This course explores the influence of the Book of Revelation upon notions of the END OF THE WORLD in American culture, politics, and environmental issues. In view of recent droughts, oil spills, mass migrations, nuclear disasters, civil wars, and health pandemics around the world, some people have started to prepare for the Apocalypse. But, what does it mean? How does it affect our lives? And why should we strive to understand it? This course helps students to answer these questions and to map the socio-economic, political, and cultural impact of apocalyptic thought upon American culture in particular, and Western cultures in general. Key themes germane to this course include: colonialism, the environment (e.g. Fukushima), UFO religions (e.g. Heaven’s Gate), millenarian movements (e.g. Pentecostalism), and the formation of alternative communities (e.g. Jonestown). In order to prepare students to analyze these themes, the course will introduce various theories and methods from the study of religion. Since apocalyptic thought has significantly influenced American religious traditions, we conclude by reflecting on its impact upon our own spiritualities, notions of social justice, and alternative visions for our world.

PROFESSOR: Roberto Mata
EMAIL: rmata@scu.edu
OFFICE HOURS: TBD
OFFICE: (300j)

CORE CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES:

Students taking this course will:

1.1 Describe and compare the central religious ideas and practices from several traditions or within one, and from at least two globally distinct regions. [Students will fulfill this core objective through group presentations, reading responses, as well as through midterm and final examinations].

1.2 Use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence. [Students will fulfill this core objective through an introduction to the theories and methods from the study of
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

religion, class discussions, reading responses, and both midterm and final exams.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Introduce the origins, development, and impact of apocalyptic through the book of Revelation.
2. Explore the influence of Revelation upon contemporary American religious traditions, politics, and culture.
3. Provide tools/frameworks/methods from the academic study of religion to help students interpret the various dimensions of apocalyptic thought.
4. Equip students to engage in global dialogue about the ways in which apocalypticism shapes our understanding of issues and events, such as fundamentalism, migration, genocide, hunger, environmental disasters, and religious violence.
5. Offer students an opportunity to reflect on the impact of apocalyptic thought upon their own religious beliefs, traditions, and experiences, as well as the ways it shapes their views on various contemporary issues.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


Additional reading material will be posted on Camino Course Site. There you should also find other course related materials including: reading response questions, field education experience response, drop boxes, online discussions, exam study guides, rubrics and other handouts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT METHODS:

- **Class attendance and Critical Engagement (20%)**. Students will achieve 20% of their course grade through (1) on-time attendance and (2) thoughtful class participation as well as class activities (e.g. small and large group discussions and online discussions. Students who leave class after attendance has been taken will be marked absent. [Fulfills core curriculum objective 1.1. Students will describe and compare apocalyptic texts/ideas within several religious traditions or within one].
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY ▪ DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

- **Reading Responses (20%).** In order to prepare for course sessions, students are required to post weekly readings responses (1 page each) on Camino throughout the quarter. Each response must summarize the main thesis of the reading assignment and articulate its importance for our understanding of the impact of apocalyptic thought, and reflect on how it might shape their own religious tradition/spirituality.  
  [Fulfills core curriculum objective 1.2. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs, religious experiences, or faith journeys through reading responses, as well as through class and online discussions.]

- **Mid-term Examination (20%):** This essay explores an apocalyptic theme, issue, or practice of interest in American culture (10 pages). It must engage the interpretive approach of at least one major thinker from the academic study of religion.  
  [Fulfills core curriculum objective 1.1. and 1.2. The midterm exam challenges students to identify, describe and interpret apocalyptic themes/ideas/symbols within sacred texts, practices, and beliefs within several or within one religious tradition. The exam also integrates critical interpretive approaches from the study of religion.]

- **Group Project (10%):** a 10-minute multi-media group presentation on a contemporary issue/problem in American culture, politics, or societies related to influence of apocalyptic thought.  
  [Fulfills core curriculum objective 1.2. Students will use critical approaches from the theories and methods in the study of religion to reflect on the ways in which apocalyptic thought continues to shape American society.]

- **Final Examination (30%):** Students will write a 15-page paper that engages a major issue in American culture, society, or politics, related to the apocalypse. The paper must employ analytical frameworks from the study of religion. Students must also reflect upon the ways in which their socio-religious location shaped their approach to the paper.  
  [Fulfills core curriculum objective 1.1. and 1.2. Students employ critical tools to reflect on their own faith journeys and to articulate constructive solutions to the issues they identify.]

