatted bibliography listing the most important scholarship (secondary sources) on your topic. **Submissions are due by noon on November 6.** Your bibliography should include at least seven entries at this point, of which at least two should be scholarly monographs (a book-length study published by an academic press) and at least three should be articles from peer-reviewed journals or edited volumes. Explain in a few sentences how your research will contribute to the scholarly conversation. (See “Getting a Handle on Historiography” posted on Blackboard under Papers and Assignments for more explanation.) You will present your thoughts on the historiography on your topic to the class either November 7 or November 14.



November 9. Apocalypticism and modern nations: the special place of America

The settlers who came to the British colonies in North America brought with them an apocalyptic sense (not unlike Savonarola’s conception for Florence) that they were creating the New Jerusalem in New England. Apocalypticism remained a potent force in the consciousness of the new nation. We will sample two American apocalyptic movements: the Millerites and the Mormons (both of which have their origins not far from Rochester!). As you read, ask yourself what is distinctly American here, what distinctly modern, and what is familiar from patristic, medieval, and early modern traditions.

Reading for discussion (please read in the order listed):

Weber, *Apocalypses*, 167-191.

Wayne R. Judd, “William Miller: Failed Prophet,” in Ronald Numbers and Jonathan Butler, eds., *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 17-35 (ER);

William Miller, “Prophetic Chronology,” excerpts, in Joshua V. Himes, ed., *Miller’s Works. Vol. 1. Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1842), 40-51 (ER);

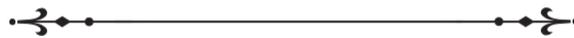
John G. Turner, *The Mormon Jesus: A Biography*, ch 5 (“I Come Quickly”), 121-51 (ER);

*The Pearl of Great Price*, excerpts from the section entitled *Joseph Smith—History* (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/mor/pgp/>) (ER).

Optional: Leon Festinger, Henry Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), online at [https://rochester.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ROCH\\_INST/173n3b8/cdi\\_proquest\\_miscellaneous\\_614167201](https://rochester.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ROCH_INST/173n3b8/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_614167201);

and, for an example from nineteenth-century France, R. Hermon-Belot, “God’s Will in History: The Abbé Grégoire, the Revolution and the Jews,” in *Catholic Millenarianism: From Savonarola to the Abbé Gregoire*, ed. Karl A. Kottman, Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture, 2 (Dordrecht and Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 91-100 (ER).

Discussion assignment: Comment on Judd, Miller, Turner, and *Pearl*, using Perusall. Post at least two comments, questions, or replies to others on each of the readings. Feel free to bring in insights from Weber. **All posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, November 8.**

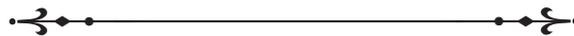


**Historiography paper must be submitted to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, November 13. See Assignments and Papers on Blackboard for detailed instructions.**



November 14. Getting a handle on historiography, II

Research assignment: Present your findings about the historiography on your topic to the class (if you did not do so last week). **You should have submitted a bibliography and explanation by noon on November 6.**



November 16. Apocalypse in twentieth- and twenty-first-century America

We sample a fundamental text in the strain of eschatological interpretation known as dispensational premillennialism in Hal Lindsey’s classic *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, a book that has informed political interpretations of contemporary events since its first publication in 1970. We are reminded of the potential dangers of the ignorance of apocalyptic language by revisiting the tragedy of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, in 1993, and its enduring legacy.

Reading for discussion (please read in the order listed):

Weber, *Apocalypses*, 193-222;  
 Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (New York: Zondervan, 1970), at least chapters 1, 4-8, 11-13;  
 Malcolm Gladwell, “Annals of Religion. Sacred and Profane: How Not to Negotiate with Believers,” *The New Yorker*, March 31, 2014, 22-28 (ER);

Daniel Immerwahr, "A Fire Started in Waco. Thirty Years Later, It's Still Burning," *The New Yorker*, May 1, 2023 (ER).

Discussion assignment: This week's discussion assignment will make use of Blackboard's discussion board. Choose two quotations or passages from *Late, Great Planet Earth* and one each from the articles by Gladwell and Immerwahr. Post your quotation (please include page numbers), along with a brief (1-2 sentence) explanation of why you chose that particular passage or quotation on Blackboard. Feel free to bring in insights from Weber. **All posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, November 15.**

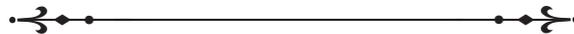


November 21. Research and writing time

Research assignment: Work on paper draft.



November 23. Thanksgiving break (no class)



November 28. Research and writing time

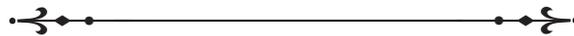
Research assignment: Work on paper draft.



