



RELS 357I: The End of the World
Instructor: Micki Lennon
Spring 2019

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Phone: 530-898-5263	Meeting times: Section 02, MWF 1:00-1:50; Section 03, MWF 2:00-2:50
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Course Description:

Is the world coming to an end? Will the end be brought about by a divine plan, a cosmic structure embedded in the universe, or by human actions? Will God rain down fiery destruction on a sinful world, or will we destroy ourselves through the misuse of science and technology?

Many religious traditions tell stories that depict cosmic struggles between good and evil or warn that the world will end if humanity doesn't change its ways. In this class we will examine apocalyptic and millennial themes in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Native American religions, Shinto, Buddhism and a number of new religious movements. We will look at some religions that strive to create utopian societies but then experience setbacks and turn to violence in pursuit of their goals. We will explore the causes of violence in millennial groups as part of our larger project of analyzing how religious apocalypticism shapes and is shaped by larger cultural debates about the possibility of global annihilation. We will focus specifically on cultural debates in the U.S. and Japan over nuclear weapons and climate change: how are these debates influenced by pre-existing religious narratives? To what extent do millennial religious narratives shape our cultural explorations of the dangers posed by science and technology? We will also look specifically at how texts produced by popular culture—especially science fiction and anime like *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, *Barefoot Gen*, and *Princess Mononoke*—demonstrate how religion helps frame debates about nuclear weapons and the impact of industry on the environment

Course Objectives and General Education Information

This is an approved upper-division humanities course in the Science, Technology and Values Pathway. It is a writing intensive class. By the end of the semester, students will be able to (1) explain the origins, history, and various expressions of apocalyptic thinking

in different world religious traditions; (2) identify ways in which religious apocalypticism shapes broader social discussions of potential catastrophes such as nuclear war or environmental devastation; and (3) analyze novels, films and other popular cultural artifacts dealing with apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic scenarios and explain how they reflect culturally-produced hopes and fears about science, technology, and human possibility.

GE SLOs this class will meet:

1. Active Inquiry: Students in this class will formulate a research project related to the impact of apocalypticism on society, using research methods appropriate to religious studies.
2. Written communication: This is a writing intensive class. Students will advance their written communication skills through approximately 8 short reading response papers as well as writing a longer research paper. The instructor will give feedback on common writing problems, and the final paper will involve several drafts.
3. Sustainability: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the impact of human actions on the environment, and analyze the way religious narratives help shape debates over sustainability in both an American and Japanese context.
4. Diversity: Students will identify and analyze Jewish, Christian, Native American, Shinto, Buddhist and other religious perspectives on the end of the world.
5. Critical thinking: Students will examine religious and nonreligious texts on apocalypticism, and analyze how debates over nuclear weapons and the environment have been shaped by religious narrative frames.

Required Texts:

- Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More* (note this is available free as an ebook through the library here: https://chico-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=01CAL5_ALMA51439684110002901&context=L&vid=01CAL5_CHI&search_scope=Everything&tab=everything&lang=en_US)
- Walter Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (any edition is fine)
- Readings posted to Blackboard. The majority of readings for homework assignments are available as .pdf files on Blackboard. **Some days you will be required to print these readings out and bring them to class to get attendance credit for that day (or bring them on a laptop)**—these days are noted in the calendar at the end of the syllabus.
- Please note that all the films we watch in the class (most of which are available through Blackboard) are also required texts.
- Internet access will be required for this class because many of the readings and all of the homework assignments are available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading

Attendance + Participation	10%	(100 points)
Writing Assignments and Quizzes	50%	(500 points)
Research Project	40%	(400 points)

Grading

Grading will be on a 1000 point scale. 935 or more points, A; 895-934 points, A-; 875-894 points, B+; 835-874 points, B; 795-834 points, B-; 775-794 points, C+; 735-774 points, C; 695-734 points, C-; 675-694 points, D+; 595-674 points, D; below 595, F.

Explanation of Course Requirements

1. Attendance/Participation (10%)

This will be a discussion-oriented course, so your attendance and participation is vital to its success. Your participation grade will be based on attendance, level of preparation for class, contributions to class discussion, and your listening skills.

I will take attendance, and I will monitor student participation. If you have an illness or another problem which will affect your ability to attend class regularly, you must let me know as soon as possible. If you miss more than three classes without a valid excuse, it will hurt your attendance grade. (This includes classes you miss if you added late).

Good discussions require that participants be prepared, ask questions, make contributions to the conversation, and listen attentively to others in the class. I will also take into account your participation in small-group discussion exercises as part of this grade. If you are texting, playing games on your computer, or otherwise impolite in class, this will negatively affect your participation grade.

If you regularly come in late or leave early, this will also negatively impact your participation grade. If you have a serious and compelling reason to leave class early, please let me know in advance. It is your responsibility to make sure I know you were in class if you arrive after attendance has been taken.

