

North Park Theological Seminary
3225 W. Foster Ave., Chicago, IL 60625

BIBL 6360 (Section J1)
Revelation
January-Term Intensive 2018 Syllabus
(version v.11.28.17)

Professor	Max J. Lee Associate Professor of New Testament
Class Hours/Location:	January 8–12, 2018 MTuWThF 8:30am–5:00pm in Nyvall ?? (* class starts at 8:30am, not 8am, with a shorter breaks so we end by 5pm)
Office	Nyvall-39
Office Hours	* During the intensive week, the best available time for office hours is eating lunch together MTWThF * For other times, let's make a separate appointment
Email	mlee1@northpark.edu

Catalog Description

This course is an exegetical study of the New Testament Apocalypse of John. Attention is given to issues of genre, socio-historical setting, purpose, cultural-religious contexts, and the variety of interpretations of Revelation in the church. Three hours.

Objectives and Relevance

- ♦ To be more aware of your own biases and presuppositions to biblical interpretation. In the context of the book of Revelation, we will analyze pop-cultural Christian views anticipating the end-times and especially how such views developed in American evangelical Christian settings. To do this, we will study briefly the modern history of Israel since 1947, watch films depicting current attempts to link political events with end-time prophecy, and evaluate whether such eschatological mappings of human history are truly biblical-based or misinformed.
- ♦ Primarily, *to build a common vocabulary* with the apocalyptic worldview of the author of Revelation (i.e., the task of **exegesis** and the historical critical method) and *apply* his original message into our present Christian context (the task of **hermeneutics** and **theological reflection**).
- ♦ To achieve this goal of building a common language with the author of the Apocalypse, it is necessary for you to study critically the history, cultural climate, social and religious value systems, and politics of Asia Minor and of the wider Roman world during the late Republic to early imperial period (ca. 1st century B.C.E. to the 2nd century C.E.)
- ♦ To read the Apocalypse not only theologically, but ask how its theology affects our views towards Zionism, violence, justice, and other political, social, and ethical concerns challenging American evangelicals in a global context.

Required Textbooks

Blount, Brian. *Can I Get a Witness? Reading Revelation through African American Culture*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005. [ISBN: 0664228690]

Blount, Brian. *Revelation: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009 [ISBN: 0664221211]

Lindsey, Hal. *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, repr. 1998 [ISBN: 031027771X]

The Revelation Reader (hence **RR**)

On blackboard in the assignment folder for this course, journal articles, essays, and select chapters from books/monographs will be available online as part of your required reading. The assigned readings from the reader are *required* and provide additional materials to your textbooks. The reader includes writings not limited to New Testament scholarship but nevertheless have relevance for situating our literary and theological reading of Revelation. It also includes some primary texts on the Jewish apocalypses, scholarly analyses of pop-cultural views on the end times, essays on Christian Zionism, as well as recent research by NT scholarship on the interpretation of Revelation.

[For all MDiv student]: *The Greek New Testament* (UBS⁵ or NA²⁸). MDiv students are required to work from the Greek New Testament at select points from the course. You are allowed, however, to bring your English Bible as well (see comments just below) as an additional reference

[For non-MDiv students]: *The English Bible* in any contemporary translation, but preferably the **NRSV** or **TNIV/NIV**.

Please do not use a paraphrased translation (e.g., New Living Bible) or an idiomatic/colloquial one (e.g., Eugene Peterson's translation). A more literal translation is needed for the course. If you have any questions concerning if a particular version or translation is acceptable or not, please do not hesitate to ask the instructor.

