SYLLABUS

TAYLOR SEMINARY

To develop Christ-minded leaders who make a difference in the world.

NT 617 - The Book of Revelation

Oct 15-19, 2018

INSTRUCTOR: Ralph J. Korner
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SCHEDULE: October 15-19, Monday to Friday, 8:30–4:30 pm

CREDITS: 3 [90 hours of work outside of class time]

PREREQUISITE: BI 412 Biblical Hermeneutics (unless special arrangements have been made with the professor)

DESCRIPTION: An exposition of the English text of the book of Revelation in the light of its first century context, with attention given to its significance for Christian life and thought today.

TARGET STATEMENTS:

A. Knowledge – Students will:
- Develop an understanding of the political, religious and geographical background of the worlds of apocalyptic literature, and of the seven Asia Minor churches of Revelation in particular.
- Understand the major themes of Revelation and the content of each section.
- Evaluate the various methods of interpreting the book of Revelation
- Integrate a structural model into their interpretation of the narrative flow of the visionary content.
- Become aware of some of the critical issues related to the study of apocalyptic literature, with special reference to the book of Revelation.

B. Character – Students will:
- Appreciate the relevance of Revelation's message for personal and social transformation.

C. Ability – Students will:
- Develop a ministry equipping resource for an audience within one's life context.

TEXTBOOK(S):

Mitchell G. Reddish, ed. *Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1990.

Leonard L. Thompson. *Revelation*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

J. Ramsey Michaels. *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992.

Eugene Peterson. *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988.

A modern translation of the Bible (e.g., NIVI, NIV, NRSV, NKJV, NASB [2000]).

The student will need a copy of *The Guide for Research and Writing* (SBL style). This is available online on the seminary web site, as well on the Moodle site for the course.

REQUIREMENTS:

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due by 11:59 pm of the due date. The assignments and their weights are as follows:

1. **Class Participation: (10%)**
   This component includes attendance, preparation for class (i.e., completing the assigned readings and questions), and taking part in class discussions. Participation marks will be assigned by the instructor with reference to an end of course student self-evaluation
   Assignment accommodates knowledge, character, and ability target statements

2. **Assignment 1: (13% [29 hours]) Reading Report**
   Required readings include the entire book of Revelation (5%; three times through), the four textbooks and the Supplementary Readings (8%) listed in the course outline. Confirmation of having reading the book of Revelation through three times must be submitted by the first day of classes (Oct 15th). The Reading Report on the four textbooks and supplementary reading is due Dec 7th.
   Assignment accommodates knowledge target statements

3. **Assignment 2: (12% [8 hours]) Inductive Study**
   A 900-1200 word (3-4 typed, double-spaced pages) personal reflection on the purpose, content and application of the book of Revelation with respect to its first century audience. Take note of key players, key events, and recurring themes. The Inductive Study is due at the start of class on Monday morning, Oct 15th. See the Inductive Study guidesheet.
   Assignment accommodates knowledge and character target statements

4. **Assignment 3: (15% [9 hours]) Ministry Application**
   You will take one of "Last Words" that Eugene Peterson highlights in his book Reversed Thunder, personalize it within your own life context, and re-work it for presentation to a contemporary audience. Examples include a sermon, an adult learning class, a leadership training session (e.g., social justice workers, church staff, youth leadership team, parents' council, marketplace leaders). The Ministry Application assignment is due on Friday, Nov 30th.
   Assignment accommodates knowledge, character, and ability target statements

5. **Assignment 4: (30% [38 hours]) Research Paper** (30% = 5% for abstract, thesis statement, and annotated bibliography + 25% for the final paper [38 hours]). A 2700-3600 word (i.e. 9-12 typed, double-spaced pages) research paper is due on **Friday, Dec 7th**. A one-paragraph description of your project (including a well-defined thesis statement) and an annotated bibliography is due **Oct. 30th**.
   Assignment accommodates knowledge target statements

6. **Assignment 5: (20%; 6 hours) Final Examination**
    The final exam will cover all textbook and supplementary (Moodle posted) readings and class content. The Final Examination is "take home" style and seeks to facilitate the integration of the course's content and readings relative to the main headings of the course outline. It will be due Friday, Oct 19th.
    Assignment accommodates knowledge target statements

EVALUATION:

Participation	10%
Assignment 1	13%
Assignment 2	12%
Assignment 3	15%
Assignment 4	30%
Assignment 5	20%

A Note on Research Paper Topics

For your papers you may choose from the options below (if you have an alternative topic for one of the papers, you will need to secure permission from the instructor).