2. Writing Assignments and Quizzes (500 points)

It is essential that you complete the assigned readings and reflect on them to allow class discussion to take place. Throughout the calendar of required readings you will find Homework questions or Quizzes. These questions are due by the start of class on the date listed in the syllabus, and should be turned in on Blackboard Learn. For example, if a homework question is listed on March 28, that means it is due by the start of class on March 28.

Homework questions are 20 points each, though there are also 2 longer written assignments, worth triple points (60 points each). Responses to homework questions should be 1-2 paragraphs in length (150-200 words). The two unit review essays should be 3-6 paragraphs in length (250-500 words).

When I grade homework assignments, I am looking for four things: (a) Does this assignment make clear that you read the assigned material? (b) Have you attempted to answer the questions assigned? Have you answered all of the questions, if there is more than one? (c) Does your response follow the rules of grammar/good writing? (d) Does

your response demonstrate that you comprehended the material? You will probably not lose many (or any) points for (d) if it is clear that you have made a good-faith effort to understand the assigned reading, even if you don't fully understand it. Please do not be tempted to find answers on Wikipedia or other websites if you don't fully understand the readings—plagiarism may result in you failing the entire class, which is much worse than losing a point or two because you didn't quite understand the reading.

Quizzes will generally be 5-10 questions long and will be worth 20 points. All the quizzes in this class are open-book and open-note, though there will be a time limit. All quizzes *with the exception of the syllabus quiz* will be due **by the start of class on the day they're listed**. For the syllabus quiz and the reading quizzes, you will have two chances to take the quiz (the higher grade will count); for the two term quizzes, though, you will only get one chance, so keep that in mind when you are taking them.

If you submit a written assignment or a quiz late, you will receive half-credit for it—this will be true even if you are sick or have to miss class for a university-sponsored event. In both cases you should still submit the assignment online. If Blackboard goes down, email me at plennon@csuchico.edu and let me know that, and I will give the whole class an extension. Late homework can be turned in until May 10 at 11:59 p.m.; after that date it will not be accepted.

3. Research Project (400 points)

Every member of the class is required to conduct a research project for the course that will involve (a) researching a specific subject connected to the end of the world using scholarly sources, (b) writing a paper on that topic, and (c) giving a presentation. There are two options for the writing and presentation components of the project:

1. Individual option: You may write an 7-10 page paper and give an individual 5 minute presentation during the last two weeks of class, or
2. Group Option: You may write a 4-5 page paper that fits into a larger topic and give a 20-25 group presentation on that topic. (For example, you might be a part of a group project on zombies in apocalyptic film, and your paper might explore major themes in George Romero's zombie movies, or you might be part of a group project on apocalyptic themes in Norse mythology, and your paper might cover the role of Loki in Ragnarok).

This research project is designed to give you an opportunity to explore a particular religious group's understanding of the end of the world in more depth. Whichever option you select, remember that this is a **research project** and requires extensive use of scholarly research sources.

DEADLINES FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

1. **Selection of which option you are choosing:** Interest survey on **February 6**; topic signups on **March 4**.
2. **Proposal** (50 points) due **March 13**.

The proposal should include one paragraph outlining your project and a bibliography of at least 4 scholarly sources. (It may also include primary sources, such as scriptural texts, novels, or films you are analyzing, but these don't count as scholarly sources). Groups should submit a collective proposal with the overall topic and breakdown, though each group member still needs to submit 4 individual scholarly sources for their piece of the overall project. This will be submitted on Blackboard.

3. Annotated bibliography (50 points) due **April 22**. This should have a minimum of 4 scholarly sources plus 2 additional sources. The additional sources can be primary sources, websites, or additional scholarly sources. An annotated bibliography includes the complete bibliographic information (I prefer Chicago style, but you may also use MLA or APA as long as you also include the URL for any internet source, which both of those style manuals have recently dropped) and roughly two paragraphs summarizing each source. Do **not** simply copy the official abstract of the source—that would be plagiarism. You should summarize the main points of the source in your own words and talk specifically about its relevance to your paper.

4. Rough draft due **April 29**. (See below for point value). The rough draft should include your thesis statement and outline your argument; it must be at least half the minimum length of your paper. **Please underline your thesis statement so I can easily identify it.** If you're doing the group option your rough draft has to have a minimum of 2 pages of prose, though the remainder can be outline; if you're doing the individual option, your rough draft has to be a minimum of 4 pages of prose. It doesn't have to be extremely polished but the more complete it is, the better the feedback you will get.

5. Presentation: Everyone must present during the last two weeks of class. You will need to use some sort of visual aid (powerpoint or prezi). **The rough draft and the presentation are cumulatively worth 150 points, but you can decide on the breakdown (either 50/100, 75/75 or 100/50—but you need to indicate which option you're choosing on the top of your rough draft).** Group members must all select the same option.