On Reserve/Reference Section in Brandel Library (in progress)

In addition to Blount, you are encouraged to consult the following commentaries to help you answer questions from the study guide, do essay assignments, and write your final paper. These resources are not exhaustive but a starting point:

Aune, David E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. [On Reserve: BS2825.52 .A96 2006]

* **Aune**, David. *Revelation*. 3 Vols. Word Biblical Commentary 52A–C. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997–98. [Reference: BS2825.3 A96 1997]

Bauckham, Richard. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. New Testament Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. [On Reserve: BS2825.2 .B387 1993]

* **Beale**, G.K. *The Book of Revelation*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. [Reference: BS2825.3 .B242 1999]

* **Boxall**, Ian. *The Revelation of St. John*. Black's New Testament Commentary. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006. [Reference: BS2825.53 .B69 2006]

* **Caird**, George B. *The Revelation of St. John*. Black's New Testament Commentary. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1966. [Reference: BS2825.3 .C3 1993]

Hays, Richard B. & Alkier, Stephan. *Revelation and the Politics of Apocalyptic Interpretation*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012. [On Reserve: BS2825.52 .R48 2012]

Hemer, Colin J. *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986. Repr. with forward by D.E. Aune. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2001. [On Reserve: BS2825.2 .H45 1986]

* **Koester**, Craig R. *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 38A. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014 [Reference: BS2825.53 .K64 2014]

- Kovacs**, Judith & Rowland, Christopher. *Revelation*. Blackwell Biblical Commentaries. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. [On Reserve: BS2825.52 .K69 2004]
- Kraybill**, J. Nelson. *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010 [On Reserve: BS2825.52 .K73 2010]
- * **Mangina**, Joseph L. *Revelation*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010. [On Reserve: BS2825.53 .M36 2010]
- * **Mounce**, Robert H. *The Book of Revelation*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977. [Reference: BS2825.3 .M69 1977]
- Osborne**, Grant. *Revelation*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002 [On Reserve: BS2825.53 .O73 2002]
- Peterson**, Eugene H. *Reversed Thunder*. San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988. [On Reserve: BS2825.2 .P48 1988]
- Smalley**, Stephen S. *The Revelation to John*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005. [On Reserve: BS2825.53 .S63 2005]
- Walvoord**, John F. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1989 [On Reserve: BS2825.3 .W33 1966]

Assignments and Papers

Time Frame	Assignment Description/Summary	Maximum Point Value
Before Class begins	Read Hal Lindsey's <i>The Great Planet Earth</i> and the chapter from Timothy Weber's <i>On the Road to Armageddon</i> * be ready to discuss these works at the start of the class on the first day * read the entire syllabus ahead of time and be aware of the reading requirements (it is recommended to get ahead of the reading and start thinking through your study guide questions)	part of the study guide grade
During instruction	Student Presentation * due during your assigned day	100
During instruction	Study Guide Questions (5 X 50pts = 250 – 1 drop when you present = 200pts total) * due <i>each</i> day at the end of class unless you are presenting.	200
After instruction	2 Critical Essays on Themes in Revelation (Essay 4 is required; please pick 1 of 3 possibilities for your 2nd essay) * due before the Spring break or earlier: submit through the Canvas course shell	200
After instruction	Final Paper * due before the Spring semester ends or earlier: submit through the Canvas course shell	300
	<i>Total Possible Points/ Percentage</i>	800

Pre-Class Preparation

Prior to the start of class, please read all of Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* and then the chapter discussing the influence of premillennial dispensationalism in modern American history and politics by Timothy Webber in *The Road to Armageddon* (available as a PDF file on Canvas). The study guide (below as an appendix) on Day 1 has questions from your reading. Please type out your response.

Study Guide Questions and Participation (200pts)

The format of the course will be seminar-driven and heavily dependent on class participation and preparation. Everyone must come to class prepared (that means, you should not just read the materials but understand them enough to engage in fruitful discussion). Since one day is equivalent to a 2 1/2 weeks of material, you must be present for each class. Absences or a lack of participation can result in a lowering of your overall grade.

