



**HISTORY 264.01E: A NATION DIVIDED
THE END OF THE WORLD**

COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2022



Albrecht Durer, *The Revelation of St. John: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1497-98)
Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe

Instructor: Professor John Howard Smith

Course Location/Time: Sowers Education South 129 / Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays,
11:00-11:50 a.m.

Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences 117

Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 8:00-10:00 a.m., or by appointment

University Email Address: John.Smith@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:*Textbooks Required:*

The Bible (any version will do, though the KJV has more of a poetic ring to it)
 Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*.
 Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992. ISBN10 0-674-95129-8
 Daniel Wojcik, *The End of the World As We Know It: Faith, Fatalism, and Apocalypse in America*. New York: New York University Press, 1997. ISBN10 0-8147-9348-7
 Various items downloadable from D2L/Brightspace

Course Description:

Beliefs in an inevitable end to the world is a feature of a handful of human religions, most recognizably of Christianity, and such beliefs are particularly strong in the United States. Much of this has to do with a current of Protestant Christian apocalypticism—beliefs about an end to the world—that runs through the American consciousness. Apocalyptic hopes and fears permeate not only the fundamentalist Christian mind, but also that of the non-religious, and apocalyptic imagery regularly appears in our popular culture. Through the close study of primary and secondary works we will examine the ancient and biblical origins of the eschatological sensibility, and the episodic expressions of apocalyptic anxiety throughout history, particularly in the United States from the founding of New England in the seventeenth century, to the fears of a global electronic shutdown at the coming of the year 2000, and the current anxiety over Islamic terrorism and belief that an apocalyptic “clash of civilizations” between Islam and Judeo-Christianity looms ahead.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or artistic works.
2. In written, oral, and/or visual communication, A&M-Commerce students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure.
3. Students will understand and practice academic honesty.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

This course consists of a series of activities and assessments to assist students in achieving the outcomes/objectives for the course and instructional units/modules. Each week students will work on various combinations of readings, discussions, and research.

Participation: (100 pts., 30% of course grade)

Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, & 4

Participation in class discussions is intended to allow students to talk about issues pertaining to the topics at hand concerning various aspects of millennialism and apocalypticism in history, and will serve to inform the Instructor about how well students are absorbing course content. They will also allow students to further develop and refine skills in scholarly debating, as they will be required to answer questions posed by the Instructor and by their classmates in coherent and insightful ways.

Readings Quizzes: (100 pts., 30% of course grade)

Student Learning Outcomes, 1, 2, 3, & 4

The readings quizzes are designed to test students' comprehension of the readings for each particular day a quiz is administered, testing the depth of their knowledge of the topic(s) at hand and their analytical skills. Administration will be random, and each quiz will take up no more than 10-15 minutes of class time at the beginning of each class period. Grading will be on a 0-10 point scale for each quiz.

Creative Writing Project: (100 pts., 40% of course grade)

Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, & 4

Students will write an apocalyptic text of their own that demonstrates the use of standard tropes as appear in such texts published by American doomsayers since the seventeenth century. Students will demonstrate their absorption of the course texts, as well as utilize material gathered through outside research to craft an in-depth analysis of historical and current world events, interpreted through a prophetic lens of the students' own devising. Students will present their papers in a formal manner during the last few class meetings. See below for further details.

Grading

Grading will be calculated using a standard 10-point scale, with course elements weighted accordingly:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
0-59	F

Participation (100 pts.)	30%
Readings Quizzes (10 pts. each)	30%
Writing Project (100 pts.)	40%

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

As this course is web-enhanced through D2L/Brightspace, students are asked to follow these links for information about course enhancements:

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

This course will be facilitated using D2L/Brightspace, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx>.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Office hours are given at the top of this syllabus, and are posted outside of my door. Arrangements can be made if a student cannot meet with me during regular office hours for consultations. Email is the most reliable method of reaching me outside of my office. Expect a reply within 36 hours.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Academic Honesty

It is the policy of the University, the History Department, and the instructor that no form of plagiarism or cheating will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as the deliberate use of another's work and claiming it as one's own. This means ideas as well as text, whether paraphrased or presented verbatim (word-for-word). **Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing on a test or assignment will automatically fail the test or assignment in question, may summarily fail the course, and could be subject to disciplinary action by the University.**

The Instructor's assessment of student work is final, and will not be adjusted except in the event of a mathematical error. Grades are not subject to negotiation.

Class Decorum

All students must show respect toward the Instructor and the Instructor's syllabus, presentations, assignments, and point of view. Students should also respect each others' differences. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. If the Instructor determines that a student is not being respectful toward other students or the Instructor, or is otherwise behaving in a disruptive manner, it is the Instructor's prerogative to remove the student from the class either temporarily or permanently, as the case requires.

Please refrain from using cellphones during class. Food is not permitted in the classroom, though beverages are permitted. Eat lunch on your own time! Noncompliance will result in deductions from the participation grade.

