



TYNDALE
• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus

SPRING/SUMMER 2018
REVELATION:
HOPE IN A WORLD GONE WRONG
NEWT 0526

MONDAY MAY 7 – FRIDAY MAY 11, 2018
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

INSTRUCTOR: DR. WILLIAM J. WEBB

Email: bwebb@tyndale.ca

“Office Hours”: During the course week on campus office hours are immediately before or after the class. On off-campus weeks after the course we can set up a phone call, Skype or meet at any Starbucks in Waterloo, ON. Kindly mail me to book a time. Thanks.

To access your course material, please go to <http://classes.tyndale.ca>. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account. For information how to access and forward emails to your personal account, see <http://www.tyndale.ca/it/live-at-edu>.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the Book of Revelation with a focus on its literary genre, theological themes and the various schools of interpretation. A detailed study of the argument with a view to teaching and preaching its contents.

Prerequisite: BIBL 0501. Recommended: NEWT 0522.

This course is designed to guide the student in a study of the final and somewhat unique book of the canon, namely, Revelation. Special emphasis will be placed on the genre issue, the different hermeneutical approaches to the book, crucial interpretive issues, the book’s literary structure and artistry, and its distinctively high Christology. We will also discuss the important question of teaching and applying the book in our present-day, apocalyptically fearful/sensitive setting.

II. LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, by:

1. Reading the book of Revelation along with a series of extra-biblical apocalypses
2. Presenting three original-audience analyses of the “esoteric” apocalyptic visions and critically evaluating other student’s presentations
3. Discussing the meaning of several challenging texts with colleagues
4. Researching and writing an interpretative passage/issue paper
5. Reflecting upon course materials (lectures, handouts, textbooks, etc.)

Students should be able to:

- Trace through the structure and argument of the book of Revelation.
- Identify the major interpretive issues and begin wrestling through the pros and cons for various options.
- Utilize the literary and metaphorical artistry of the book to clarify, rather than cloud, the author’s intended meaning.
- Understand John’s apocalypse within its literary genre and the milieu of extra-biblical apocalyptic writings. [Contrary to popular opinion Revelation does not present us with “tomorrow’s newspaper” slid underneath our door today].
- Develop a more resolute faith (despite hardship, difficulties and setbacks) and be drawn irresistibly into the worship of the Lion and the Lamb.
- Begin feeling comfortable using the book in various ministry contexts as they better understand how the “strange visions” of John’s apocalypse would have applied to the seven churches (a good starting place for all contemporary application).
- Trace through certain biblical themes—sacrifice, temple, holy war, God’s glory, creation, covenant(s), etc.—in order to see canonical development and how these apocalyptic visions provide closure to the broader storyline of Scripture.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

*Note: Students may choose to read either (not both) Mounce or Osborne depending upon various considerations (see below under “Assignments and Grading”).

Mounce, Robert H. *The Book of Revelation*. NICNT. Revised edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998. [ISBN: 0-8028-2537-0]*

Osborne, Grant R. *Revelation*. BECNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002. [ISBN: 0-8010-2299-1]*

B. RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Bock, Darrell L. *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*. Grand Rapids. MI: Zondervan, 1999. [ISBN: 978-0-310-20143-4]

Reddish, Mitchell G. ed., *Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995. [ISBN: 1-56563-210-9]*

Sprinkle, Preston, ed. *Four Views on Hell*. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids. MI: Zondervan, 2016. [ISBN: 978-0-310-51646-0]

*Note: Reddish's *Apocalyptic Literature* provides a handy collection of many 2TJ (second Temple Judaism) apocalypses and early Christian apocalypses. Unfortunately, it is not always in print. The extra-biblical apocalypses for reading in this course are available online or in numerous other hard-cover volumes.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Reading (10%)

There are four areas of reading requirement for students: (a) the book of Revelation itself, (b) a commentary, (c) ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypses and (d) periodical articles and handouts that are provided online.