There is a **study guide with questions** directed to the biblical text and your reading attached as an appendix below. Your answers to the questions on the study guide should be **typed out** and are to be turned at the end of each day *except* when you have a paper presentation. On the day of your paper presentation, you are exempt from turning in a written response to the study guide although you should keep up with the reading and be prepared for discussion. Each day's assignment is worth 50pts (5 days – 1 day of presentation = 4 X 50pts = 200pts)

Student Presentation (100pts)

Each student must sign up for a student presentation for a select day prior to the intensive week of instruction. The sign up sheet is on Canvas. There should be only one student per topic only at first, and as the slots for presenting get filled, only then should students double-up on an assigned day. The instructor reserves the right to move the 2nd signee to a vacant presentation day in order to make sure we have a presenter for each of the 5 sessions during the intensive.

For your presentation, please provide a short 1-page outline for the whole class, but *for the instructor of the course*, you are to provide a 1- 1 1/2 page (single-spaced; **500–600 words**) critical essay of the reading specified for our discussion on a given text/passage in Revelation. Please place a word count on top of the page. In general, you must include the following information:

1. Summarize the central thesis of the essay/article, its main arguments, and the supporting evidence/data which the author uses to assert these arguments.
2. How does the author's commentary/study help us interpret the message of the Revelation text under study? Does the author interpret the text from a particular modern methodological approach or from a specific 1st-century AD historical, cultural, or social background? or OT and Jewish background? Is the author's interpretation of the texts convincing? Why or why not?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the article in contributing to our understanding of Revelation's theology?

Important note: The presenter is expected to do more than just read the assigned essay/article. The presenter should add a research component to his or her presentation and consult other secondary sources (e.g., the commentators in the library reserve). The grade for this assignment is dependent on the written paper, not so much on one's oral presentation.

2 Critical(ly Reflective) Essays (2 X 100pts = 200pts total)

After the intensive week of instruction, students will be asked to write two short essays (100pts each) on a given topic *which incorporates your reading* and any extra research you would like to do. You are given a selection (see appendices below). Everyone does Essay 4. For the second essay, please pick 1 (one) of the remaining three topics.

Each essay is 1 or 1 1/2 pages long, single-spaced (approximately **500–600 words**). Please place a word count on top of the page.

Revelation and Aesthetics Final Paper (300pts)

Revelation is a visionary book, and like Shakespeare's plays, sometimes Revelation is best seen or heard rather than read. The assignment is to analyze a product from our surrounding culture – that is, a film, work of art, piece of music (or hymn), or literary work (poetry or prose) – which, in your opinion, offers a good interpretative reading of the major themes and images in the Book of Revelation (e.g., suffering and the problem of evil, political and social oppression and its structures of power, redemption, vindication, hope, etc). What images and themes to choose will become more clear as we read through the book of Revelation together. Please note that the aesthetic piece under analysis should be a *good* interpretation of texts in Revelation (there are already plenty of bad examples so I want students to find good and excellent readings, not poor ones).

Your creative project should answer the following questions:

- 1) What message/ideology is being conveyed by the film/work of art/music/literary piece? How does its form contribute to the communication of its content? How does it use themes from Revelation to convey/communicate this message?
- 2) What texts/images does the film/literary work use from Revelation? How does the work accurately interpret the relevant text/passage? how is the work weak in its interpretation, or is there an element of the text that is important but the work misses the opportunity to convey the text's message? is there a danger that the work may distort the message of the text/passage in some way?
- 3) In what ways does the message/ideology of the film *affirm* a Christian worldview or ethical framework (social, political or moral)? In what ways does the message/ideology of the film *draw Christians into conflict with* our surrounding culture? and what ways does it *affirm* our redemptive spaces and moments in culture?

Your creative project must provide:

- 1) A copy of the work under analysis: whether its the lyrics and mp3 recording of a musical piece or hymn, the transcript of the poem, a photo of an artistic work, etc. with the full citation for where the source can be found
- 2) A formal paper analyzing the aesthetic piece and an exegetical-theological interpretation of the Revelation texts that the piece evokes and engages. The paper should be **2500-3000 words long** (about 5-6 single-spaced pages; or 10-12 double-spaced pages). *You are asked to be in conversation with the instructor throughout various stages of the project and not turn in a work without some consultation.*

Warning: Absolutely no films or literary works from the horror genre. If you are going to pick a film, make sure it is a mainstream film or fine arts film of *admirable* quality. If you are going to pick a work of literature, makes sure it is work of literature and not a trashy cheap novel or comic book. Whatever your aesthetic piece please make sure you choose wisely and with good taste.

