

Apocalypse and Millennium Exploring a Theme in Western Culture



The Cloisters Apocalypse, ca. 1330

Zombies, super contagions from bio-chemical warfare, environmental catastrophe. Popular culture and the news media bring countless warnings of apocalyptic destruction daily. Is the obsession with such predictions unique to this time and place, or do they have their origins elsewhere? This class sets out to consider the religious, historical, and literary roots of the western fascination with the millennium and apocalypticism. We will begin our survey with a discussion of biblical sources, then we will trace these themes through late antiquity and the middle ages, ending with a discussion of apocalypse, messianism and millennium in the modern world as represented in political movements, scholarship and film. Students will conduct research on an apocalyptic movement, figure, or narrative of their choice and write a paper demonstrating how apocalyptic symbols, narrative structures or imagery from the biblical and late-antique sources were adapted in that literature. Lectures and discussions will focus on close examination of texts and discussion of modern scholarship.

Course Requirements

a) **Reading:** I strongly recommend that that you at least skim the readings at the beginning of the week so you will be ready to discuss the themes and substance of the assignments and read them thoroughly by the end of the week. Lectures and discussions will be more engaging and productive for you if you have a formal point of reference. Please bring all assigned primary source readings to class on the day for which the reading has been assigned (i.e., internet sources and handouts, etc.). We will not always discuss all of the readings directly. However, these readings were selected to provide you with a foundation for the material and issues covered and you will be responsible for all readings. You are strongly encouraged to bring questions about the readings to class – if one of you had questions or difficulties, others certainly did as well

b) **Attendance:** In addition to the readings, you are responsible for all the material covered in class as well. It is expected that you will be present at all class sessions unless unavoidable circumstances make attendance impossible. If you must miss a class, please make arrangements

with another student to get notes. But remember: if you miss a substantial number of classes, your participation grade will suffer proportionately. **You will be permitted three absences over the course of the term; every unexcused absence thereafter each unexcused absence will lower your grade by one third.** Guidelines for excused absences can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/regulations/info/attendance.aspx#absences> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site..

Also, as a courtesy to me and to your fellow students, please turn off your cell phones before class begins and refrain from checking them during class. Obsessive attention to cell phones distracts your instructor and your colleagues. If ringing cell phones and persistent texting become a problem, the owners of those phones will be asked to leave the class and the subsequent absence will count as unexcused.

c) **Written assignments:** Historical writing demands that you make your arguments in a clear and precise manner and that you back them up with historical evidence. Thus, written assignments will be graded on the basis of **style as well as content**. Completion of all written assignments is *absolutely required*. Late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. Please make every effort to apprise me of adverse circumstances that affect your ability to attend class or complete assignments on time.

Do not submit your work to via email – written work must be presented in hard-copy. Official documentation is required to excuse an absence and to schedule make-up assignments. In order to pass this class, you must complete all written assignments.

d) **Grade distribution:** i) Three short papers, each worth 15% of your final grade, due 22 January, 19 February, and 18 March. ii) A take home final, worth 35% of your grade, . I will be happy to read and comment on all written assignments prior to the due date; just be sure to give me enough time to read your work carefully and get it back to you in time for you to implement changes. iii) A final paper on a topic of your choosing (subject to instructor approval), worth 35% of your grade. iv) Participation in class discussions, worth 20%. By participation, I mean active and attentive engagement with the course material. Ideally, it also means contribution to in class discussion, including asking questions. Coming to class and sleeping through the lecture, for example, is not considered productive participation. [*Nota bene* the material we will be discussing in this class will frequently be challenging and emotionally charged. You will be expected to maintain a respectful and appropriately academic tone during our discussions.]Coming to class and sleeping through the lecture or focusing on instagram, for example, is not considered productive participation.

Required Texts for this Class. All of the reading for this class will be available through the [library course reserves](#) or online through our [Canvas](#) site. The following books are available for purchase online and in the University Bookstore. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are available as ebooks.

Course Schedule

Week I 8 January Defining our subject: time, temporality, and the balance between beginnings and ends

- Kermode, *Sense of an Ending*, Ch 1.
- [Genesis 1-5](#)
- [Jubilees 1-6](#)
- Eviatar Zerubavel *The Seven Day Circle*, ch. 1
- Augustine, *Confessions* Book XI

Week II 15 January The Genre: Apocalyptic Literature

- McGinn *Visions of the End*, Introduction, 1-36
- Ezekiel 1-9, 20, 25, 38--44
- The Book of Daniel – focus on chapters 7, 9, and 11-12, but read the whole thing
- John Collins, “What is Apocalyptic Literature?” in John J. Collins, *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford Handbooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-16.
- Stephen D. O’Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3-19
- Hindy Najman “The Inheritance of Prophecy in Apocalypse” in John J. Collins, *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford Handbooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 36-51.

Week III 22 January The Birth of Christianity

- Stephen D. O’Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3-19
- John Collins, “What is Apocalyptic Literature?” in John J. Collins, *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford Handbooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 151-159
- Revelation
- Greg Carey “Early Christian Apocalyptic Rhetoric” in John J. Collins, *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford Handbooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 218-234

Week IV 29 January Good and Evil – The Antichrist

- McGinn, *Visions of the End* Ch. 2 51-55, Ch.10 81-88
- Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), Ch. 2
- Christopher Rowlands, “Apocalypticism and Radicalism” in John J. Collins, *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford Handbooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 407-420
- Stephen D. O’Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 61-92
- Alexander Kulik, “How the Devil Got His Hooves and Horns: The Origin of the Motif and the Implied Demonology of 3 Baruch,” *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 60, no. 2–3 (2013): 195–229, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685276-12341263>.