The Book of Revelation. The student is required to read the biblical text of Revelation four times during the course:

- twice before the 2nd week (complete book of Revelation)
- twice before each week's lectures (only the portion to be studied)

A Commentary. A student must read through the appropriate portion of the course textbook once (either Mounce or Osborne) *before* each class period. Osborne's commentary is 869 pages; Mounce is a mere 439 pages. Your choice between these two commentaries ought to be influenced by the following considerations:

- reading abilities
- how much do you want to "dig deeper" into the subject matter
- the grade you wish to achieve (see grading rubric)

Apocalyptic Literature. If one is to appreciate the literary genre of Revelation, s/he must have done at least a minimal amount of background reading in similar kinds of apocalyptic literature. By the 4th week, the student is to read one "sample piece" of apocalyptic literature (either 2 Baruch or 1 Enoch 1—36, which is known as, "The Book of the Watchers"). This sample reading anticipates our discussion of apocalyptic genre for that week. The student

may choose to read a certain number of extra-biblical apocalypses based upon the reading grade that they wish to achieve (see grading rubric).

[Explanatory Aside: In most courses a grade is not given for reading. However, a course on Revelation requires an “added element” of reading because of its unusual kind of literature, namely, its apocalyptic genre. Aside from completing the grading rubric as a measure of one’s reading, the professor will expect students to interact with apocalyptic literature in their final research paper on Revelation. For example, if you choose to do a final paper on “Hell”, you will need to work through about 5-6 different (mutually exclusive) options in terms of how Christians understand this subject through asking the question, “Which option is most convincing?” A major part of your discussion will focus on weighing the competing evidence within the book of Revelation itself for choosing between views. In addition to this, however, the presentation of hell within apocalyptic literature more broadly is very important to a genre-based discussion (and validation) of what one finds in the book of Revelation. Other apocalypses can help build a case concerning what John *more likely* meant to say within the book of Revelation. Accordingly, the professor will be looking for interaction with apocalyptic literature in the final paper. Papers on almost every facet of Revelation—the millennium, heaven, the fall of Babylon, etc.—have interpretive issues and require interaction with apocalyptic literature in choosing between competing views.]

Periodical Articles/Handouts. All students must at least read Chisholm’s periodical article on prophetic genre in order to pass the course. Beyond this minimum reading requirement for this fourth category of periodical articles/handouts, consult the grading rubric for further details.

The grading rubric for course readings will (a) assist in making decisions about how much course reading a student wishes to accomplish and (b) help in understanding exactly how one’s grade for this assignment is derived.

Due date for reading grade submission: same as **final paper** (see below).

2. The Great [Sample] Debates: Millennium and Hell (25%)

Students may choose to debate either the different Christian views of the millennium or hell. On Thursday [May 10th] students must be prepared to engage in a debate based upon a reading of the multiple views book (minimal reading) re. either the millennium or hell. See the recommended reading list above. While representing only one particular view in the debate, students must nonetheless be familiar with each of the views, their representative authors and the pros/cons of competing positions.

The class will be divided into teams for either (a) the millennial debate or (b) the hell debate. A grade will be assessed based upon both the group achievement and each student’s contribution to the group effort.

As an *alternative* to the two debates (millennium and hell) students may choose to do a written assignment that captures the “Echoes and Images” in the fourth vision in the book of

Revelation, namely, **Rev. 17:1 – 22:5**. Here is a summary of the E&I assignment:

Echoes and Images Assignment: When applying the apocalyptic visions of Revelation to today's generation, one must think through what "sermonic/pastoral/theological impact" the scroll would have had upon those who first encountered the text. The best measure of the intended impact on the original audience is to picture what would have gone through the minds of the various congregations, i.e., the seven churches (chps. 2 – 3) and John himself (chp. 1), as they listened to the letter being read aloud. What were these visions saying to them about how they ought to act/think/feel in their own life setting?

One way to gain this kind of first-audience perspective is to listen carefully in the text of chapters 4*–22 for "echoes and images" that correlate with the seven letters. In other words, listen for where you detect a verbal link or a conceptual link between the chapters 1 – 3 (John and the seven churches) and chapters 4*–22 (the apocalyptic visions). List all of these verbal links and conceptual links.