Note: Failure to comply with any of the Instructor's policies may result in immediate deregistration from the course.

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Attendance

All students are expected to attend class meetings, and understand that attendance affects the participation grade positively, while non-attendance and non-participation will do so negatively. For more information about the attendance policy please follow these links:

[Attendance](#)

[Procedure13.99.99.R0.01.](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

“Campus Carry” Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. **Pursuant to Penal Code 46.035 and Texas A&M University-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.** For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer. **Pursuant to Penal Code 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses.** Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COVID-19 Statement

The Instructor recommends the use of face-coverings during all class meetings. Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

University Specific Procedures:*ADA Statement*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**Texas A&M University-Commerce****Gee Library 132****Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835****Fax (903) 468-8148**StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)*Student Conduct*

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

A Note on Religious History

First and foremost, this is not a theology course, even though theological concepts will be discussed at length. Students may not use class meetings as any kind of platform for religious proselytization, nor will the Instructor be doing so. Bear in mind that in a course on the history of religion, controversial subjects may arise. There are two important features about striking the right tone and attitude in discussing religious history: 1) other students around you may hold a belief system directly related to or descended from the groups under discussion, so please be respectful, and 2) historical analysis or interpretations of religion in the past do not necessarily reflect upon their present-day status or claims to ultimate meaning. I will work hard to keep lectures and discussions open and collegial, and if you have any questions or concerns, please see me.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Jan. 12: Introductions**Jan. 14: What is Eschatology?**

Readings: Boyer, "Prologue"

Jan. 17: MLK Holiday—No Class Meeting**Jan. 19-21: Ancient Roots**

Jan. 19: Egyptian and Mesopotamian Beginnings

Jan. 21: Indo-Aryan and Persian Influences

Jan. 24-28: Syro-Palestinian Eschatology

Jan. 24: "Thou didst bestride the earth in fury"

Readings: The Old Testament—Isaiah 24-27, Book of Ezekiel, and Book of Daniel

Jan. 26: "He shall appoint their retribution with burning"

Readings: 1 Enoch, "The Book of Watchers" (D2L); Dead Sea Scrolls—"The War Scroll" and "The War of the Messiah" fragments (D2L); Boyer, chap. 1 (to p. 33)

Jan. 28: **Readings Quiz #1**

Jan. 31-Feb. 4: Early Christian Eschatological Thought

Jan. 31: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth"

Readings: Jewish Apocrypha—2 Esdras [4 Ezra] (D2L); The New Testament—Mark 13, 1 and 2 John, and the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse of John); Boyer, chap. 1 (remainder)

Feb. 2: "We think the end is upon us so that we perish"

Readings: Christian Apocrypha—The Apocalypse of Thomas and the Christian Sibyllines (D2L)

Feb. 4: **Readings Quiz #2**

Feb. 7-11: Medieval and Reformation Era Apocalypticism

Feb. 7: St. Augustine, Joachim of Fiore, and Hildegard of Bingen

Readings: Boyer, chap. 2 (to p. 56—end of section)

Feb. 9: Martin Luther and Thomas Muntzer

Readings: Boyer, chap. 2 (to p. 68—end of section)

Feb. 11: **Readings Quiz #3**

Feb. 14-18: “Errand into the Wilderness”

Feb. 14: The Puritan Exodus to a New Canaan

Readings: Boyer, chap. 2 (pp. 68-70); Samuel Sewall, *Phaenomena Quaedam Apocalyptica . . .* (D2L); Michael Wigglesworth, “The Day of Doom” (D2L); Jonathan Edwards, Excerpt from “Notes on the Apocalypse” (D2L)

Feb. 16: The First Great Awakening as Millennial Harbinger

Readings: Boyer, chap. 2 (p. 71)

Feb. 18: **Readings Quiz #4**

Feb. 21-25: The Seven Years’ War and the American Revolution

Feb. 21: “Methinks I see mighty cities rising on every hill”

Readings:

Feb. 23: “The prophecy of Daniel is now literally fulfilling”

Readings: Boyer, chap. 2 (remainder); Smith, *A Dream of the Judgment Day*, chap. 3 (D2L)

Feb. 25: **Readings Quiz #5**

Feb. 28-Mar. 4: American Eschatology in the Long Nineteenth-Century

Feb. 28: Millerism and the Rise of Premillennialism

Readings: Boyer, chap. 3 (to p. 90—end of section);

Mar. 2: The Triumph of Premillennialism

Readings: Boyer, chap. 3 (pp. 90-100—end of section); Cyrus I. Scofield, “The Seven Dispensations” and the Book of Revelation from *The Scofield Study Bible* (D2L)

Mar. 4: **Readings Quiz #6**

Mar. 7-11: Twentieth-Century Fundamentalism and the Apocalyptic Imagination

Mar. 7: World War I and the Great Depression

Readings: Boyer, chap. 3 (pp. 100-110 [stop at “merited respectful attention.”])