6. Final drafts: These are due during your scheduled final exam time and will be worth 150 points.

Important guidelines for selecting sources

For the proposal, everyone must submit a minimum of 4 scholarly sources. By "scholarly source" I mean (a) a piece of secondary literature (b) taken from an academic book or journal (c) that is a minimum of 5 pages long and (d) has footnotes or endnotes. Generally articles found through the library search engine meet all these criteria, though be careful not to rely on book reviews as scholarly sources.

"Secondary literature" means material that is written by an academic, not a member of the community itself. Materials written by members of the community (e.g. Jim Jones' speeches, or Y2k guides written by survivalists, or the Heaven's Gate website, or the Bible) are known as "primary sources" and may certainly be used for your research, but

since most people taking this class are not experts on the groups they are studying I want to make sure you have enough context (secondary sources) to help you interpret that material. Your minimum of four scholarly sources for the proposal (and the additional sources for the papers and annotated bibliographies) must be secondary, not primary sources—though if you are also using primary sources you should certainly cite those as well.

Please use extreme caution when using non-library websites even as primary sources, since online sources on religion can be quite biased. Certain websites (like government file depositories) can be counted as secondary sources, and some are acceptable as primary sources, but you should consult the instructor on a case-by-case basis for these.

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

1. Basic beliefs, practices, or controversies surrounding **specific millennial or apocalyptic groups that we are not covering class**. Some examples might include:

- Qumran (an ancient Jewish community that predicted a coming war between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness)
- Sabbatians (16th century Jewish millennialists)
- Diggers, Ranters, Adamites, etc. (Christian millennial groups that emerged as part of the English Civil War in the 17th century that preached various forms of social equality)
- Zoroastrian apocalyptic ideas (an ancient Persian religion that still exists today)
- Ragnorak and Norse mythology
- Branch Davidians (a splinter group of the Seventh-Day Adventists involved in a conflict with the FBI at Waco, Texas)
- Solar Temple (a UFO religion active in Canada and France that committed group suicide)
- Aum Shinrikyo (a New Religious Movement blending Buddhism and new teachings that committed terrorist acts in Japan)
- Montana Freeman (a splinter group of the Christian identity movement that had a standoff with the FBI that was resolved peacefully)
- Muslim apocalypticism (be aware that there are Shia and Sunni variations of this)
- New Age apocalyptic groups that appropriated Maya teachings about 2012 (be aware that this can be a little hard to research)
- Specific debates among apocalyptic groups, e.g. debates about whether the rapture will be pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation
- Religious apocalyptic themes in popular literature, art, film, etc. (e.g. Apocalyptic imagery in William Blake; *The Final Judgement* and the Art of Albrecht Durer; Biblical apocalyptic themes repurposed in *Supernatural*; Annual Apocalypses in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; Enochian apocalyptic themes in *The Prophecy*; Christ figures and the apocalypse in *The Matrix*, *Constantine* and *Dogma*; Religious themes in horror: Stephen King and the war between good and evil; etc.)

2. Issues connected to fears about **nuclear or other technological apocalypses**.

Some examples might include:

- The bomb shelter movement of the 1950s
- Survivalism today
- Nuclear themes in popular literature, art, film, anime, etc. (e.g. War Games as an Expression of Nuclear Fears in the Reagan era; Nihilism and Nuclear Fears in

Punk Music; B-Movies and the Bomb: Nuclear Fears and *The Blob*, *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, and *Night of the Living Dead*)

- The panic over Y2K
- Mutation in comic books, anime, film, etc. as an expression of nuclear fears (e.g. Godzilla movies, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, X-Men)
- Apocalyptic rhetoric and the Cold War (e.g. analyzing responses to the Cuban missile crisis)
- Debates about the morality of nuclear deterrence
- Debates about the ethical responsibilities of scientists involved in nuclear research
- Predictions concerning the “singularity” and the coming technological apocalypse

3. Issues connected to fears about **the potential for an environmental apocalypse**.

Some examples might include:

- Apocalyptic thinking in Earth First!, Earth Liberation Front or other environmental action groups
- Environmental themes in popular literature, art, film, anime, etc. (e.g. *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Winds*, *Blade Runner*, *The Happening*, *Waterworld*,)
- Media responses to events like Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Katrina, the South Asian tsunami, the Haiti earthquake, the recent oil spill in the Gulf, recent mass animal die-offs, etc. that frame these events in apocalyptic terms
- Debates about the ethical responsibilities of environmental scientists
- An examination of the role played by religious belief in debates over climate change (e.g. does belief in premillennial Christianity make people less likely to care for the environment?)

4. Issues connected to fears about **a biological apocalypse**

- Medieval responses to the Black Plague
- Cultural responses to other pandemics, e.g. the 1918 influenza epidemic
- Media discussions about H1N1, bird flu, etc.
- Themes related to a biological apocalypse in popular literature, art, film, anime, etc. (e.g. the recent popularity of zombie films such as *28 days*)

5. Other apocalyptic themes, e.g.

- Alien invasion in popular literature, art, film, etc
- Hollywood transformation of religious apocalyptic themes
- Other themes not discussed above (check with the instructor)

Specific requirements for the papers and presentations

1. Sources: The final papers must each have a minimum of six sources; four of these must be scholarly sources. See above for definitions of scholarly sources. Please list your sources on a “Works Cited” page.