Echoes. For *verbal links* (we will call them, "echoes"), it is helpful to type out the visions portion of biblical text first. Below this material from chapters 4*–22, type out the connecting section of the "John on Patmos and the letters" (chps. 1 – 3). Then, highlight in bold or italic the material that corresponds. For example, a clear verbal link obviously exists between 19:15 and 2:26-27:

19:15

Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. **He will rule them with an iron scepter.** He treads the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

2:26-27

To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—**he will rule them with an iron scepter**; he will dash them to pieces like pottery—just as I have received authority from my Father.

Images. For *conceptual links* (we will call them, "images"), simply type out both portions of text, underline or italics the related material in each, and specify (in your own words) the nature of the conceptual link. Such an example of conceptual linkage would appear to exist between 20:1-6 and 2:10:

20:1-7

I saw an angel . . . holding in his hand a **great chain**. He **seized** the dragon/devil . . . and **bound** him for a **thousand years**. . . . I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. . . . They came to life and reigned with Christ a **thousand years**. . . . they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his **prison** . . .

2:10

I tell you, the devil will put some of you [Christians] **in prison** to test you, and you will suffer persecution for **ten days**. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Link/point: contrast between a "short" time of persecution *versus* a "long . . . long" time of better things to come.¹ Cf. short time of devil's persecution (imprisoning Christians) *versus* long time of his being imprisoned! Aside from the theme of eschatological reversal (one answer to theodicy) in terms of terms of imprisonment, there is a short-vs.-long dichotomy in the sentencing.

¹ Most examples will be comparative. However, you will want to think contrastively as well.

Please organize the materials according to the progress of verse designations throughout the visions, i.e., according to the flow of the biblical text from 4:1* to 22:5 (not according to the church letters). Mix together the echoes and images as they naturally surface within the flow of the biblical text (no need to keep them in two distinct categories). In close proximity to the grading rubric for this two-part assignment, the professor will give a brief lecture covering a series of practical hints or tips for achieving greater success in this assignment. Unlike the final paper (see below), the form/style of these two forum assignments does not need to conform to Turabian/Chicago writing style.

Due date: **Thursday, May 10th**

3. Preliminary Bibliography (20%)

As a preliminary step to writing the Research Paper, the student must submit a “starting bibliography” with 10 (minimum) to 30 (maximum) sources of excellent academic quality that includes a range of monographs, periodicals, commentaries, dissertations, etc. Each source item should be entered in proper Chicago or Turabian style. Underneath each bibliographic entry place 2-3 sentences to state the source’s contribution to your paper topic and their thesis on the topic. Finally, state in 1-2 sentences what the tentative (best hunch at this point) thesis is for your research paper. Of course, feel free to modify your thesis in the final paper however the evidence unfolds.

The professor will return this preliminary-research assignment with comments in a quick turn-around timeframe (hopefully 24 to 48 hours). Comments and feedback from this assignment should be used to strengthen the development of your final paper.

Due date: **Thursday, May 31st** [earlier if possible]

4. Final Research Paper (45%)

Students must write a final research paper on some aspect of meaning in the book of Revelation. You may choose (a) an interpretive issue, (b) an ethical problem, or (c) a thematic development of a particular subject. The grade ceiling of “B” will most likely follow for the third option (thematic development) because a descriptive paper is *generally* easier than an interpretive-issue or an ethical-problem paper.

The paper must strive for excellence in three areas: research, writing style and argumentation. A discussion of these three areas along with a grading rubric will be provided. Use the instructions, grading rubric and various resources posted on the course site under “Final Research Paper.” The paper is due *through email submission* as an attached file [bwebb@tyndale.ca] on the date specified in the syllabus schedule below. See discussion of late submissions below. Length: 15 to 20 double-spaced, 12 point font pages (not including bibliography). Please use single-spaced 10 point footnotes (no endnotes and no short-form, author-year citations within the body of the text). Going over the allowable page limit will result in a reduction of the grade. The final paper must use correct Turabian style in all of its

components—font size, title page, headings, paragraph spacing, margins, block quotes, footnotes, bibliography, etc. See grading rubric.