Mar. 9: World War II and Early Cold War Apocalypticism

Readings: Boyer, chaps. 3 (remainder)-4 (to p. 126—end of section)

Mar. 11: **Readings Quiz #7**

Mar. 14-18: Spring Break**Mar. 21-25: The Nuclear and Information Ages**

Mar. 21: Hal Lindsey—Popular Apocalypticist

Readings: Boyer, chap. 4 (pp. 126-130—end of section)

Mar. 23: The Soviet Union and the Shadow of a Nuclear Apocalypse

Readings: Boyer, chaps. 4 (remainder)-5

Mar. 25: **Readings Quiz #8**

Mar. 28-Apr. 1: The U.S. as Good and Evil

Mar. 28: The Centrality of Israel

Readings: Boyer, chap. 6

Mar. 30: The United States in Prophecy; the Waco Debacle

Readings: Boyer, chap. 7

Apr. 1: **Readings Quiz #9**

Apr. 4-8: Y2K, 9/11, and the New Millennium

Apr. 4: A New World Order

Readings:

Apr. 6: 21st-Century Wars of Religion as Apocalyptic

Readings:

Apr. 8: **Readings Quiz #10**

Apr. 11-15: The Apocalypse in American Popular Culture, Part I

Apr. 11: Coming Plagues and Inconvenient Truths

Readings: Brad Spellberg, Robert Guidos, David Gilbert, et al., "The Epidemic of Antibiotic-Resistant Infections: A Call to Action for the Medical Community from the Infectious Diseases Society of America," *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 46 (Jan. 2008), 155-164; Michael Specter, "The Deadliest Virus," *The New Yorker* ([March 12, 2012](#))

Apr. 13: Dystopias and Post-Apocalyptic Hellscares, Part I

Readings: [From Zombies to Mad Max](#)

Apr. 15: **Readings Quiz #11**

Apr. 18-22: The Apocalypse in American Popular Culture, Part II

Apr. 18: Dystopias and Post-Apocalyptic Hellscares, Part II

Readings: Shelly L. Rambo, "Beyond Redemption? Reading Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* after the End of the World," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 41 (2008), 99-120 (D2L)

Apr. 20: Zombie Apocalypses

Readings: Elizabeth McAlister, "Slaves, Cannibals, and Infected Hyper-Whites: The Race and Religion of Zombies," *Anthropological Quarterly* 85 (Spring 2012), 457-486 (D2L)

Apr. 22: **Readings Quiz #12**

Apr. 18-May 6: Paper Presentations**May 11: Final Paper Drafts Due**

Paper Assignment: The End of the World As I Know It

The purpose of this final paper is to draw on the entirety of the American Judeo-Christian apocalyptic and millenarian experience to write an original work of prophetic interpretation, in the mode of a popular apocalypticist. You may choose any interpretative schema you wish from any theological perspective, just so long as you make use of the canonical and/or apocryphal biblical texts traditionally used by apocalypticists (i.e., Book of Ezekiel, Book of Daniel, Book of Revelation, etc.), as well as any others from different religious traditions you may wish to employ. Adopt the persona of an apocalypticist, and write a convincing exegetical analysis that argues that ancient prophecies are beginning to come to pass that are leading directly to some conception of the world's end **in the near future**. You may or may not choose to date future events such as the Rapture (if you even want to include the Rapture), the Tribulation, or the onset of the Millennium (if indeed you wish to use these constructs). You may or may not choose to identify the Antichrist. This is your chance to play at being Joachim of Fiore, Jonathan Edwards, William Miller, Hal Lindsey, John Hagee, et al., so **have fun!**

However, do not think that, because so many apocalypticists have been Christians, and the ancient texts you'll be using are from the Judeo-Christian tradition, that you have to approach this assignment only from that angle. You can choose to be a Zoroastrian Buddhist, a Muslim, a Neo-Babylonian Jew, a Hindu Methodist, a Ghost Dancer . . . the only limit is your imagination! Therefore, you can augment your use of the biblical texts with any ancient or modern sources you wish. Regardless of your persona's religious orientation, the evaluation of this assignment is based on a mastery of the ancient texts from the Near Eastern and other traditions, and how cogently your interpretations of those prophecies are connected to current events and those of the past.

This is not exactly an academic assignment, so scholarly language is not especially necessary. However, I would expect your syntax to be erudite.

If, based on your personal beliefs, you are uncomfortable with doing this assignment, please consult with me for an alternative.

Paper Parameters

Paper must be composed using Microsoft Word.

Text must be in 12 pt. Times New Roman font (10 pt. for footnotes).

The minimum length (not counting the bibliography) is 12 pp.

Margins must be one inch on top and bottom, left and right, with full justification. Disable the extra space between paragraphs function.

Bibliography must begin on a separate page, not on the same page as the end of the text.