2. Thesis statement: Every paper must have a thesis—that is, a main argument supported by evidence. See below for examples of thesis statements.

3. Papers:

(A) If you are choosing the group option, your rough draft must be a minimum of 2 pages, including your thesis statement; your final paper must be 4-5 pages; and you must participate in a 20-25 group presentation during the last two weeks of class.

(B) If you are choosing the individual option, your rough draft must be a minimum of 4 pages, including your thesis statement; your final paper must be 7-10 pages; and you must give a 5 minute presentation during the last two weeks of class.

4. Presentations:

(A) If you are choosing the group option, you must give a 20-25 minute presentation. All group members should help design the Powerpoint or Prezi (required) and speak for at least part of the presentation. Presentations will be graded on research, organization, delivery, and powerpoint design. If you are using google slides or another non-powerpoint design, you will need to save it as a powerpoint or an adobe pdf to upload it; at that point I'd suggest testing it! Sometimes formatting gets lost in the conversion. You will need to upload your powerpoint by 9 a.m. on the day of your presentation.

(B) If you are choosing the individual option, you must create a powerpoint no longer than 4 slides and give a 5 minute talk on a date during the last two weeks of the semester. You will need to upload your powerpoint by 9 a.m. on the day of your presentation. Since individual presentations are quite brief, please do not make use of film clips in them.

5. Group work:

If you are choosing the group option, it is very important that you contribute fully to the group. If you persistently miss group meetings, I will allow your group to expel you. I expect that groups will work together on the general theme your group selects, but please be sure to divide responsibilities in such a way that each of your final papers is distinct. For example, if your group is doing a project on zombie apocalypses, one of you might research the historical/religious origins of zombie beliefs; one might focus on whether zombies are biologically possible, one might focus on early zombie films by Romero and the cultural fears they embody, and one might focus on recent zombie films and the ways they have changed from earlier films.

EXAMPLES FOR CERTAIN ASSIGNMENTS RELATED TO PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Sample thesis statements for papers:

- Stephen King's *The Stand* and Connie Willis' *Doomsday Book* both examine biological apocalypse in the light of Christian religious imagery, but while King's story reflects a dualistic struggle of good v. evil, Willis is more interested in showing the persistence of love and goodness in the face of total social collapse.
- While many people see zombie movies as simply an excuse for lots of cinematographic violence, a comparison of *Dawn of the Dead*, *Sean of the Dead* and *Land of the Dead* shows that the zombie film is actually a criticism of many aspects of modern society, especially the abuse of the poor by the rich and the

excessive consumerism of modern society.

- A comparison of three different versions of *War of the Worlds*—the original radio broadcast, the 1950s film, and the recent Spielberg version—shows that in every case, the story uses fear of aliens as a symbol for America fears of literal invasion, but in each case the invaders represent different fears—fascism, communism, and terrorism.

B. Sample annotated bibliography entries:

1. Theodore Seuss Geisel, *The Lorax* (New York: Random House, 1971).

The Lorax is an environmental parable in which the story of the “Onceler” is told. The Onceler is a sort of proto-capitalist who comes to exploit the paradisaical land of the Lorax. Before the coming of the Onceler, Truffula trees bloom, Brown Barbaloos play, and all is happy and joyous. The Onceler sets about making products from Truffula trees, and as a result destroys the animals’ habitats and pollutes the air and water. The Onceler becomes rich, but undercuts his own profit-making abilities by destroying all of the Truffula trees.

The film is an indictment of capitalism, industry and unbridled expansion, calling on the viewers to treat nature with care. In this project, I am using the Lorax as an example of secular apocalypticism. The narrative structure of the Lorax closely follows the Christian master narrative (paradise, a fall, a savior figure, collapse, final judgment, hope for the future).

2. Daniel Wojcik, “Secular Apocalyptic Themes in the Nuclear Era,” *The End of the World as We Know* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

https://learn.csuchico.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=2_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flauncher%3Ftype%3DCourse%26id%3D_16003_1%26url%3D

Wojcik talks about the history of secular apocalyptic fears in this chapter, which he says are generally characterized by “a sense of pessimism, absurdity and nihilism.” While these fears have been found prior to the 20th century, they became more common after the use of nuclear weapons in WWII. Nuclear fears can be seen both in non-fiction (e.g. Jonathan Schnell’s *The Fate of the Earth*) and fiction (e.g. *Dr. Strangelove*). Wojcik explores such fears as they expressed in the bomb shelter movement, nuclear humor, and punk rock.

