

# APOCALYPSE THEN AND NOW

## Winter 2021

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## Contents

Course Description.....	3
Course Objectives.....	3
Required Materials and Texts .....	3
Class Format.....	3
Course Evaluation – Overview .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Course Evaluation – Details .....	3
Assignment/test 1 (%%), due xxxx .....	3
Assignment/test 2 (%%), due xxxx .....	3
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings .....	4
Week 1 (Dates).....	5
Week 2 (Dates).....	5
Week 3 (Dates).....	5
Week 4 (Dates).....	5
Week 5 (Dates).....	5
Week 6 (Dates).....	6
Week 7 (Dates).....	6
Week 8 (Dates).....	6
Week 9 (Dates).....	6

Week 10 (Dates).....	6
Week 11 (Dates).....	6
Week 12 (Dates).....	6
Week 13 (Dates).....	7
Week 14 (Dates).....	7
Course Policies .....	7
Submission of Assignments.....	7
Grades.....	7
Late Assignments .....	7
Avenue to Learn .....	7
University Policies .....	8
Academic Integrity Statement.....	8
Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection .....	8
Courses with an On-line Element .....	9
Online Proctoring.....	9
Conduct Expectations.....	9
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.....	9
Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work .....	10
Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO) .....	10
Copyright and Recording .....	10
Extreme Circumstances.....	10

## **Course Description**

This course investigates the genre of ancient apocalyptic in early Judaism and Christianity, exploring the way in which historical and social factors contributed to the development and popularity of this theme in the ancient world. Additionally, the course will compare and contrast this ancient body of literature to contemporary apocalyptic movements and thought.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- become familiar with the content and themes of ancient Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts
- understand how historical and social contexts led to the development and use of apocalyptic literature.
- Explore the way in which ancient apocalyptic thought has been adopted and adapted for or differs from the modern world

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- Various readings posted to A2L or online links

## **Class Format**

Online videos and readings

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### ***Opinion Piece (15%), due January 22, via A2L***

What are the biggest problems facing the world now? What, if any, solutions are there? How, if it all, can we contribute to those solutions? This should be a well-written and structured essay in which you share your own thoughts. Papers should be 5-6 pages double spaced. There is no need for footnotes or secondary scholarship (although you can include such references if you believe that they will help). You will be graded on the thoughtfulness of your paper (not whether the TA agrees with your opinion) and on how well written, formatted, structured, the piece is.

### ***Comparison Paper (15%), due on February 28, via A2L***

Compare and contrast one modern apocalyptic movement of your choice with one ancient apocalyptic text from the lectures. What do they agree upon? What do they disagree upon? Is there a way to account for these differences socio-historically? Your paper should be 6 pages in length, 12 size font (Times New Roman), double spaced.

### ***Create Your Own Apocalypse (25%), due on March 15, via A2L***

Using John Collins's definition of apocalyptic literature, construct your very own apocalypse. Have fun and be creative! Work to construct a coherent, compelling piece

of literature that is well written. Your paper should be 10 pages in length, 12 size font (Times New Roman), double spaced.

***Independent Study (30%), Due on A2L on April 1, 2021***

Pick from one of the following options. Watch or listen to or read ONE of the following, taking notes and thinking about what kind of apocalyptic movement(s) are depicted. Write a 5-page summary of the apocalyptic thinking and distinctives. Some options require a subscription to Netflix or AmazonPrime or Crave (all of which offer a free one month or more free trial); others are open-access. AGAIN, just ONE of these options.

- Netflix Package: Waco (6 episodes) and Wild Wild Country (6 episodes)
- AmazonPrime 'Package': Apocalypse Later: Harold Camping; Wheat and Tares; Mayan Revelations; Earth Population Overload; End Times Prophecy of the Popes *and* listen to or read 15 episodes of the Podcast Ash Tales (<https://ashtales.com/podcast>)
- Crave Package: Aftermath (all episodes of Season 1)
- Buy or checkout from local library (often available as ebooks!) and read one apocalyptic novel
  - Omar El Akkad, *American War*
  - Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven*
  - Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*
  - PD James, *The Children of Men*
  - Nnedi Okorafor, *Who Fears Death*
  - Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*
  - Waubgeshig Rice, *Moon of the Crusted Snow*
  - Nevil Shute, *On the Beach*
  - Ling Ma, *Severance*
  - Louise Erdrich, *Future Home of the Living God*
  - Peng Shepherd, *The Book of M*
  - Colson Whitehead, *Zone One*
  - Tochi Onyebuchi, *Riot Baby*
  - Kim Stanley Robinson, *New York 2140*
  - Daniel Wilson, *Robopocalypse*
  - Lidia Yuknavitch, *The Book of Joan*
  - Rumaan Alam, *Leave the World Behind*
  - Margaret Atwood, *Oryx & Crake*
  - Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Water Knife*
  - Sandra Newman, *The Country of Ice Cream Star*
- Email me and suggest your own project (~10-12 hours of viewing/listening or one novel or an equivalent). Must receive approval!

***Checklist (15%), Due April 14, 2021 via A2L***

Given the nature of this academic year, and the relatively self-directed nature of this course, 'class' participation consists of doing as many of the readings, videos, etc. in the tentative schedule as possible. To receive 15% students must complete at least 90% of the readings, viewings, etc. See attached checklist below. Please fill out honestly!