November 30. Looking carefully at sources: manuscripts and early books (with Anna Siebach-Larsen, director of the Rossell Hope Robbins Library)



**Complete draft of your paper must be made available to your peer readers via Blackboard by December 1 at 11:59 pm.**



December 5. Workshop on drafts

Today's class will be devoted to a peer-review workshop for your paper drafts. See Blackboard (Assignments and Papers) for detailed instructions.



**Students should schedule an individual conference with the instructor to discuss the paper draft at some time between the December 5 workshop and December 12.**



December 7. Final presentations, I

Our final two classes are devoted to presentations of your research projects. See Blackboard (Assignments and Papers) for detailed instructions.

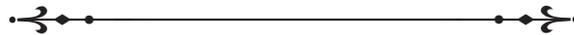


December 12. Final presentations, II



**Final papers due on December 21, by noon, via Blackboard.**

Undergraduate papers should be at least 5000 words in length (body only, not including notes and bibliography); graduate student papers should be of publishable length (6250-10,000 words) and quality. Papers should be submitted in Times or Times New Roman font, 12 point, double-spaced, with standard margins. You may use footnotes or endnotes, but whichever you choose you MUST follow University of Chicago style (Turabian/humanities style) for text and references. Include a bibliography, separated into primary and secondary sources, at the end of your paper. See Assignments and Papers on Blackboard for more details about the final paper.



**Learning objectives:**

At the end of this course, students will be able to

- Read and understand primary sources as products of a specific historical context
- Identify the elements of the literary genre apocalypse
- Outline major developments in the history of apocalyptic thought from the inter-testamental period through the twentieth century
- Provide examples of the way in which apocalyptic thinking responds to current events and can be used either to propel action or to support the status quo
- Identify the thesis and analyze the argument of secondary sources relating to apocalyptic thinking
- Present historical analysis and arguments in a clear written form, by constructing an argument and marshaling supporting evidence in an appropriate and logical fashion
- Write a research paper that asks a significant historical question, situates it within a body of scholarship, answers it with a clear thesis and a logical argument, supports it with both primary and secondary sources documented according to the standards of the Chicago Manual of Style, and articulates its points in clear and artful prose with the grammar and spelling associated with formal composition

**Books to purchase:**

Recommended:

*The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*, ed. Michael D. Coogan, Marc Z. Brettler, et al. (paperback), 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). ISBN: 978-0190276089

Required:

Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (New York: Zondervan, 1970). ISBN: 9780310277712

Bernard McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979). ISBN: 9780809122424

Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, revised ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). ISBN: 978-0231112574

Eugen Weber, *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). ISBN: 9780674003958

Electronic Reserves (ER): Readings designated (ER) in the syllabus are linked through Blackboard.

**Statement regarding credit hours:** The College's credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIS 382W are expected to devote at least one hour each week to researching in depth the topics for their final papers. Graduate students receiving 5 units of credit are expected to devote at least two additional hours each week to researching in depth the topics for their final papers.

**Course requirements:**

Discussion assignments----10%

Active participation in discussions----5%

Write your own apocalypse, with commentary/book review—10%

Research prospectus----10%

Research assignments----10%

Historiography paper----15%

Final research paper----35%

Draft/workshop on drafts---5%

Reading assignments are to be completed before the day they appear in the lecture schedule (with the obvious exception of the first day of class, for which the reading may be done after class).

Attendance at and participation in all classes is crucial to your success in this course. Repeated absences will affect your grade.

Late work will be penalized 5% for each calendar day late. Failure to post discussion assignments by the required time will result in a full loss of credit for that assignment.

Grading scale:

A	100-93%
A-	92.9-90%
B+	89.9-87%
B	86.9-83%

B-	82.9-80%
C+	79.9-77%
C	76.9-73%
C-	72.9-70%
D+	69.9-67%
D	66.9-63%
D-	62.9-60%
F	Below 60%

In case of some mix-up, it is a good idea to save all returned work until you receive your grade at the end of the semester.

**Students with disabilities:** The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: [disability@rochester.edu](mailto:disability@rochester.edu); (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me as well.

**Classroom etiquette:** Please turn off cell phones or set them to a silent alert. In the rare event you must enter late or leave class early, please let me know in advance. All students should disable or turn off all social media notifications during the class period.

**Academic honesty:** All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Anyone who engages in such activities will be turned over to the College Board on Academic Honesty for disciplinary action, as outlined at <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/>. Submitting as one's own any work produced by another, including by AI such as ChatGPT, constitutes plagiarism. Close paraphrasing of another's words is also plagiarism. For helpful discussions of plagiarism (including subtle, unintentional instances), see the American Historical Association's "Defining Plagiarism," <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism>.

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**Disclaimer:** The instructor reserves the right to change topics and assignments on the syllabus at any point in the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.