The section of this essay that is most relevant to my research project is the section on nuclear fears in film. Specifically, Wojcik talks about how films that feature mutation (e.g. *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, *The Blob*, *Night of the Living Dead*, etc. represented a coded way to explore nuclear fears in the 1950s. His argument, which I draw on in my paper, is that “[b]y ultimately defeating or taming these cinematic beasts, the otherwise uncontrollable threat of imminent nuclear destruction was perhaps symbolically vanquished in the context of a movie theater.”

General Guidelines for writing assignments

- Students are required to **keep a copy of all written assignments submitted to me**, and to resubmit written work if required.
- Please submit written assignments through the appropriate Blackboard assignments tool, not through campus email or Blackboard email. Either attach your assignment (as a Word document or a pdf) or click on “Type submission” and type directly into that box. Please don’t submit your homework in the comment field!
- If you turn in an assignment via Blackboard, it automatically tells me your name and section, so you don’t need to include that information, but for any assignments you give me a written copy of (e.g. the rough draft and final paper) please include your name, class and section number, and the day the assignment is due. A title page is not necessary, and please don’t submit work in folders or binders.
- All written assignments that you actually hand in to me should be typed, double-spaced, on standard 8 1/2 by 11 paper. Margins should be one inch on all sides. Please use a 12 point font. **These must be stapled!** If you turn in an assignment in which the pages are not stapled together, I accept no responsibility for lost pages. Please do NOT turn in assignments in binders or plastic covers.
- All assignments should be accompanied by a bibliography or works cited page, in addition to citations you use in the text. (Exception: homework assignments do not need a works cited page, though you should use in-text citations). Also, the final paper will need to be electronically uploaded to Turnitin.com. There will be a link to Turnitin on the Blackboard class page.
- Any instance of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty (e.g. cheating on exams) **will result in an “F” for the course** and a report of academic misconduct submitted to Student Judicial Affairs. If you borrow the ideas of others in composing your written work, they must be cited; if you borrow the words of others, they must be enclosed in quotation marks and cited. If you have any doubts as to whether or not something needs to be cited, play it safe and cite it—or ask me about it. Any standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.) is fine, though for websites I want you to include the URL even though that is no longer the MLA standard.
- If you are having health problems or personal crises which might tempt you to plagiarize, please talk to me. In some cases, I may be able to make accommodations for your situation; in other cases, I may advise you to take the late penalty (see below). Students who plagiarize on more than one occasion will be expelled from the university. In the long run, it is far better to receive a lower grade (or even a failing grade) than to jeopardize your entire academic career.
- Please note that material from the internet is still someone else’s work, and must be cited appropriately! If you are unsure of how to do this properly, consult the following website: http://www.csuchico.edu/eng/Links/style_guide.html
- Late homework can be turned in for half credit until May 10. If the proposal, annotated bibliography, or rough draft is late, I will accept them until May 10 for a 20% late penalty, though you won’t receive feedback on them before the final paper is due. The final paper cannot be submitted late, unless you have a reason that

would allow you to receive an incomplete for the class, such as a serious illness or death in the family.

Students with certified disabilities

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester. I will make every reasonable effort to facilitate your success in this course. Please note that you may be required to show documentation of your disability.

To receive such documentation or to gain assistance with reasonable accommodation in your classes, please contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The ARC is located in Student Services Center 170; their phone number is 530-898-5959 and their website is <http://www.csuchico.edu/arc>.

Title IX:

State law makes university professors mandated reporters. This means I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator whenever I learn about incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking that affect any member of the campus community. This includes disclosures that occur during our class discussions or in private. Students may make a **confidential** report to the Counseling and Wellness Center or Safe Place. Information on campus reporting obligations and other Title IX related resources are available here: www.csuchico.edu/title-ix.

Other campus resources:

There are many resources available to students such as tutoring through the Student Learning Center, assistance with personal crises through the Counseling Center, help with research through the library, help for students with food insecurity at the Hungry Wildcat Pantry, etc. Check out the “Student resources” tab on our Blackboard page for more information.

Course Calendar and Reading Assignments

Readings labeled “Boyer” are from Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*; those labeled “Canticle” are from *A Canticle for Leibowitz*; those labeled “Blackboard” are available on Blackboard (look under the folder “class readings” and then the specific date). Please note that this schedule is tentative and may change if necessary. **ALL READINGS AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE BY THE DATE LISTED.**