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (Week of January 11)**

1. Video: Introduction to Apocalyptic (A2L)
2. Video: What is Apocalyptic? (A2L)
3. Listen: Podcast with Prof. Martha Himmelfarb (<https://peteenns.com/interview-with-martha-himmelfarb-second-temple-judaism-apocalyptic-literature/>)
4. Read: David Newheiser, "Honest Fragility" (<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/david-newheiser-keeping-hope-through-coronavirus-uncertainty/12139052>)

### **Week 2 (Week of January 18)**

1. Read: Zechariah 9-14 (<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=zechariah+9-14&version=NRSV>)
2. Read: Isaiah 24–27 (<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+24%E2%80%9327&version=NRSV>)
3. Read: Christopher Hays, "Proto-Apocalyptic Constellations," in *Apocalypses in Context*, 37-60
4. Read: Thomas Moynihan, "The end of the world: a history of how a silent cosmos led humans to fear the worst" (<https://theconversation.com/the-end-of-the-world-a-history-of-how-a-silent-cosmos-led-humans-to-fear-the-worst-120193>)
5. Video: Zechariah (A2L)
6. Video: Isaiah (A2L)

### **Week 3 (Week of January 25)**

1. Read: Daniel 7-12 (<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=daniel+7-12&version=NRSV>)
2. Read: 1 Enoch 85-90 ([https://www.ccel.org/c/charles/otpseudepig/enoch/ENOCH\\_4.HTM](https://www.ccel.org/c/charles/otpseudepig/enoch/ENOCH_4.HTM))
3. Read: "Notes on a Maya Apocalypse"
4. Read: Elizabeth Dias, "Unveiling" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/us/coronavirus-apocalypse-religion.html>)
5. Video: Daniel
6. Video: Animal Apocalypse

### **Week 4 (Week of February 1)**

1. Read: 1 Enoch, chapters 6-11 ([https://www.ccel.org/c/charles/otpseudepig/enoch/ENOCH\\_1.HTM](https://www.ccel.org/c/charles/otpseudepig/enoch/ENOCH_1.HTM))
2. Read: Lilly, "The Planet's Apocalypse" ([https://www.academia.edu/17005635/The\\_Planets\\_Apocalypse\\_Rhetoric\\_of\\_Climate\\_Change](https://www.academia.edu/17005635/The_Planets_Apocalypse_Rhetoric_of_Climate_Change))
3. Read: "Green Funeral Practitioners" on A2L
4. Read: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/report/mayan-apocalypse-2012/>
5. Read: <https://theconversation.com/apocalyptic-fiction-helps-us-deal-with-the-anxiety-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic-133682>
6. Video: Book of Watchers (A2L)

**Week 5 (Week of February 8)**

1. Read: The War Scroll (<https://www.qumran.org/js/qumran/hss/1qm>)
2. Read: Testament of Moses (<http://wesley.nnu.edu/index.php?id=2124>)
3. Read: "Return of Amalek" (A2L)
4. Read: Barkun, "Racist Apocalypse" (A2L)
5. Video: The War Scroll (A2L)
6. Video: Testament of Moses (A2L)

**Week 6 (Week of February 15)**

Date – Reading Week

**Week 7 (Week of February 22)**

1. Read: Psalms of Solomon 17 (<http://qbible.com/brenton-septuagint/psalms-of-solomon/17.html>)
2. Read "Apocalypse and the Spirit of Revolution"
3. Read "Japanese Apocalypse"
4. Video: The Messiah

**Week 8 (Week of March 1)**

1. Read Mark 13  
(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+13&version=NRSV>)
2. Read: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/02/opinion/climate-change-australia.html>
3. Read: <https://www.wired.com/story/the-climate-apocalypse-is-now-and-its-happening-to-you/>
4. Video: Apocalyptic Jesus (A2L)
5. Video: Son of Man (A2L)

**Week 9 (Week of March 8)**

1. Read 1 Thessalonians  
(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thessalonians%201&version=NRSV>)
2. Video: Paul and the Gentiles
3. Video: Paul and Apocalyptic

**Week 10 (Week of March 15)**

1. Read Revelation 1-6  
(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=revelation+1-6&version=NRSV>)
2. Read Revelation 20-22  
(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=revelation+20-22&version=NRSV>)
3. Video: Revelation and Roman Empire
4. Video: Revelation and New Creation

**Week 11 (Week of March 22)**

1. Video: 4 Ezra (A2L)
2. Video: Heaven's Gates (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca2LhJdIK3U>)
3. Read: "How Much Do I Want the Apocalypse to Happen" on A2L

4. Read: "Wasteland America" on A2L

### **Week 12 (Week of March 29)**

1. Video: Ancient Apocalyptic Summary (A2L)
2. Read: Sociology of Apocalypse (A2L)
3. Read: Mr. Rogers Environment (A2L)

### **Week 13 (Week of April 5)**

1. Video: Concluding Lecture (A2L)
2. Read: Facing the Apocalypse (A2L)
3. Read: Murphy, "Zombies Required" (<https://religiondispatches.org/the-world-is-always-about-to-end-no-zombies-required/>)

### **Week 14 (Week of April 12)**

1. Catch up and Complete Any Remaining Work

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

[Insert policy on format of assignments and how to be submitted. Keep in mind our department policy that staff in the office of the Department of Religious Studies will not date-stamp or receive papers and other assignments.]

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

[Insert policy on late assignments]

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation

may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).



### **Courses with an On-line Element**

**Some courses may** use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Online Proctoring**

**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

## Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

## Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.