



EAST TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

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

COURSE SYLLABUS: SUMMER I 2026



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

Online Course

Instructor: Professor John Howard Smith
Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences 117
Office Hours: By Zoom (see below)
University Email Address: John.Smith@etamu.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.

Student Responsibility Quiz

Student Learning Outcome no. 4:

The Student Responsibility Quiz consists of a series of questions about the Instructor and the course syllabus that must be taken **no later than June 6**. The quiz is found on the course's D2L/Brightspace under "Activities"—"Quizzes."

Exams: (5@ 100 pts. each, 70% of course grade)

Student Learning Outcomes nos. 1, 2, 3, & 4:

The exams, to be administered via D2L/Brightspace, will be open-book examinations wherein students will be required to answer a series of multiple-choice, matching, short-answer, and essay questions over a period ranging from 1.5 to 2.5 hours. Students will be required to utilize their absorption of the course content to demonstrate their understanding of the development of American society and culture at various key stages.

Primary Source Document Analysis: (30% of course grade)

Student Learning Outcomes nos. 1, 2, 3, & 4:

Students will write a 500-word analysis of a primary source document of the Instructor's choosing, in which they will identify the document, describe the circumstances under which it was produced, explain its content and meaning, and finally explain its importance to understanding the relevant historical event(s) involved.

The assignment will be composed using Microsoft Word or Google Docs, and conform to the following parameters:

Spacing of text: double-spacing

Font type and size: Times New Roman 12 pt.

Citation style: parenthetical (MLA, APA)

All pages must be numbered

The document must be quoted from **at least** three times

Further instructions and guidance will be forthcoming later in the term.

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

Exams (5@100 pts. each)	70%
Primary Source Analysis (100 pts.)	30%

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

To fully participate in online courses you will need to use a current Flash enabled internet browser. For PC and Mac users the suggested browser is Mozilla Firefox.

You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:

- 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
- Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
- Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution

You must have a:

- Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
- Speakers or headphones.
- *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.

Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
<http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>

Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Run a browser check through the Pearson Learning Studio Technical Requirements website.
[Browser Check](http://help.D2L/Brightspace.com/LS_Tech_Req_WebHelp/en-us/#LS_Technical_Requirements.htm#Browset)
http://help.D2L/Brightspace.com/LS_Tech_Req_WebHelp/en-us/#LS_Technical_Requirements.htm#Browset.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.

Pop-ups are allowed.

JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software, if you do not already have them:

- [Adobe Reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader/) <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
- [Adobe Flash Player](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (version 17 or later) <https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
- [Adobe Shockwave Player](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/) <https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>
- [Apple Quick Time](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

For additional information about system requirements, please see: [System Requirements for LearningStudio](https://secure.D2L/Brightspace.com/tamuc/index.learn?action=technical)
<https://secure.D2L/Brightspace.com/tamuc/index.learn?action=technical>.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

This course will be facilitated using D2L/Brightspace, the Learning Management System used by East Texas A&M University. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.etamu.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@etamu.edu.

Consistent and reliable access to the Internet is a fundamental requirement for this course. ***Lack of such ability will make participating in the course difficult—if not impossible—and***

the Instructor is not responsible for accommodating students who are unable to log onto the course when it is necessary to do so.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Email is the most reliable method of reaching me. Expect a reply within 24 hours. I will be conducting virtual office hours via Zoom at dates and times to be determined shortly and communicated via email prior to the first day of the Summer I term.

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). You are neither required nor expected to come up with original ideas about, or new interpretations of, American history. It is more important for students to understand why events unfolded in the ways they did, and what other scholars have said and written about them. **However, anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing will automatically fail the assignment in question, may summarily fail the course, and could be subject to disciplinary action by the University.**

Likewise, no element of the course grade is negotiable or optional, meaning that failure to take an exam in the absence of compelling, documented circumstances **will result in a 0 for that exam**. *The instructor's evaluative judgment of tests and examinations is final, and will not be subject to revision except in cases of mathematical error.* For more, see: [Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

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. If the Instructor determines that a student is not being respectful toward other students or the Instructor, or is otherwise behaving in an inappropriate manner, it is the Instructor's prerogative to remove the student from the class either temporarily or permanently, as the case requires.

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

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Late Work Policy

Writing assignments are due by the end of the date indicated on the syllabus below. Barring unavoidable and reasonable impediments that must be documented, and about which the Instructor must be notified as soon as possible, there will be a penalty of ten (10) points applied to the earned grade for **each day** that the assignment is submitted late.

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University 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.

Statement on Student Grievances

Students who have questions or concerns about the Instructor's course policies or the conduct either of the Instructor or a classmate should first consult with the Instructor. In the event of a lack of resolution or satisfaction on the matter, the student may bring their concerns to the head of the History Department, Sharon Kowalsky (Sharon.Kowalsky@etamu.edu). If this does not result in a satisfactory conclusion to the matter, students may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of Students per procedures outlined on pp. 15-19 of the Student Guide Book.

“Campus Carry” Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M campuses.** Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Statement on Texas Senate Bill 17

Texas Senate Bill 17, the law that prohibits certain diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, **does not** affect academic course instruction, including the content, teaching, or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. SB 17 does not alter existing expectations and academic freedom for teaching and related classroom discussion, including regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion topics.

Statement on the Uses of Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there can be legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words. However, use of such tools cannot take the place of original composition on academic writing assignments, and therefore is expressly forbidden by the Instructor in this course. Any discovered and confirmed use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty, and will result in the same penalties that attend cases of plagiarism. Students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, including cases in which A.I. was used, and especially in cases where the A.I. software plagiarized another text and/or misattributed or otherwise misrepresented primary and/or secondary source materials.

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
East Texas A&M University****Waters 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*).

Mental Health Services

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel.

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

June 1-5: Introductions / The Ancient Roots of Apocalypticism

Readings: The Old Testament—Isaiah 24-27, Book of Ezekiel, and Book of Daniel; The New Testament—Mark 13, 1 and 2 John, and the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse of John); Boyer, chap. 1; Smith, *A Dream of the Judgment Day*, “Introduction” (download from D2L)

June 8-12: Millennialism & Apocalypticism from the Middle Ages through the European Reformation

Readings: Boyer, chap. 2 (to p. 68—end of section); Smith, *A Dream of the Judgment Day*, chap. 1 (to p. 27)

June 15-19: Millennialism & Apocalypticism in America from the Colonial Era through the American Revolution

Readings: Boyer, chap. 2 (remainder); Smith, *A Dream of the Judgment Day*, chaps. 1 (remainder) through chap. 4

June 22-26: Millennialism & Apocalypticism in America during the Nineteenth Century

Readings: Boyer, chap. 3 (to p. 100—end of section); Smith, *A Dream of the Judgment Day*, chaps. 5 through 7

June 29-July 2: Millennialism & Apocalypticism in America in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

Readings: Boyer, chaps. 3 (remainder) through 7; 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); Michael Specter, “The Deadliest Virus,” *The New Yorker* ([March 12, 2012](#))

Paper Project Due July 2**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 10 pages.

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.