

The Politics of the Apocalypse from The Book of Daniel to the Present

PL373

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Office Hours: TBD
Seminar times: Fridays 09:00 am to 12:15 pm.

Course Description

The apocalypse as a way of looking at the world plays a major role in shaping political theology from its sources in The Book of Daniel right up to the present day. The idea of the end of the world is decisive for a proper understanding of the emergence of Christianity and Islam, as well as for the conceptualization of other shifts in human experience and social organization, such as modernity. The Apocalypse contributes to the theory of secularization and to the formulations of political theory. To study the connection between the Apocalypse and the political, we will read the original Jewish, Christian and Islamic apocalyptic texts, and follow their transformation in modern thought (in the work of, among others, Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Carl Schmitt), before turning to their lurking or overt presence in contemporary religious and political movements, from climate change theory, to ISIS, to Evangelicalism in the USA.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that, instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Also, please to consult the BCB Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPRING 2021:

Some students might need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Assessment and Grade Breakdown

Class Participation (20%): Participation will be evaluated at the end of each session. Students will be assessed based on the general enthusiasm, frequency and quality of the questions they raise. Regular attendance and completion of all reading assignments is also required. Recurrent absences will substantially decrease the final grade. (up to two unexcused absences are allowed).

Class Presentations (30%): Each student will be expected to make one 20-25-minute (Power Point) presentation about a particular week's readings of their own choice. Presentations should address the author, central question, and arguments of the work and three critically engaging questions and concluding thoughts posed to the class to spark discussion. Students can sign up to present on the week of their choice in the first week of classes.

Final essay (50%): The final paper for the class consists of a 4000-word essay that addresses a particular theme or concept related to the readings. Students will agree on their paper topics with the instructor and after first submitting an abstract and proposed bibliography. Late assignments will be penalized per day. Written assignments should include a creative title followed by your name, date, and course number. Pages should be double-spaced with 12-pt. font and one-inch margins. Paper due **Friday, 21.05.2020**.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers (and Diary Entries)

Syllabi for core and elective classes should note or refer to the following policy from the Student Handbook on the submission of essays: *essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.*

Schedule

Week One: 05. February

Introduction

- <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/07/climate-change-earth-too-hot-for-humans.html>
- Matthew: <http://biblehub.com/matthew/>
- K. Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>

Week Two: 12. February

Jewish Sources

- Nevi'im: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel: <http://biblehub.com>
- A.E. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism*, 223-279
- H. Reventlow, *Eschatology in the Bible and in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, 200-217

Week Three: 19. February

Christian Sources I

- New Testament, *Thessalonians 2*, Matthew: <http://biblehub.com>
- D.C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, Part II
- H. Reventlow, *Eschatology in the Bible and in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, 233-245
- R.D. Aus, God's plan and God's power: Isaiah 66 and the restraining factors of 2 Thess 2:6-7
- B.C. Blackwell & J.K. Goodrich, *Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination* (Pages TBD)
- G. Wenz, Katechon: Naherwartung und Zeitverzug in den neutestamentlichen Thessalonicherbriefen

Week Four: 26. February

Christian Sources II

- New Testament, Revelation: <http://biblehub.com>
- D. G. Muller, *Testing the Apocalypse: The History of the Book of Revelation*
- E. Pagels, *Revelations: Visions, Prophecy, and Politics in the Book of Revelation*
- L.L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire*, Part IV
- G. Rojas-Flores, The Book of Revelation and the First Years of Nero's Reign

Week Five: 05. March

Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition

- P.J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 1-9, 151-225
- Kraft, Andrés, The Last Roman Emperor Topos in the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition

Week Six: 12. March

Early Islam I

- D. Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, Introduction, chapter 2
- N.O. Brown, *The Apocalypse of Islam*

Week Seven: 19. March

Early Islam II

- D. Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, Chapter 4, chapter 8
- D. Cook, *An Early Muslim Daniel Apocalypse*
- S.J. Shoemaker, "The Reign of God Has Come": Eschatology and Empire in Late Antiquity and Early Islam

Week Eight: 26. March

Apocalypse as A Metaphor

- I. Kant, *The End of All Things*
- I. Kant, *Comprehensive Commentary on Kants Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, Chapter 9
- G.E. Lessing, *The Education of the Human Race*:
https://archive.org/stream/lessingseducati01hanegoog/lessingseducati01hanegoog_djvu.txt
- A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study*, Chapters XV, XVI:
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/45422/45422-pdf.pdf>

Week Nine: 02. April

No Class: Spring Break (29. March—05 April)

Week Ten: 09. April

Anticipating the End

- F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*
- F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*
- S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Week Eleven: 16. April

Politics of Apocalypse I: Conservative Revolution

- C. Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*
- C. Schmitt, *Three Possibilities for a Christian Conception of History*
- M. Lievens, *Karl Schmitt's Concept of History*
- P. Szendy, *Katechon*
- M. de Wilde, *Politics between Times*

Week Twelve: 23. April

Politics of Apocalypse II: American Apocalypse

- M.A. Sutton, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Pages TBD)
- J. Dittmer & T. Sturm (ed.), *Mapping the End Times: American Evangelical Geopolitics and Apocalyptic Visions* (Pages TBD)
- <https://altright.com/2017/02/17/steven-bannon-and-the-west-as-katechon-restrainer-of-the-antichrist/>
- https://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/this-is-how-steve-bannon-sees-the-entire-world?utm_term=.xeeqE8VwB#.icm8wDM2B

Week Thirteen: 30. April

Zionist and Post-Zionist Apocalypse I

- T.P. Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend*
- C. Aldrovandi, *Apocalyptic Movements in Contemporary Politics: Christian and Jewish Zionism*
- D. Cohn-Sherbok, *The Politics of Apocalypse: The History and Influence of Christian Zionism*
- V. Clark, *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism*

Week Fourteen: 07. May

Zionist and Post-Zionist Apocalypse II

- I. Abraham & R. Boerb, 'God Doesn't Care': The Contradictions of Christian Zionism
- Y. Ariel, Israel in Contemporary Evangelical Christian Millennial Thought
- L.S. Hanauer, The Path to Redemption: Fundamentalist Judaism, Territory, and Jewish Settler Violence in the West Bank

Week Fifteen: 14. May

Contemporary Muslim Apocalypse

- D. Cook, *Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature*
- W. McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*
- Gerges, F.A., *ISIS: A History* (Pages TBD)

Week Sixteen: 21. May

Completion Week