Due date: **Friday July 6th**. See the discussion of late final paper submissions below.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Submissions. Kindly email all assignments as attached files (either MSWord or PDF formats are fine) to the professor at: bwebb@tyndale.ca

Late RESEARCH PAPER Submissions, part I: ON OR BEFORE the “Last Day of Exams” [LDOE] Deadline. The last day of exams in a semester is the official deadline for any late submissions. After that day the professor cannot accept late work without the explicit/written approval of the dean’s office (see below). If student recognizes that a late submission on or before the LDOE deadline does not involve clear extenuating circumstances (defined below), they may submit the material to the professor as **(i) a late submission with penalty** until midnight of the LDOE. In this case there is no need to contact the professor for approval. For every day late, the grade will be reduced by 5 %, a half a letter grade (i.e. one day late: 82 % A- becomes 77% B+; two days late, 82 % becomes 72 % B-, etc.). Please note that the deduction for a partial day late counts that same as a full day late. On the other hand, if there are clear extenuating circumstances, the student may ask the professor for **(ii) a late submission without penalty** (or with partial penalty). By clear mitigating circumstances I mean something along the following lines. Suppose I as your professor were to take your circumstances to the class (hypothetically, not in reality) and ask them the following question, “Should I treat this student differently regarding late penalties than I would treat the rest of you based upon their particular [mitigating?] circumstances?” If the class were to respond with an overwhelming, “Yes, of course,” then you have a case of clear mitigating circumstances. If you wish to ask for this sort of late submission without penalty (or with only partial penalty) where the submission is on or before the LDOE, please contact the professor. The student must take the initiative in this matter.

Late RESEARCH PAPER Submissions, part II: AFTER the “Last Day of Exams” [LDOE] Deadline. Any submissions after the LDOE require a formal process of appeal to the Registrar’s Office (not to the professor). Requests for such extensions beyond the LDOE must be (a) submitted in writing using the Tyndale Extension Forms, explaining the reason why the extension is needed and (b) submitted to the registrar before the LDOE unless there are reasons why this was not possible. No assignments will be accepted after the LDOE unless the student has a valid reason for an extension. In that case, the student must apply for an extension to the dean/registrar (again, not to the professor). Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to a heavy work load, other assignments, professional or ministry obligations or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current Academic Calendar for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at <http://tyndale.ca/registrar/calendar>.

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.46 to 10.51](#) and [14.253 to 14.254](#). Turabian style includes title page, headings, paragraph form, block quotes, footnotes, etc.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Reading | 10% |
| The Great Debates [or alternative E&I paper] | 25% |
| Preliminary Bibliography | 20% |
| <u>Final Research Paper</u> | <u>45%</u> |
| Total Grade | 100% |

F. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE

| Week#/Date | Lecture/Subject | Assignments/Reading |
|--------------|---|---------------------|
| Day 1 | Syllabus Authorship, Date, Origin/Destination, & Setting Excursus: "A Biblical Theology of Suffering—Derived From Revelation" Literary Structure 1:1-20 2:1 – 3:22 Seven Churches Excursus: "The Overcomers: All Christians or Some Christians?" Excursus: "The Rapture Question" | |
| Day 2 | 4:1 – 5:14 Excursus: "The Literary Genre of 4:1 – 22:5" Excursus: "Methods of Interpreting 4:1 – 22:5" Excursus: "Who are the 24 Elders?" 6:1 – 17 Excursus: "The Structure of the STBs—Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls" Excursus: "Apocalyptic Cosmic Catastrophe—Literal or Figurative?" | |
| Day 3 | 7:1-17 Excursus: "Who are the 144,000?" Excursus: "Who are the Great Multitude?" 8:1—9:21 10:1—11:14 11:15—13:1 13:2-18 Excursus: "666—Calculating the Number of the Beast" | |
| Day 4 | 14:1-20 15:1—16:21 | |

Excursus: "Armageddon, The Place of the Eschatological Battle—Literally?"

17:1—19:10

Excursus: "Babylon the Great: Literal or Figurative Babylon?"

Day 5 19:11—21:8

21:9—22:5

22:6-21

Excursus: "A Pastoral Theology of Suffering—Related to Revelation"

Research Paper: Due Friday July 6th.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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