

University of Calgary
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Religious Studies

Religious Studies 399.07 L03, Winter 2009
Apocalyptic Themes in Popular Culture
T 18:00-20:50
Location: Chinese Cultural Center, 197 1st St. SW

Instructor: Tracy Derynck
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Office Hours: By Appointment

Required Texts

- LaHaye, Timothy, and Jerry Jenkins. Left Behind.
- King, Stephen. The Stand.
- Pratchett, Terry, and Neil Gaiman. Good Omens.
- Various short readings will be provided on Blackboard.

Course Description

This course will introduce students to elements of apocalyptic discourse such as the struggle between good and evil, the end of time, final judgment, and the millennial establishment of a new world. The focus is primarily upon Christianity. Students will then have the opportunity to identify and reflect upon apocalyptic themes as they occur in works of fiction, films, and elsewhere in popular culture. Readings on feminist and postcolonial critique of apocalyptic discourse will round out discussion.

Core Competencies

Students in this class will gain familiarity with apocalypticism and its manifestations in the literary and film productions of contemporary culture. Through opportunities to discuss and write about this subject, they will increase both written and oral communication skills, and also broaden their perspective on how our increasingly secularized society nonetheless continues to be influenced by religious themes.

Course Requirements

Two papers 30% each
1800-2000 words, electronic submission preferred
Due Feb 10 & Mar 31; 5% late penalty per day, including weekends
No extensions without proof of illness or bereavement

Registrar-scheduled final exam 40%
 The final exam will be offered at the U of C main campus in the evening, date TBA
Short and long answer
Cumulative

Syllabus

Date	Topic	Readings
January 13	Introduction	-
January 20	Biblical apocalypticism	Revelation (link on Blackboard)
January 27	The Antichrist	Blackboard readings
February 3	The Rapture	LaHaye - Left Behind
February 10	Post-apocalyptic survivalism *	-
February 17	(Reading week - no class)	-
March 3	Apocalypticism in disaster movies *	-
March 10	Plague as apocalyptic theme	King - The Stand
March 17	Plague as apocalyptic theme *	King - The Stand
March 24	Atomic warfare and apocalypticism	Blackboard readings
March 31	Atomic warfare and apocalypticism *	-
April 7	Criticism of apocalypticism	Blackboard readings
April 14	Alternative apocalypses	Pratchett - Good Omens

* = a movie will be shown in class on these days

Grading Scheme

Mark (%)	95+	94-90	89-85	84-80	79-75	74-70	69-65	64-60	59-55	54-50	49-45	<44
Grade	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
GPA	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.0	0
Description	Excellent Superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.			Good Clearly above average performance with knowledge of the subject matter generally complete.			Satisfactory Basic understanding of the subject matter.			Bare pass Marginal performance, generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in same subject.		Fail Unsatisfactory performance. Or failure to complete assignments.

General Policies and Other Information:

- *Attendance*
This course is designed such that in order to do well on both assignments and the exam, class attendance is highly recommended.
- *Lecture and reading schedule*
Any updates to the lecture/reading schedule will be posted on Blackboard.