

**PROVIDENCE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
**136.32L - BNT: Special Studies in New Testament - Revelation**  
**3 credit hours**  
**Instructor: Ed Neufeld, PhD**

---

## SYLLABUS

---

### A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

John the Seer directed this Revelation to Christians who found themselves on the margins of society, often despised, and either attacked or about to be attacked. The church now politely ignores Revelation, or ridicules and rejects it, or fixates on its predictions. It rarely figures in the day-to-day experience of most Christians, yet that was precisely its intention. This course will explore the original setting and audience of this writing, and how it was written to guide their faith and obedience. We will also explore how it might guide contemporary faith and experience.

This course is designed as an independent study, based on audio lectures with power point outlines, with additional reading and assignments. The audio / power point lectures were originally offered as a seminary course, and are now presented as part of this university college credit.

Prerequisites: 121.11 - BINT and 121.12 - BINT and one set of *either* 132.22/23 - BNT *or* 134.22/23 - BNT.

### B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The following course objectives flow out of various learning opportunities available to students, including assigned readings, audio lectures, and individual student research. As with all courses, students play an integral role in learning outcomes, which are commensurate with student initiative and effort. As a collective effort, this course aims:

- To clarify the genre of Revelation: what is the nature of apocalyptic literature generally (Jewish and Christian examples introduced); and how did it function among ancient readers of approximately 200 B.C.E. – 200 C.E.
- To reconstruct the historical setting in which John wrote his letters to the seven churches: why this style of writing? Why was this appropriate for the communities addressed?
- To introduce Revelation studies, in order to argue that Revelation is a spiritually rich text that should not be feared. It is a guiding and encouraging text for all Christians at all times, and an inviting text for others.

## C. COURSE TEXTS

*Note:* these texts are available at the Providence Bookstore, 204-433-7488 or 1-800-668-7768; email [bookstore@prov.ca](mailto:bookstore@prov.ca).

Kraybill, Nelson. *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010.

Kraybill writes from an Anabaptist pacifist tradition. There are a few conclusions presented in this book that I think go beyond what John the writer had in mind. But overall this book admirably demonstrates how to read Revelation so that it shapes the worship and allegiance of Christ followers in the third millennium. It is his posture toward Revelation that we need to grasp.

Wilcock, Michael. *The Message of Revelation: I Saw Heaven Opened*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975.

Wilcock's book is somewhat dated by now, but it is a classic of simplicity and method. One, it is readable; and two, it presents a perceptive approach to understanding and interpreting Revelation. His approach is not novel in itself, for the most part. But he lays it out with unusual clarity. Wilcock's value is his approach to Revelation, which I find unsurpassed, and his accessible style of writing.

## D. COURSE AUDIO LECTURE OUTLINE

- Unit 1            Revelation 1 -- Prologue and Opening Vision
- Unit 2            Rev 2-3 -- Messages to the Seven Churches
- Unit 3            Rev 4-5 -- Throne Room Vision
- Unit 4            Rev 6-7 -- Seven Seals
- Unit 5            Rev 8:1 - 11:18 -- Seven Trumpets
- Unit 6            Rev 11:19 - 14:5 -- The Deeper Conflict
- Unit 7            Rev 14:6 - 16:21 -- Deeper Conflict Ends; Bowl Judgments
- Unit 8            Rev 17 -- 'Symbols', the Harlot, and the Beast
- Unit 9            Rev 18:1 - 20:6 -- The Harlot and the Beast (Conclusion)
- Unit 10           Rev 20:7 - 22 -- New Heaven and Earth; Epilogue

## E. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### General Guidelines

Students may submit documents either in hard copy (paper) or electronically as an email attachment. Electronic submissions should be formatted as hard copy would be, that is, with proper title page, #12 Times New Roman font, double-spaced unless otherwise noted, page numbers, and so on.

Do not send the title page as a separate document file when submitting a paper electronically. If the problem is not having a page number on the title page, solve it this way with MS Word: open the "insert page numbers" window, click on "format," and set page numbering to "start at" 0 (zero). Then hide the page number on the first page, which will be your title page, and the first page of text will be page 1.

Ed Neufeld can be reached by email via his faculty page on the Providence web site. Assignments as electronic files can be attached to emails sent this way.