Week V 5 February Christian Time in the Early Middle Ages

- McGinn, *Visions of the End* Ch. 7, 70-77
- Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, Preface and Book I, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/gregory-hist.html#pref1>
- Immo Warntjes “The final countdown and the reform of the liturgical calendar in the early Middle Ages” in Matthew Gabriele and James T. Palmer, eds., *Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019).
- Jessica Lee Ehinger, “Biblical History and the End of Times: Seventh-Century Christian Accounts of the Rise of Islam,” *Studies in Church History* 49 (2013): 53–62.

Week VI 12 February The Beginning of the Second Millennium: A Significant Turn?

- McGinn, *Visions of the End* Ch. 11, 88-93
- Levi Roach “Apocalypticism and the rhetoric of reform in Italy around the year 1000
Apocalypticism and the rhetoric of reform in Italy around the year 1000” in Matthew Gabriele

and James T. Palmer, eds., *Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019).

- Matthew Gabriele, "This Time. Maybe this Time. Biblical Commentary, Monastic Historiography, and Lost Cause-ism at the Turn of the First Millennium" in Matthew Gabriele and James T. Palmer, eds., *Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019).

Week VII 19 February Heresy

- R.I Moore, "The Birth of Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon?" in *The Journal of Religious History* Vol 24. No 1 (2000): 8- 25
- Richard Landes "The Birth of Heresy: A Millennial Phenomenon" in *The Journal of Religious History* Vol 24. No 1 (2000): 26-43

Week VIII 26 February More Historical Shifts

- McGinn, *Visions of the End*, Ch 12-14
- Richard Landes, "What Happens when Jesus Doesn't Come: Jewish and Christian Relations in Apocalyptic Time.," in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 14:1 (Spring, 2002): 241-274
- Erin Runions "Deconstructing Apocalyptic Literalist Allegory" in John J. Collins, *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford Handbooks (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 236-251
- Jehangir Yezdi Malegam "Against the Silence: Twelfth-Century Augustinian Reformers Confront Apocalypse" in Matthew Gabriele and James T. Palmer, eds., *Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 205-220

Week IX 4 March – Spring Break

Week X 11 March Apocalyptic Movements in the High Middle Ages

- McGinn, *Visions of the End*, Ch 17 and 19,
- Brett Whalen, "Joachim of Fiore, Apocalyptic Conversion, and the 'Persecuting Society,'" *History Compass* 8, no. 7 (2010): 682–691.
- Stephen D. O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 44-61

Week XI 18 March Islam

- McGinn, *Visions of the End*, Intro to Part II and Ch 18
- David Burr, "Antichrist and Islam in Medieval Franciscan Exegesis.," in *Medieval Christian • • Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1768 (New York: Garland, 1996), 131–52.

Week XII 25 March Church and Empire

- McGinn, *Visions of the End* Ch. 20, and 22-23
- Frederic J Baumgartner, *Longing for the End: A History of Millennialism in Western Civilization*, Ch. 63-86

Week XIII 1 April Spiritualists and the Apocalypse

- McGill, *Visions of the End*, Ch 24.- 25

Week XIV 8 April Schism and Politics

- McGill, *Visions of the End*, Ch. 29-31

Week XV 15 April

Week XVI 22 April

Some small print...

Grade Distribution and Grading Scale

Three short papers– 15 points each	A = 100 – 94	C = 76 – 74
Take home Final – 35 points	A- = 93 – 90	C- = 73 – 70
Participation – 20 points	B+ = 89 – 87	D+ = 69 – 67
	B = 86 – 84	D = 66 – 64
	B- = 83 – 80	D- = 64 – 61
	C+ = 80 – 77	F = below 61

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx-hgrades>

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

e) Academic Honesty: According to the UF Academic Honesty Guidelines, “an academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. As a University of Florida student, one is expected to neither commit nor assist another in committing an academic honesty violation. Additionally, it is the student’s duty to report observed academic honesty violations.” All students are will be expected to follow the UF Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. All academic honesty offenses will result in a failing grade in this class.

More information on grades and grading policies can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> -

Students with disabilities requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/> (Links to an external site.)). The DCR will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Online Course Evaluation Process: Students in this class are participating in the pilot evaluation of the new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors so that teaching effectiveness is enhanced and to be more seamlessly linked to UF’s CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A_ufl.bluera.com_ufl_&d=DwIGaQ&c=sJ6xIWYx-zLMB3EPkvcnVg&r=1qtWVKU2uNohMAWR5pYYVu0F_ty9jxk4wI-

[DcSEfmKub76k8eaDIYyGQkZMpCOZ6&m=KCOMaruvDccGkQ95LBWWejChKpHpd3olzGps63zo0Ao&s=2ry1lk1Sd2MT9xMTXgaRslOLmzE7-Mky8W2E_HUO3wQ&e=](https://www.gatorrater.com/evaluations/63zo0Ao&s=2ry1lk1Sd2MT9xMTXgaRslOLmzE7-Mky8W2E_HUO3wQ&e=) (Links to an external site.) . Please note your other classes this semester may be evaluated in the current GatorRater online evaluation system at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>Links to an external site. . Thank you for serving as a partner in this important effort.