**GRADING SCALE:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94%-100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90%-93%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87%-89%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83%-86%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80%-82%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77%-79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73%-76%</td>
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<td>70%-72%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59% &amp; below</td>
<td>59%</td>
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The instructor will provide written feedback on reading responses, readings responses, and presentations. Group project feedback will be communicated via email or during office hours.
OTHER INFORMATION:

Disability Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, http://www.scu.edu/disabilities as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy or parenting may also be eligible for accommodations.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information, you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination (Title IX)

Santa Clara University upholds a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence or stalking, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife/about/osl.cfm and click on the link for the University’s Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethics point: www.ethicspoint.com or http://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point

Academic Integrity Policy

The University is committed to academic excellence and integrity. Students are expected to do their own work and to cite any sources they use. A student who is guilty of a dishonest act in an examination, paper, or other work required for a course, or who assists others in such an act, may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a grade of F for the course. Santa
Clara University is implementing an Academic Integrity pledge designed to deepen the understanding of and commitment to honesty and academic integrity.

The Academic Integrity Pledge states:

“I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.”

I ask that you affirm this pledge and apply these principles to your work in this class.

For more information on the university’s policy on academic integrity see the following: http://www.scu.edu/provost/policies/upload/Academic%20Integrity%20Protocol.pdf

PEDAGOGY:

In order to create a collaborative, democratic, and empowering learning environment, this course will implement a form of Border Pedagogy. Such a pedagogical approach acknowledges the shifting borders of power and knowledge, and links the educational enterprise with the struggle for a more just and democratic society. The instructor's version of this approach entails five interrelated stages: Critical Awakening, Journeying, Crossing, Negotiating, and Transforming. Such an approach will translate into the following practical dimensions of our learning practices/experiences: (1) students and the instructor will reflect on their own socio-religious location and the ways it shapes their understanding of the three monotheistic religions; (2) students will collaborate with one another and engage in critical and constructive dialogue for class projects and discussions; (3) students will identify and address key issues/themes/ritual practices in the three religious traditions; (4) students will learn traditional and non-traditional paradigms for understanding religion, as well as methods of interpretation; (5) students will be prepared to articulate the implications of course content and methodologies for the struggle towards a more egalitarian society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week &amp; Date</th>
<th>LECTURE TOPICS and READING ASSIGNMENTS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wk. 1: Sep 20, 22</td>
<td>PART I. THE BEGINNING OF THE END: The Roots, Genre, and Social Setting of the Judeo-Christian Apocalypse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please Note, students are required to read all primary sources (in red), and One of the required secondary sources for each class session.

Required Readings:

Tuesday: Genre, Cultural Background, and Social Setting of Apocalypse

- *Revelation 1:1-10, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, 1 QM*
- Frantz Fanon, “Concerning Violence”, 20-30 (PDF).

**Film: Ben Hur (2016)**


**Film: Concerning Violence (2014)**

**Recommended Readings:**

**Wk. 2:**
**Sep 27, 29**

**End-Times Prophets:**
Jesus, Jim Jones, and Marshall H. Applewhite

**Required Readings:**
**Tuesday: Jesus as a Prophet or Ends Times Savior?**
- *Revelation* 5:1-14, *Mark* 5:1-17,

**Film: The Passion (2004)**

**Thursday: False Prophets and Messiahs?**
- David Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide*, 1-12.
- George D. Chryssides, “Come Up and I Will Show Thee: Heaven’s Gate as a Postmodern
- Gifford, “Religious Authority”, 397-410 (in Hinnell’s);

**Documentary: Jonestown (PBS)**

**Recommended Readings:**

**Wk. 3: Oct 4, 6**

**Apocalyptic Communities:**
- Christians, Branch Dravidians, and Doomsday Preppers

**Required Readings:**

**Tuesday: The Ekklesia, Waco, and Doomsday Preppers**
- Revelation 1-3, Acts 2

**Film: Waco: The Rules of Engagement (1997)**

**Thursday: End-Times Proofed Bunkers**
- Revelation 12:13-20

**TV Series: Doomsday Preppers, Episode 1**

**Recommended Readings:**
- Kenneth Newport, *The Branch Dravidians of Waco: The History and Beliefs of an Apocalyptic Sect*, 76-95.
- Wright, Stuart A. *Armageddon in Waco*, 205-235.

