

RELT21082 End of the World and Apocalypticism Semester 2, 2023-24

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11 x two-hour lectures, including study of texts, documentary clips, film clips, etc.
11 x one-hour seminars, including individual or small group research project and presentation on an apocalyptic movement or cultural artefact(s) of your choice.
c.7 hours of viewing films and documentaries and listening to accounts relating to apocalyptic movements or cultural artefacts.

This course provides knowledge and analytical tools to understand and assess apocalyptic movements, the use of apocalyptic ideas and imagery in contemporary culture, and the effects of apocalyptic thought in politics and elsewhere. The course runs from examination of the biblical roots of much apocalyptic thought, via analysis of a range of historic apocalyptic groups, to present-day culture and politics.

SOME KEY QUESTIONS

What are the **similarities and differences in features of end-of-the-world ideas** across a range of religious, philosophical and scientific cultures and periods? **In what ways are end-of-the-world ideas and images deployed** in discourse about other, non-final major events?

What are the **biblical and other texts that provide ideas, language and imagery** that keep recurring in apocalyptic movements and cultural expressions? How do those **texts relate to the contexts in which they were produced**, especially the Roman empire and other political structures? How do **Jewish, Christian and Islamic perspectives** on the end of world compare?

What **apocalyptic movements and groups** have arisen at various times? How do such **groups relate to the social and political contexts** of their time? To what extent are apocalyptic groups inherently **violent**? **What actions do such groups take in preparation** for the end? **What happens to groups when the world does not end** when expected? What varieties of **millennialist ideas** are there and how do they affect the behaviour of groups? To what extent can there be **secular apocalypticism**?

In what ways do apocalyptic ideas and images affect current and recent culture, society and politics. To what extent can the deployment of apocalyptic imagery in films, TV and books be **purely a matter of entertainment**? How does the deployment of apocalyptic ideas and images relate to **gender**? How do end-time ideas relate to the development of **Christian Zionism** and what role does that play in **US and world politics**? How do apocalyptic ideas affect the **presentation of climate change or denial of climate change**?

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

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| Early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic |
| Book of Revelation and ways it has been used |
| Islam and apocalyptic |
| Apocalyptic in art (esp. William Blake), literature and film |
| Apocalyptic movements |
| Apocalyptic in US culture and politics |

ASSESSMENT

| Assessment task | Formative or Summative | Length | Weighting within unit (if summative) |
|--|------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Individual or small group presentation on an apocalyptic movement or cultural artefact(s) [e.g., a film with an apocalyptic plot like <i>The Terminator</i> , a popular book like <i>Left Behind</i> , or even a conspiratorial website like <i>Infowars</i>] + outline and bibliography for summative work. | Formative | 10 minute presentation + c. 1000 words | |
| Report or portfolio on the apocalyptic movement or cultural artefact(s) studies for the formative assessment. | Summative | 2000 words or equivalent | 50% |
| Open book examination | Summative | tbc | 50% |

RECOMMENDED READING (ALL AVAILABLE ONLINE)

A wide range of online resources are available at the web-site of the Centre for the Critical Study of Apocalyptic and Millenarian Movements (CenSAMM): <https://censamm.org/resources>

Colin McAllister, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Apocalyptic Literature* (Camb.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2020)

https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992980719952701631

The Bible (preferably New Revised Standard Version, with Apocrypha [Oxford: OUP, 2006])

Available for use on the web via various religious web-sites such as:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-NRSV-Bible/> or <https://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/>

Filiu, Jean-Pierre, *Apocalypse in Islam*, translated by M.B. DeBevoise (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013)

online (1 hour use): <https://archive.org/details/apocalypseinislam0000fili/page/n23/mode/2up>

print copy: https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma9933365954401631

John Hall. *Apocalypse: From Antiquity to the Empire of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009)

https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975951094301631

Arthur H. Williamson. *Apocalypse Then: Prophecy and the Making of the Modern World* (Westport: Praeger, 2008)

https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992982180675001631

Monica Germanà and Aristeidis Mousoutzanis, eds., *Apocalyptic discourse in contemporary culture : post-millennial perspectives on the end of the world* (New York: Routledge, 2014)

https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/1rfd42k/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781315883861

Anthony F. Aveni, *Apocalyptic anxiety : religion, science and America's obsession with the end of the world* (Boulder CO: University Press of Colorado, 2016)

https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992976654139301631

Adele Reinhartz. *Bible and Cinema: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2013)

https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992976146434901631

Crawford Gribben. *Writing the Rapture: Prophecy Fiction in Evangelical America*. Oxford: OUP, 2009

https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/bofker/alma992975879560101631

Walliss, Aston. "Doomsday America: The Pessimistic Turn of Post-9/11 Apocalyptic Cinema." *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 23.1 (2011): 53–64.

https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/1rfd42k/cdi_proquest_journals_874655807 .

Hamonic, Wynn. "Global Catastrophe in Motion Pictures as Meaning and Message: The Functions of Apocalyptic Cinema in American Film." *The Journal of Religion and Film* 21.1 (2017): no page numbers

https://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/permalink/44MAN_INST/1rfd42k/cdi_proquest_journals_1947785820