1. Reading Revelation. Read Revelation completely through eight times in the translation of your choice. As much as possible read it through in one sitting, or at least all in one day. Do not read it through more than once in a single day, and not more than twice a week. I *suggest* that you do two of these readings *before* you do any other course work, do another four readings while listening to the ten lectures and doing the lecture responses, and that you save two readings for the very end of the course, after all the other assignments are done. After each reading, type a one-page response to your reading. Write out a reflective impression you gained from that reading. Your responses should consider repeated themes or patterns, or overall impressions. Pay attention also to the atmosphere of the book - what effect does it have on you, and why do you think that is so? Date each response. Submit all eight responses as one document. 20%

2. Lecture Responses. Type a one to two page response to each audio lecture. Do not summarize the lecture. Pick a few points made in the audio lecture that caught your attention. Describe them and explain why this attracted your interest. These responses may express approval, disapproval, disbelief, or surprise. Submit all ten in one document. 15%

3. Apocalyptic Reading. Read Leon Morris's *Apocalyptic* (Eerdmans, 1972; 2nd ed IVP, 1973). This small book has about 100 pages of text, and is a fine introduction to apocalyptic. The entire book is available online as a pdf file, and can be downloaded free of charge. E. Neufeld can send it as an attachment if it is no longer available. *Apocalyptic* is divided into 25-30 short sections, beginning with the introduction. Write an eight to ten page summary of Morris's *Apocalyptic*, organized and labelled as one or two paragraphs summarizing each of Morris's sections. In your conclusion evaluate the usefulness of the book, and note what parts of the reading were most helpful to you. 15% of course grade.

4. Wilcock Review. Read Wilcock, *The Message of Revelation*, and write a six-page review. The first four pages or so should summarize the book. Then cover two more matters: in one page indicate the main purpose or point of the book: what gap does he intend to fill, or what view "out there" does he hope to correct? Read the whole book with this question at the back of your mind. Lastly, evaluate the book. What do you think are its strengths and weaknesses? 15%
5. Kraybill Review. Review Kraybill in the same way as Wilcock. 15%
6. Research Paper / Preparation Studies. Choose one of the two following options, *not both, only one* of them. Either write a *research paper*, or write eight one-page *preparation studies*. 20%

*Research Paper Option*. Select a text from Revelation, read the text carefully, research enough to find out what commentators agree on in your text and what the problems are. It is a good idea to check your text selection with the instructor. This is a good paper in which to explore some debated aspect or theme of Revelation, or a section you have grappled with for some reason. Explain your text as you understand it. It is appropriate to suggest an application of your text to contemporary life, but not before the last paragraph or two. Write eight to ten pages of text. You may use either the footnotes / endnotes bibliographic style of citation, or the parenthetical-reference list style of citation. Do not take more than one page to get to your text or issue. Imagine that you are writing to a fellow student, one who is taking the course with you, but knows little about the matter you are researching.

*Preparation Studies Option*. Imagine that you will lead a group of people in a study of the book of Revelation. They are reading the whole book of Revelation, but do not understand it at all. For eight evenings you will explain to them a different section of Revelation each evening. This assignment is designed to prepare you to lead this.

Select eight texts from Revelation between three and fifteen verses long. Write one page, definitely not more than one page, on each of your eight texts. Each page will have the following four elements: (1) A title for that study at the top of the page, including the text references, i.e. Rev. 1:1-7. (2) A paragraph describing the text you have chosen. Observe the obvious - is your text a conversation? A picture? A conflict? An invitation? What happens? Who are the key characters? What is the tone? And so on. Pay close attention to what your text actually says. (3) A second paragraph describing how your text would have served the original first century readers. How would your text have helped John's persecuted churches, to guide or warn or encourage them? (4) A third paragraph in which you show how your text might guide Christian life and loyalty and worship in the present time. That is, how would you apply the text?

These preparation studies can be either single-spaced or double-spaced. You do not need to research this, although you may.

## F. COURSE POLICIES

In addition to the policies outlined in the *Student Handbook*, the full text of the academic policies, procedures and regulations of Providence University College is available online ([http://prov.ca/college/ac\\_pol-proc-reg.aspx](http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx)) or in the Library, Admissions Office, and the Dean's Office.

### Plagiarism

Issues of academic integrity will be dealt with according to the policies on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism outlined in Student Handbook. Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the policies and with the consequences attached to their violation.