Grading Scale

The following scale is by percentage:

93-100	A	77-79	C+	60-62	D –
90-92	A–	73-76	C	0-59	F
87-89	B+	70-72	C –		
83-86	B	67-69	D +		
80-82	B –	63-66	D		

Academic Honesty

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park Theological Seminary is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion.

Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.

In the special instance of group work, the instructor will make clear his/her expectations with respect to individual vs. collaborative work. A violation of these expectations may be considered cheating as well. For further information on this subject you may refer to the Academic Dishonesty section of the University’s online catalog.

Disability Accommodations

North Park Theological Seminary provides services for students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to programs, services, facilities, and activities. Students with a disability who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Seminary Academic Services as soon as possible. If desired or necessary, discussion pertaining to documentation and accommodation can take place at another suitable location or by telephone. Further information about the American Disabilities Act Services is found in the Student Academic Handbook.

Title IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Dean of Students (773-244-5565) or Director of Human Resources (773-244-5599) for information about campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services. As a member of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University’s Title IX coordinator in certain situations help ensure that the student’s safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. Please refer to North Park’s Safe Community site for contact information and further details. <http://www.northpark.edu/Campus-Life-and-Services/Safe-Community>

Class Schedule

Day	Time	Texts and Topics	Readings and Assignments
1	8:30 – 10:00am	Introduction to the Class The History of Revelation’s Influence on American Culture: Hal Lindsey’s <i>Late Great Planet Earth</i> Reaped	Lindsey’s LGPE RR: Timothy Weber’s <i>On the Road to Armageddon</i> [i.e., ‘The Six-Day War,’ and ‘Dispensationalists Engage a Changing World’]
	10:20am – 12:00pm	Brief overview of millennial schemes to frame your reading in Lindsey	
	1:30 – 3:00pm	Apocalypse Now: Rev. 1:1-6 , the Genre of Revelation, and its Historical Setting Blinded by the Son: Rev. 1:7-20 and Throne Theophanies	RR: Lee -Introduction to Revelation Blount commentary, pp. 1-47
	3:20 – 5:00pm	Rev. 2–3 and the <i>Life Setting</i> of the Seven Churches in Asia Minor	Study Guide Day 1 due
2	8:30 – 10:00am	The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: What Christ Says to the Churches at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7); Pergamum (2:12–17), and Thyratira (2:18-29)	Blount commentary, pp. 47–84
	10:20am – 12:00pm	Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11), Philadelphia (3:7-13), Sardis (3:1-6), Laodicea (3:14-22)	
	1:30 – 3:00pm	1st Student Presentation: Blount <i>sLamb Evil: Rev. 4:1–5:15</i> and Reconfiguring Power as Creative and Redemptive	Blount , ch. 3 ‘Wreaking Weakness’ in <i>Can I Get a Witness</i> Blount commentary, pp. 120–40
	3:20 – 5:00pm	The Four Horsemen: Rev. 6:1-17 and Perennial Question – How Long...?	Study Guide Day 2 due
3	8:30 – 10:00am	Lament and the Eternal Chorus: The 5th-7th Seals and Prelude to Prayer in Rev. 7:1-8:5	Blount commentary, pp. 140–223
	10:20am – 12:00pm	The Seven Trumpets, Pt 1: Why History Belongs to the Intercessors (Rev. 8:2-9:21)	
	1:30 – 3:00pm	The Seven Trumpets, Pt 2: Interlude and Reversed Thunder (Rev. 10:1-11:19)	
	3:20 – 5:00pm	2nd Student Presentation: Sanchez The Celestial Opera Begins: Enter the Dragon in Rev. 12:1-18	RR: Sanchez , <i>From Patmos to the Barrio: Subverting Imperial Myths</i> Blount commentary, pp. 223–43 Study Guide Day 3 due