**Wk. 4: Oct 11,13**

**PART II: READING THE SIGNS OF THE END:**
- Scripture, the Anti-Christ, and the Rapture

**Required Readings:**
- Tuesday: Interpreting the Apocalypse
**Recommended Readings:**


**Wk. 5: 18, 20**

**The Rapture Exposed? The End-Times, Israel, and the American Religious Right**

**Required Reading:**

**Tuesday: The Second Coming**

- 1 Thessalonians 2:19, Revelation 19:11
- LaHaye, Tim F, and Jerry B Jenkins. *The Rapture in the Twinkling of an Eye*, ch.1

**Film: The Left Behind (2014)**

**Thursday: Rapture Politics**

- Barbara R. Rossing, “The Rapture Script for the Middle-East” in *The Rapture Exposed the Message*
Wk. 6: Oct 26, 27  |  PART III. APOCALYPTIC UTOPIAS:  
| The New Jerusalem, Christian Missions, and The Third Reich |

### Required Readings: The New Jerusalem and Christian Missionary Movements

**Tuesday**

- **Revelation 21**

**Film:** The Mission

**Thursday: The Third Reich & Millennialism**

- **Revelation 2**

### Recommended Readings:


Wk. 7: Nov 1, 3  |  Apocalyptic Races:  
| Anti-Semitism, Eugenics, and Water Contamination in Flint Michigan |
Required Readings:
Tuesday: Race/Ethnicity in the End-times
- Revelation 2:9, 3:9

Film: Schildler's List

Thursday: Building the End-Times Race?
- Revelation 5:9, 7:9
- Edwin Black, “The United States of Sterilization,” in *War Against the Weak. Eugenics and Americas Campaign to Create a Master Race*, 87-125.

Film: The Matrix (1999)

Recommended Readings
- Judith Sherman’s *Say the Name: A Survivor’s Tale in Prose and Poetry* or *Maus I: A Survivor’s Tale—My Father Bleeds History.*

Wk. 8: Nov 8, 10

Part IV. APOCALYPSE AND POPULAR CULTURE: Zombies, UFO Religions, and Maya Calendars

Required Readings:
Tuesday: The Zombie Apocalypse and UFO Cults
- Revelation 16:1-17
Film: World War Z (2013)

Thursday: Apocalyptic Calendars
- Revelation 1:9-10, 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3
- Mircea Eliade, “Sacred Time,” (PDF)

Recommended Readings:

PART V. APOCALYPSE AND GLOBAL ISSUES:
Fundamentalism, Civil Wars, and Environmental Disasters

Wk. 9: Nov 15, 17

Required Readings:
Tuesday: Fundamentalism and Syrian Refugee Crisis
- Revelation 19

Video clip: Displaces in Calais

Thursday: Environmental and Natural Disasters
- Revelation 15:17-21

Documentary: Fukushima Nuclear Disaster
**Recommended Readings:**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk. 10 : Nov 22, 24</th>
<th>CLASS CANCELLED</th>
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Annual Meeting of Society for Biblical Literature  
&  
Thanksgiving Holiday

| Wk. 11: Nov 29, Dec 1 | Part VI. RETHINKING THE END:  
Decolonization, Social Justice, and the Environment |
Required Readings:

Tuesday: Decolonization and Social Justice
- Revelation 19: 11-21
- John R. Hall, Modernity and The Apocalyptic (Anticolonial Messianic Movements, Terrorism, and Guerrilla Warfare), in Apocalypse, 142-147.

Film: Concerning Violence 2014

Thursday: The Fracking Apocalypse
- Revelation 16:1-5

Video clip: Fracking Water Injected into Clean Aquifers

Recommended Readings:
- Evelyn Stiller, “Gaming Armageddon: Leaving Behind, Race, and Gender,” in End of Days, 308-327.

Week 12: Dec 7-11

Bibliography

Aveni Anthony F. The End of Time: The Maya Mystery of 2012. Boulder, Colo.: University Press of
Damian Thompson, _Waiting for Antichrist: Charisma and Apocalypse in a Pentecostal Church: Charisma and Apocalypse in a Pentecostal Church_. Oxford University Press, USA, 2005.


James R Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, Controversial New Religions, 2 ed. Edited by Oxford University Press, 2014.


