



TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus Winter 2013

REVELATION
NEWT 0526 (SECTION 1)

JANUARY 16 – APRIL 17, 2013
WEDNESDAYS, 6:30 PM TO 9:20 PM

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To access your course material, please go to <http://mytyndale.ca>

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 OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, the student should be able [seven-fold]:

- To trace through the structure and argument of the book of Revelation.
- To identify the major interpretive issues and begin wrestling through the pros and cons for various options.

- To utilize the literary and metaphorical artistry of the book to clarify, rather than cloud, the author’s intended meaning.
- To 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.]
- To become more resolute in our faith (despite hardship, difficulties and setbacks) and to be drawn irresistibly into the worship of the Lion and the Lamb.
- To begin feeling comfortable using the book for both personal and public ministry as we 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).
- To trace through various 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

REQUIRED TEXTS

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

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

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

*Note: Students may choose to read either Mounce or Osborne depending upon various considerations (see assignment C1 below). Reddish’s *Apocalyptic Literature* is required reading for all students. If Reddish is unavailable (sometimes out of print), the professor will supply online reading sources.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Reading Revelation and One Commentary (10%)

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

- twice before the 2nd class (complete book)

- twice before each class (only the portion to be studied)

Also, it would be helpful if the student could read through the appropriate portion of the course textbook once (either Mounce or Osborne) *before* each class period. However, the reading of the course textbook/commentary may either precede or trail the course week.

The grading for this assignment will be based upon the % of the biblical text read (4 times) before the class week and the % of the commentary read either before or after the class. 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
- perhaps you have read Mounce in the past, so it would be more helpful to choose Osborne
- the “grade ceiling” (maximum achievable grade) for this assignment is “B+” if you choose Mounce; it is “A+” if you choose Osborne.
- the grade will combine three factors: (a) quantity, (b) quality and (c) amount read before class (more for the biblical text, much less so for the commentary).

2. Apocalyptic Reading (20%)

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 literature. As an introduction to the field, the student is to read a collection of “classic” apocalyptic works found in extra-biblical literature (Reddish, Michell G. ed., *Apocalyptic Literature. A Reader*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995).

By the 2nd class/day, the student is to read one “sample piece” of apocalypse literature (either 2 Baruch or 1 Enoch 1—36/Book of the Watchers). This will be in preparation for our discussion of apocalyptic genre for that day.

After reading Reddish, ed., *Apocalyptic Reader* in its entirety, write a 2-3 page, single spaced, typewritten paper. Ask the following question: “*How does reading other apocalyptic literature help my understanding of Revelation?*” Articulate in point form a number of specific/concrete examples from various apocalyptic works and show how they have helped you understand certain features of the book of Revelation.

[Optional: If you have *BibleWorks*TM or another search tool, check out one or two correspondences between the book of Revelation and apocalyptic texts found in the Apocrypha. Choose a word or phrase that raises your curiosity as something that might be worth tracking down in other apocalyptic works—e.g., the word “Babylon” or “abyss”

or “Michael”. Put your one or two samples and a sentence summarizing your findings/ insights within an Appendix and attach it to the (above) typewritten assignment.]

3. Echoes and Images Assignment (30%)

In order to apply the apocalyptic visions of Revelation to today’s generation, one must think through what “homiletic 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, the seven churches (chps. 2—3), 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 chps. 4—22 for “echoes” and “images” from the seven letters. In other words, listen for where you detect a verbal link or a conceptual link between the chps. 2—3 and chps. 4—22. List all of these verbal links and conceptual links.

For *verbal links (echoes)*, it is helpful to type out the “visions” portion first; below this, type out the connecting section of the “letters”. Then, highlight in bold or italic print the material that corresponds. For example, a clear verbal link 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.

For *conceptual links (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:

20:1-6

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.

2:10

I tell you, the devil will put some of you **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 imprisonment reversal, there is a short-long dichotomy in the sentencing.

This assignment is to be completed in four stages or sections (4:1—7:17; 8:1—13:1; 13:2—16:21; 17:1—22:5). Please organize the materials according to the progress of verse designations throughout the visions (not the church letters). At some point during the week, the professor will cover a series of practical hints or tips for achieving greater success in the assignment.

[Optional: If possible, use *BibleWorks™* or another search tool and your UBS text. Search for the verbal “echoes” in the original/Greek text. Remember to chop down words (endings and prefixes) and add an asterisk* (wild card) to catch all of the variants. Set your search range for the rest of Revelation but especially work with connections to the first three chapters. The final assignment should cite portions of the English text with italics or bold to indicate which English words form the links. Then, within brackets () place the equivalent Greek words that reflect the italicized English words. This format should clearly identify the verbal correspondence in the original/Greek text.]

4. Research Paper (40%)

Students must write a 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. Yet there are exceptions; this is simply a general observation.

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 handout will be provided during the course/class week. The paper should be 20 to 25 double-spaced pages (bibliography not included) and conform to Chicago style.

Due date: March 4, 2012 (eight weeks after last course day)

5. Grading Summary

Reading Revelation and One Commentary	10%
Apocalyptic Reading	20%
Echoes and Images	30%
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>40%</u>
Total	100%

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

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

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

Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic polices on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

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

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week#/Date	Lecture/Subject	Assignments/Reading
Week 1 (Jan. 16)	Syllabus Authorship, Date, Origin/Destination, & Setting Excursus: "A Biblical Theology of Suffering—Derived From Revelation"	
Week 2 (Jan. 23)	Literary Structure 1:1-20	Reading Revelation (2x)
Week 3 (Jan. 30)	2:1—3:22 Seven Churches Excursus: "The Overcomers: All Christians or Some Christians?" Excursus: "The Rapture Question"	
Week 4 (Feb. 6)	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?"	2 Baruch; 1 Enoch 1—36 Chisholm (article online)
Week 5 (Feb. 13)	6:1-17 Excursus: "The Structure of the STBs—Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls" Excursus: "Apocalyptic Cosmic Catastrophe—Literal or Figurative?"	Apocalyptic Reading due
Week 6 (Feb. 20)	7:1-17 Excursus: "Who are the 144,000?" Excursus: "Who are the Great Multitude?"	
Week 7 (Feb. 27)	8:1—9:21 10:1—11:14	
Week 8	11:15—13:1	

(Mar. 6)	13:2-18 Excursus: "666—Calculating the Number of the Beast"	
Week 9 (Mar. 13)	NO CLASS (Reading Week)	
Week 10 (Mar. 20)	14:1-20 15:1—16:21 Excursus: "Armageddon, The Place of the Eschatological Battle—Literally?"	Echoes and Images due
Week 11 (Mar. 27)	17:1—19:10 Excursus: "Babylon the Great: Literal or Figurative Babylon?"	
Week 12 (Apr. 3)	19:11—21:8	Webb (article online)
Week 13 (Apr. 10)	21:9—22:5 22:6-21 Excursus: "A Pastoral Theology of Suffering—Related to Revelation"	
Week 14 (Apr. 17)	NO CLASS	Research paper and Reading report due

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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