Day	Time	Texts and Topics	Readings and Assignments
4	8:30 – 10:00am	How the Empire Strikes Back But Loses: The Beasts of the Sea and Earth on Stage in Rev. 13:1-18	Blount commentary, pp. 243–93
	10:20am – 12:00pm	Curtain Call: Two Harvests and a Song in Rev. 14:1–15:8	
	1:30 – 3:00pm	3rd Student Presentation: O’Donovan	RR: O’Donovan , ‘History and Politics in the Book of Revelation’
		The Seven Bowls: Why God Delays Ultimate Justice Until the Very End in Rev. 16:1–21	<i>Recommended:</i> Blount commentary, pp. 293–310
	3:20 – 5:00pm	4th Student Presentation: Selvidge	RR: Selvidge , ‘Reflections on Violence and Pornography’
		The Babylonian Whore and the Horror of Rome: Aesthetic Shock in Rev. 17:1-18	<i>Recommended:</i> Blount commentary, pp. 310–23 Study Guide Day 4 due
6:30pm–8pm	Dinner at the Lee’s Brainstorming for the Final Paper Topics Reflections on how to preach through Rev	See the syllabus for guidelines on the final paper	
5	8:30 – 10:00am (modified schedule)	Rhapsody Against Roman Economy in Rev. 18:1-24	RR: Lee , Rev 18:1-24: Roman economy
		5th Student Presentation: Blount	Blount , ch. 4 “The Rap against Rome,” in <i>Can I Get a Witness?</i>
		Hymns of Resistance and the Wedding Song of the Lamb: The King Returns in Rev. 19:1-21	<i>Recommended:</i> Blount commentary, pp. 338–59
	10:15am – 1:00pm	The Millennial Maze: An Eschatological Review (Rev. 20:1-15) Coming Home: The New Genesis and New Jerusalem in Rev. 21:1-27 Benediction and Doxology: The Heavenly Liturgy Closes/Continues in Rev. 22:1-11	RR: Johnson , Sermon: “All Things Made New (21:1–22:5)” in <i>Discipleship on the Edge</i> <i>Recommended:</i> Blount commentary, pp. 359–417 Study Guide Day 5 due

Appendix 1: Study Guide Questions

Day 1

- 1) Read all of Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth*. What are your initial impressions of the book? What is his method of interpretation? What kind of audience do you think he was writing to? Was he writing to a culture of fear? of prosperity? of uncertainty? or optimism? Be prepared to summarize the central thesis of his book and what arguments he uses in support of it
- 2) Read the assigned sections of Timothy Weber's *On the Road to Armageddon*. What ethical concerns does he raise in his book as he traces the cultural influence of dispensationalism on American evangelicalism and the way it has engaged the political sphere?
- 3) In your reading of Slater's essay (and Boxall's introduction), answer the following questions: what is the imperial cult? and how influential was it for the life setting of the churches in Asia Minor? At its worst, what kind of oppressive conditions did the church face if they were being coerced to participate in emperor worship?

Day 2

- 1) Looking through your commentary (Blount) or the library reserves (e.g., Aune, Beale or Hemer), take notes on the history, social setting, geography, and cultural features of each city that you think are being highlighted by Christ in his letter to each of the seven churches. How does knowing the geographical and cultural setting of each city help us interpret each letter as Christ addresses the churches of Revelation?
- 2) According to Brian Blount, what is *sLambing*? What are the strengths and weaknesses of his thesis? How does Rev 4-5 reconfigure and challenge secular notions of power?
- 3) Concerning Rev. 6:1-17 (the 7 Seals, pt. 1): What does each rider on a colored horse symbolize? (the first Four Seals) In the 5th and 6th seals, we have two different responses to the suffering unleashed by the first four seals. How does God answer the cry of the martyrs at the altar? Is it a satisfying answer? What implications does God's answer have to the mission of the church?