## G. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aune, David E. *Revelation 1-5*. Word Biblical Commentary. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Revelation 6-16*. Word Biblical Commentary. Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Revelation 17-22*. Word Biblical Commentary. Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998.
- Bauckham, Richard. *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*. NovTSup 3. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. New Testament Theology. Cambridge: CUP, 1993.
- Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Beasley-Murray, G. R. *Revelation*. NCBC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Revelation." In *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments*. Ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids. 1025-38. Downers Grove: IVP, 1997.
- Buchanan, George Wesley. *The Book of Revelation: Its Introduction and Prophecy*. Mellen Commentary Series 22. Lewiston: Mellen, 1993.
- Caird, G. B. *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*. Harper's New Testament Commentaries. 1966. Reprint: Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987.
- Charles, R. H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, 2 volumes. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920.

Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypses*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination*. New York: Crossroad, 1992.

Cullmann, Oscar. *Christ and Time*, rev. ed. Trans. Floyd V. Filson. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964.

Ford, J. Massyngberde. *Revelation*. The Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1975.

Gilmour, Michael J. "An Outsider's Notes on the Jehovah's Witnesses' *Revelation: Its Grand Climax at Hand!*." *Journal of Religion and Society* 8 (2006): [http://www.creighton.edu/jrs].

\_\_\_\_\_. "Delighting in the Sufferings of Others: Early Christian *Schadenfreude* and the Function of the *Apocalypse of Peter*." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 16.1 (2006): 129-39.

Hanson, Paul D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*. Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Apocalypse, Genre" and "Apocalypticism." Pages 27-34 in Supplementary Volume of *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by Keith Crim. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.

Hanson, Grayson, Collins, and Collins. "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism." Pages 279-291 in vol. 1 of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Harrington, Wilfrid J. *Revelation*. Sacra Pagina 16. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993.

Himmelfarb, Martha. *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.

Hughes, Philip Edgecumbe. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary*. Eedrmans, 1990.

Keener, Craig S. *Revelation*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

Kiddle, Martin. *The Revelation of St. John*. Moffat New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940.

Kirsch, Jonathan. *A History of the End of the World: How the Most Controversial Book in the Bible Changed the Course of Western Civilization*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006.

PROVIDENCE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
136.321 - BNT: Special Studies in New Testament - Revelation  
3 credit hours  
Instructor: Ed Neufeld, PhD

Kraybill, Nelson. *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010.

Ladd, George Eldon. *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Apocalyptic Literature." Pages 151-161 in vol. 1 of *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Edited by Geoffrey Bromiley. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979.

Lupieri, Edmondo F. *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John*. Trans. Maria Poggi Johnson and Adam Kamesar. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

MacKenzie, Robert K. *The Author of the Apocalypse: A Review of the Prevailing Hypothesis of Jewish-Christian Authorship*. Mellen Biblical Press Series 51. Lewiston: Mellen, 1997.

Metzger, Bruce M. *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.

Michaels, J. Ramsey. *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*. Guides to New Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.

Minear, Paul S. *New Testament Apocalyptic*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981.

Morris, Leon. *Apocalyptic*. Eerdmans, 1972, InterVarsity, 1973.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Revelation of St. John*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Eerdmans, 1969, 1987.

Mounce, Robert H. *The Book of Revelation*. Rev. ed. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Osborne, Grant. *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Baker Academic: 2002.

Pippin, Tina. *Death and Desire: The Rhetoric of Gender in the Apocalypse of John*. Louisville: Westminster, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Revelation of John." In *Search the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. 109-30. New York: Crossroad, 1994.

Rowland, Christopher C. *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity I*. London: SPCK, 1985.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Revelation*. Epworth Commentaries. London: Epworth, 1993.

PROVIDENCE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
136.321 - BNT: Special Studies in New Testament - Revelation  
3 credit hours  
Instructor: Ed Neufeld, PhD

Rowley, H. H. *The Relevance of Apocalyptic: A Study of Jewish and Christian Apocalypses from Daniel to the Revelation*, rev. ed. London: Lutterworth, 1963.

Russell, D. S. *Divine Disclosure: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*. Proclamation. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991.

Swete, Henry Barclay. *Commentary on Revelation*. London: Macmillan, 1911; Kregel reprint: 1977.

Walvoord, John F. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1966.

Wilcock, Michael. *The Message of Revelation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975.