Date	Topic	Readings + Assignments due on this date
1/23	Introduction to the Course	<u>Syllabus Quiz</u> . (Available on Blackboard). I encourage you to take the syllabus quiz after class; it is not due until 2/4 at 11:59 because people may still be adding through

		the first 2 weeks of class, but it's a good idea to take it while the material is fresh in your mind.
Unit One: Case studies in apocalyptic narrative: popular religious narratives v. official religious narratives		
Date	Topic	Readings + Assignments due on this date
1/25	What is apocalypticism? Some key terms	<u>Reading:</u> Meredith McGuire, "The Provision of Meaning and Belonging," (Blackboard) <u>Extra credit:</u> You'll get 10 points extra credit if you bring in a photo of yourself that will fit on the back of a 3 X 5 notecard (e.g. a color copy of your drivers' license or ID photo). You will not get this photo back, so don't give me anything precious or irreplaceable.
1/28	Case study: Book of Eli	Film: Book of Eli I recommend you start reading <i>Canticle for Leibowitz</i> .
1/30	Film: The Book of Eli	<u>Reading:</u> British code of ethics for scientists; Uppsala Code of Ethics for Scientists; and John Forge, "The Morality of Weapons Research," (Blackboard) <u>Homework assignment:</u> (Submit on Blackboard by the start of class on Jan. 30). What do these three readings suggest are some of the basic values of science? What are some important responsibilities of scientists? Do you agree or disagree with any specific arguments made in the three pieces? Write a 1-2 paragraph response to these questions. "
Date	Topic + readings	Assignments due on this date
2/1	Book of Eli	<i>Read Canticle!!</i> Note on Canticle: "Book 1" of Canticle is "Fiat Homo", or chapters 1-11. Book 2 is "Fiat Lux", or chapters 12-23. Book 3 is "Fiat Voluntas Tua", or chapters 24-30
2/4	Popular religious narratives case 2: A Canticle for Leibowitz.	<u>Canticle Quiz</u> (which covers Book 1 of Canticle and also <i>Book of Eli</i>) due by the start of class. Also, the syllabus quiz must be completed by 11:59 p.m. tonight.
2/6	Religion, science, and ethics: Canticle's perspective.	<u>Reading:</u> You must have finished Book II (through chapter 23) of A Canticle for Leibowitz <u>Homework question:</u> A basic debate in Book 2 has to do with access to scientific knowledge. What are Dom Paolo and Thon Taddeo Pfardentrott's positions on this question? Do you agree with either of them? Do you think your answer would change if you were living in a post-Deluge society? (Write 1-2 paragraphs on this and submit it on Blackboard; it's due by the start of class).

		Also, today in class we will also do an interest survey: group or individual presentations.
2/8	Apocalyptic narratives	The Lorax <u>Reading:</u> Keep reading Canticle; you have to finish it by Monday!
2/11	Worldview and values: Canticle's perspective.	<u>Reading:</u> You must have finished the entire novel by today. <u>Reading quiz:</u> To successfully complete today's quiz, you need to know (a) Fr Zerchi and Dr Cors' perspectives on euthanasia, and how that connects to their different worldviews, as a Catholic priest and a secular doctor and (b) who Mrs. Grales is and what happens to her at the end of the novel.
2/13	Official religious apocalyptic narratives: Jewish apocalypticism.	<u>Reading:</u> Boyer, chapter 1 (pp. 21-48); Daniel, Introduction and Daniel 1:1-12:13 (Blackboard) <i>If you don't quite understand what's happening in the Book of Daniel, don't panic—we will spend time in class going over it.</i>
2/15	Official religious apocalyptic narratives: Early Christian apocalypticism	<u>Reading:</u> Matthew, chapter 24; Revelation, Introduction, and Book of Revelation (Blackboard). Just as with Daniel, don't panic if you don't understand Revelations; we will discuss it in class. <u>Homework question:</u> Revelation is filled with many symbols: number symbolism (e.g. 7, 12, 666, 144,000); symbolic objects (7 seals; 7 bowls of wrath; 7 hills, Babylon) and symbolic beings (the lamb, the two witnesses, the four horsemen, the whore of Babylon, the woman who flees into the desert, the dragon, the beast from the sea, the Alpha and the Omega, etc.) Pick two of the symbols in Revelation and do an internet search: what sort of explanations do you find? Write 1 paragraph per symbol summarizing some of the explanations you found; be sure to include the name and URL of the sites you used.
2/18	Apocalyptic symbolism and vocabulary: some conclusions.	
2/20	Apocalyptic symbols in the modern world Film: Armageddon	<u>Reading:</u> Michael Sells, "Armageddon in Christian, Sunni, and Shia traditions"(Blackboard) <u>Unit One Review quiz due by the start of class today;</u> it's available on Blackboard, and is open book, multiple-choice. REMEMBER that unlike all the other quizzes, you only get ONE chance at term quizzes, so be sure to review the terms before you start!!!