Day 3

- 1) On Rev. 7:1-8:5 (the 7 Seals, pt. 2): What is the symbolic significance that the prayers of the saints mix in with the incense and the censor which contains the prayers sets the earth on fire? Why silence as the 7th seal? Any ideas?
- 2) On the trumpet cycle, how does each trumpet modify and intensify a particular Egyptian plague from the Exodus story? What is the message of the first six trumpets?
- 3) The interlude for the trumpet sequence is particularly long and detailed. What role does the interlude play in the overall trumpet sequence? What does the interlude say about the mission of the church? What does the 7th trumpet contribute to our understanding of the kingdom of God and its final expression when Jesus returns?

4) On Rev. 12:1-18, how does the story of the woman, the dragon, and the war in heaven resemble other ancient combat myths of the ancient world? How is the Christian story different from these combat myths? (see Sanchez)

Day 4

1) Who are the beasts of the sea and the beast of the earth? What role do they have in human history? What challenges did the Roman Empire make toward the Christian communities of Asia Minor. What ideologies and false gospels are embedded in the different aspects of empire (e.g., the imperial cult, the *Pax Romana* or military might, its economy and wealth) and how does Revelation challenge empire?

2) On Rev. 14:1–15:8: Compare the Grain Harvest and the Grape Harvest. What are the similarities and the differences? How would you respond to someone who read about the wine press of God's wrath and insisted that God is a violent bloody monster as much as the beast is and it is hypocritical of God to judge the world for its violence when his is greater?

3) Take the time to review all 3 cycles of 7 judgments: seals, trumpets, and bowls. How do they address the question of theodicy and the origin of evil? Evaluate O'Donovan's article on 'History and Politics in the Book of Revelation'? How does he answer the above question? Do you find his discussion and answers satisfying? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the way he reads the cycles of judgments in Revelation?

4) What critique do feminist interpreters make with Revelation's portrayal and God's judgment of the Babylonian harlot? What are the strengths of their reading? weaknesses? (refer to the essay by Selvidge)

Day 5

1) In Lee's short commentary, he goes into great detail in giving an itemized description of the good which the merchants of the earth can no longer receive from Babylon? How does Rev 18 function as an economic critique against Rome? How would you apply its message today?

2) On Rev. 19:1-21: Respond to Blount's chapter on the Rap against Rome. What is Blount's central thesis? How does his article add to our interpretation of the various judgment texts against Rome symbolized by the Babylonian harlot, Babylon the City, and the merchants of the earth who follow her?

3) Read the sermon transcripts by Johnson. Evaluate both Johnson's interpretation of the Revelation text and his preaching of the text. What part of the sermon was particularly powerful for you to read?

4) Does Revelation end well? Why or why not? What final word does John give to his readers as both a message of assurance and challenge/warning?

Appendix 2: Critical Essay Topics

Be sure to interact with relevant readings in the course plus additional works from research you have done on the topic. Each essay is 1 or 1 1/2 pages long, single-spaced (approximately **500–600** words). Please place a word count on top of the page.

Please pick 1 (one) of the following 3 essays. Everyone will do Essay 4.

(1) **Essay 1:** How does the cycles of the seven seals, trumpets or bowls (pick 1) answer the problem of theodicy, if at all? In other words, how do the series of seven judgments speak to the issue of human suffering and the origin of evil?

(2) **Essay 2:** How does Revelation critique the problem of empire in its pictorialization of Rome as the beast of the sea, the Babylonian prostitute, and a fallen city? You can pick either the *political* or *economic* dimensions of imperialism in your response but make sure you talk about all three metaphors (beast, prostitute, and city).

(3) **Essay 3:** Revelation is a book replete with violent and misogynistic images. What images are especially problematic and how would you explain (theologically) Revelation's use of these images? Is there a way for the author to employ violent imagery but at the same time subvert the very violence the image elicits through parody, irony, or re-writing the myths behind the image? How can we explain the unsettling imagery to souls who have been the victims of violence or abuse? Where is grace in the midst of bloodshed and loss of life?

Everyone does: (4) **Essay 4:** As you review the entire course, how would you preach and teach Revelation to the church today? If you were to do a sermon series on Revelation, what texts would you choose and what would be the central message of each text? How would the series as a whole, and the texts you choose, speak to the overall message of Revelation? What is Revelation's central message?

**APPENDIX 3:
GENERAL GUIDELINES TO ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS
The Mechanics of the Paper and Grammar**

- ◆ Your paper/assignment must be *typed*; no hand-written reviews will be accepted.
- ◆ **Avoid** slang, colloquialisms, dangling antecedents, contractions, and any other ungrammatical or informal use of language!!!
- ◆ **You are allowed to include excerpts or quotations if they are primary sources** (= Eng. trans. of Greek/Latin/Hebrew/or Aramaic sources from the 2nd century BC–1st century AD). Be sure to give the full citation of the primary source and the Eng. translator/translation from which you draw your excerpt/quotation.

◆ **Do NOT quote or excerpt from 2ndary sources withOUT a word of explanation.**

Preference: Summarize all 2ndary sources (= modern works) in your own words and footnote your work.

Alternative: Quote the 2ndary or modern source but give a commentary on the quotation/excerpt.

Too many students uncritically cut and paste quotations/excerpts in the body of their prose and this is poor writing. Do not assume that the reader will automatically grasp the way you understand a particular excerpt simply by quoting it without any qualifying/explanatory remarks. If you feel a quotation from a 2ndary source is worth quoting as an excerpt, then single space the quotation, indent the margins on both sides, and **explain after you quote the source why it is important, how you are interpreting the excerpt, and what you expect the reader to learn from it.**

* Unqualified, cut/paste quotations or excerpts of 2ndary sources will result in a deduction in your grade.

* Excessive quotes will result in your paper being returned ungraded and your being asked to rewrite it.

- ◆ Your work should be *well-documented* with **footnotes** and **bibliography**. But do not footnote biblical references. Place scripture references in parenthetical notes, for example: (Matt. 5:2)
- ◆ You should consult outside secondary sources to help you interpret the biblical texts or describe the cultural or historical context from the 1st century world from/within which you are interpreting the text.

Generally, your sources should meet the following criteria:

- a. **They must be an academic source written by a professional scholar within the guild of New Testament scholarship or ancient classical world;** no devotional-type of materials are allowed unless they are simply rhetorical devices to introduce your paper or end it. Instead include academic journal articles, essays, monographs and where applicable, critical reviews.
- b. **No internet sources.** This does NOT include material you access as PDF's from the Brandel library database or other database collections. Wikipedia does NOT count, for example, but a PDF of an article from the *Journal of Biblical Literature* is a fine source. Often internet sources/websites receive their information from published works, so it is far better to consult directly the resources on which the internet site depends rather than relying on their distillation of the published sources.
- c. **For the biblical material, do not use 2ndary sources that are originally published before 1950.** That means: you may not use a book that was originally published in 1910 but was simply reprinted in 1990. Of course this does NOT include primary sources, which, depending on what historical event you choose, may pre-date 1950. The point is: don't use, for example, a commentary on Romans from before 1950. Use the most up-to-date or definitive references for 2ndary source material.
- d. **No NRSV or NIV study notes** (even from your textbook Harper Collins NRSV)
- e. **Bible dictionary or encyclopedic sources** are allowed but use sparingly. It is much better to use a book, journal article, or essay.
- e. In your **biblical commentary** choices, **use technical commentaries, not devotional ones.** That means the NIVAC (= the NIV Application Commentary) should be used sparingly. Your first choice commentaries include but are not limited to:

Word Biblical Commentary; Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT; New International Commentary on the NT; New International Greek New Testament Commentary; Anchor Bible; Hermeneia; New Testament Library; Sacra Pagina; Pillar; and International Critical