		Terms you need to understand for this quiz include: worldview, sectarianism, dualism, determinism, warning narrative, struggle narrative, sectarian narrative, legitimation, anomie, plausibility structure, theodicy, sect.
Unit II: Apocalypticism in history		
2/22	Apocalypticism in medieval and early modern Christianity	<p><u>Unit One Review Assignment</u> due by the start of class. This essay, worth 60 points, should be 3-6 paragraphs long (300-500 words) and submitted both on Blackboard and as a hard copy in class. It will be graded on content, grammar and structure.</p> <p>You must write on one of the following questions:</p> <p>1. Use one of the three readings from 1/30 (British code of ethics for scientists; Uppsala Code for Scientists or Forge on the Morality of Weapons research) to evaluate any character or event in Canticle for Leibowitz—for example, how would the authors of the Uppsala Code evaluate Thon Taddeo’s actions? What would John Forge have to say about the nuclear scientists in Book 3?</p> <p>2. In lecture, I discussed the fact that for the writers and readers of apocalyptic scriptures, religious apocalypses are often messages of hope for communities in crisis. Would you say that the overall message of Canticle for Leibowitz is one of hope or one of despair? Why? What do you think the author was trying to convey with this book?</p> <p>Also, please read Boyer, 46-79.</p>
2/25	Postmillennialism: building the perfect society on earth	<p><u>Reading:</u> Sarah Vowell, “Excerpts from Assassination Vacation” (Blackboard); John Humphrey Noyes, “Christian Perfectionism” (Blackboard); Boyer, 80-112.</p> <p>Please bring the Noyes essay to class.</p> <p><u>Homework question:</u> According to Vowell, what were the goals of the Oneida community? What motivated Noyes to start it? Look at the list of 23 features of "Bible communism" in the Noyes essay (pp 21-25). What seem to be the main ideas of his "Bible communism"?</p>
2/27	The premillennial impulse	<p><u>Reading:</u> Edwin Gaustad, “Millerites,” “Adventism,” “Millennialism,” “Holiness and Perfectionism.” (Blackboard)</p>
3/1	Seventh-Day Adventists and	<p><u>Reading:</u> Paul Conkin, “Apocalyptic Christianity.” (Blackboard)</p>

	Jehovah's Witnesses.	
3/ 4	Modern Christian apocalypticism: Protestant and Catholic.	<u>Reading:</u> Hal Lindsey, "Israel, O Israel" (Blackboard); Michael Cuneo, "The Vengeful Virgin;" (Blackboard), Boyer, 181-224 Research topic selection today.
3/6	Apocalypticism in Islam: Roots	<u>Readings:</u> Selections from the Quran and Hadith (Blackboard)
3/8	Apocalypticism and modern Islam	<u>Readings:</u> Graeme Wood, "What ISIS really wants" and Juan Cole, "How Islamic is the Islamic State" (Blackboard). <u>Homework question:</u> (a) How, according to Wood, is apocalypticism driving ISIS's goals? (b) Why does Wood argue that ISIS's goals are Islamic? Why does Cole disagree? What is at stake in this debate?
Unit Three: Catastrophic Millennialism in America: case studies		
3/11	New religious movements: terminology and theory	<u>Reading:</u> Catherine Wessinger, "Introduction" and "How the Millennium Comes Violently" (Blackboard). <u>Reading quiz</u> , due by the start of class, on Blackboard. To succeed on this quiz, you should be able to answer the following questions: Why does Wessinger reject the term "cult"? What does she think of the term "brainwashing"? What are some features that lead to "catastrophic millennialism?"
3/13	Native American Apocalypticism: Ghost Dance Religion.	<u>Readings:</u> Joel Martin, "New Religions in the West" (Blackboard) Research Proposals due today on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.
3/15	Ghost Dance Religion.	<u>Reading:</u> Michelene Pesantubbee, "From Vision to Violence: The Wounded Knee Massacre." (Blackboard) <u>Reading quiz</u> , due by the start of class. To succeed on this quiz, you should be able to answer the following questions: What does Pensantubbee see as the causes of the Wounded Knee massacre? How did Whites perceive the Ghost Dance? How did dancers perceive the dance? What are some strategies she thinks might have prevented the massacre?
3/25	Catastrophic millennialism and the People's Temple	<u>Reading:</u> "1978—Jonestown" (Wessinger, ch. 3); David Chidester, "Jim Jones, The People's Temple, and Jonestown." (Blackboard).
3/27	Understanding Jonestown	<u>Reading:</u> "Primary documents on Jonestown," Rebecca Moore, "American as Cherry Pie." (Both on Blackboard)

	We'll be doing an exercise on these in class, so be sure to bring the primary documents on Jonestown to class.	<p>Bring readings to class!</p> <p><u>Homework question:</u> Select 2 primary documents from the first set of readings. For each document, try to identify (a) the perspective of the author--is s/he a survivor? Someone who died at Jonestown? Someone who left the movement? (b) the main points s/he is trying to make and (c) whether you find their account credible. What specifically leads you to find their account credible or lacking in credibility? Could they be trustworthy in certain respects and not in others? Why/why not?</p>
3/29	Catastrophic millennialism and UFO religions	<p>Reading: "1997, 1998—Heaven's Gate" (Blackboard). Note: Class is online instead of in person today; watch the recorded lecture on Blackboard.</p>
4/1	No Class	Cesar Chavez Day

Unit Four: Secular Apocalyptic Narratives: nuclear war and environmental catastrophe

4/3	The impact of the Atom Bomb on the Apocalyptic Imagination. Film: Barefoot Gen	<p><u>Term Quiz</u> due today by the start of class. REMEMBER that unlike all the other quizzes, you only get ONE chance at term quizzes, so be sure to review the terms before you start!!!</p> <p>Quiz: This will be a term quiz on major concepts from the Wessinger/NRM unit. Terms you need to know: cult, sect, church, ultimate concern, catastrophic millennialism, progressive millennialism, internally fragile millennial group, assaulted millennial group, revolutionary millennial group, rapture, dispensationalism, conversion experience, bible communism, revolutionary suicide, T.E.L.A.H. It is due by the start of class.</p>
4/5	Experiencing the atom bomb.	Film: Barefoot Gen
4/8	The impact of Hiroshima and Nagasaki	<p><u>Reading:</u> Ward Wilson. "The Winning Weapon?" and Paul Fussell, "Thank God for the Bomb;" (both in Blackboard).</p> <p><u>Reading quiz:</u> To do well on this quiz, you need to have watched Barefoot Gen (know what happens to Gen's family) and read both Wilson and Fussell. For Fussell, why does Fussell criticize arguments saying the bomb was unnecessary? Why does he think it was necessary? For Wilson, how does he respond to the central question of the essay, were nuclear weapons militarily effective?</p> <p>In class we'll talk about your own perspective on the use of atomic weaponry in war.</p>

4/10	Nuclear fears and cold war culture Reading: Reading:	<u>Reading:</u> Daniel Wojcik, "Secular Apocalyptic Themes in the Nuclear Era," (Blackboard) Film: Dr. Strangelove
4/12	Dr. Strangelove	Fim: Dr. Strangelove
4/15	Environmental catastrophe	<u>Reading:</u> Matthew Barrett Gross and Mel Giles, "How Apocalyptic Thinking Prevents Us from Taking Political Action," and one of the following: John H. Richardson, "When the End of Human Civilization is your day job," (about how climate scientists cope with their own dire environmental predictions) or Jeff Goddell, "Goodbye Miami" (about predictions that Miami will be underwater within the next 50 years due to sea level rise) (all three essays on Blackboard). <u>Homework question:</u> Why do Gross and Giles argue that apocalyptic thinking is actually preventing political action on climate change? Does either the Goddell or Richardson essay make you agree or disagree with Gross and Giles' arguments?
4/17	Environment and scientific responsibility.	<u>Reading:</u> Rebecca Berg, "When Science Crosses Politics"; Leslie Alm, "Science and Policy: the View from the World of Scientists"; and Michael Nelson and John Vucetich, "On Advocacy by Environmental Scientists." <u>Homework question</u> (worth triple points): These three essays all address the question of if, when, and how environmental scientists should become involved in policy debates. The Berg essay is a specific case study; the Alm essay discusses how and why American v. Canadian environmental scientists might differ on this question; and the Nelson/Vucetich essay is more of a philosophical examination of reasons why or why not it might be appropriate for environmental scientists to engage in political advocacy. Select two of these three essays and discuss some of the debates about scientists becoming involved in political advocacy. What seem to be persuasive arguments for them to get involved? What seem to be arguments against this? Do you find any of the arguments on either side compelling? Why or why not? Your total response should be 3-6 paragraphs in length.
4/19	Environmental catastrophe and Asian religions: A Case study	Film: Princess Mononoke.
4/22	Film: Princess Mononoke.	Annotated bibliographies due today on Blackboard

4/24	Film: Princess Mononoke	
4/26	Princess Mononoke discussion	<p><u>Film quiz</u> due by the start of class. To do well on this quiz, you should be able to answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What seems to motivate Prince Ashitaka, Lady Eboshi, and San? 2. Where do you see Shinto and/or Buddhist influences in the film? (E.g. which religion believes in kami? Which teaches the 4 Noble truths, which suggest the universality of suffering and the idea that suffering is overcome by meditation and compassion?)
4/29	Research presentations	<p>Rough drafts due! Presentation points/rubric form due (If presenting in a group, 1 per group with everyone's full name). Be sure to specify the point breakdown!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember, if you're presenting, upload powerpoint to the class discussion board no later than 9 AM. • If you're responding to a presentation, be sure to bring in a copy of the presentation response form!
5/1	Research presentations	Don't forget a response form on the 3 days you're assigned to respond!
5/3	Research presentations	You can only do one extra credit response.
5/6	Research presentations	Don't forget to upload your powerpoint by 9 AM on your presentation day.
5/8	Research presentations	
5/10	Research presentations	Remember that 11:59 p.m. today is the deadline for turning in any late work for partial credit. During final exam week, the only assignment I will accept is the final draft of your research paper.
5/15 or 5/17	Final paper due at your scheduled final exam time: Section 02, 5/15 at 2 p.m. ; section 03, 5/17 at noon	Final draft of the research paper must be uploaded to Turnitin and turned in as a hard copy at the beginning of your exam time in the regular classroom. Note that until the official final times are posted this date is tentative.

This syllabus is subject to revision if necessary.