Research Paper Topics
The structure of Revelation and its relevance for interpretation
The Christology of Revelation
Interpreting Revelation in light of Jewish apocalyptic literature
The Millennium and the book of Revelation
The socio-cultural background to the book of Revelation
Eschatological symbols in Revelation (e.g., Earthquake, Babylon, New Jerusalem, Trumpets)
HB Intertextuality in the book of Revelation (e.g., Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah)
Understanding Revelation in light of one interpretive system (e.g., preterist)

1) *Annotated Bibliographies:* Your annotated bibliography should comprise at least *seven sources of which one is a refereed journal article*. Each item should have a couple sentences explaining the author's *specific* thesis and the evidence garnished to support it. Make sure that you provide evidence that you have read and understood the article or book. In addition, annotations for commentaries should only focus on the specific passage or issue with which you are dealing. (Your research paper's final bibliography must have at least ten sources but need not be annotated).

2) *Breadth of Sources*: Your final bibliography must consist of at least *ten items of which at least three are articles from refereed journals*. Use a variety of secondary sources (commentaries, theological dictionaries, encyclopedias, specialized books) representing a number of critical perspectives. Note that a maximum of two internet resources may be used – and they must be cited with full bibliographical details as per Seminary guidelines (ensure the quality of the internet resources!).

GENERAL INFORMATION:
1. MOODLE
Taylor Seminary's Moodle is located on a shared platform with our partner seminary, Sioux Falls Seminary. Bookmark this site on your computer for easy, regular access: https://moodle.sfseminary.edu

Moodle log-in is the first initial of your first name and your last name - all in lowercase, with no spaces. For example, if your name is John Calvin, you would log-in as jcalvin

The default enrolment key is the course code (all in lowercase, with no spaces). The course code consists of the course prefix followed by the course number.
For example, Old Testament Introduction's key is: ot417

If you are having trouble logging into Moodle or self-enroling, please email teresa.seibel@taylor-edu.ca

2. COURSE WRITING
Formatting
All studies and papers should be typed and formatted according to the Society of Biblical Literature writing style as outlined in the Seminary's *Guidelines for Research Writing in Religion & Theology (SBL)*. For the full stylesheet, please refer to Patrick H. Alexander, et al., ed., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014) which is in Reading Room.

Research Language.
You should employ acceptable research language for your paper which is not too informal yet reads inclusively. Avoid the use of gender specific language (e.g., Do not refer to "man" generically or to "mankind," "men," "he"; rather use "humankind," "humanity," "person," etc.)

Plagiarism.
Academic honesty and integrity is essential to the academic enterprise and the Seminary community. All written work submitted *must* be your own. *Guidelines for Research Writing* defines plagiarism as the failure to give credit where credit is due: "To plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written something original which in fact you have borrowed from another without acknowledging that other person's work" (*Guide for Research and Writing*, 2016, p. 11-12). If you borrow ideas or distinctive phrases, or include direct quotations in your written assignments, you must acknowledge your source(s) properly by in-text citation or footnote. It is also wrong to copy another person's work or to submit an assignment previously handed in for credit in another course. **Students guilty of plagiarism may *receive a grade of zero* for the assignment and may be brought to the attention of the Seminary's Academic Committee**.

3. COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY
The last day to withdraw is Oct. 18th. A withdrawal results in a "W" being placed on the transcript of a student. After non-attendance past Oct. 18, an "F" will be recorded on the student's transcript.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Section 1   Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and Eschatological Themes

Terminology: Apocalypse, Apocalypticism, Apocalyptic Eschatology, Prophetic Eschatology
        Reading: Reddish, 19-37; Michaels, 21-33.
        Moodle: Aune et al., "Apocalypticism," in *DNTB*, 45-51.
        Question: How does Revelation reflect apocalyptic eschatology more so than prophetic?

Last Days in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature
        Reading: The Community Rule: 1QS (Reddish, 224-28); War Scroll: 1QM (Reddish, 229-36)
        Moodle: J.J. Collins, "Eschatology," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2000), 256-61.
        Question: How would you describe the eschatology of the Essenes?

Messiah in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature
>Reading: 2 Baruch 22–30 (Reddish, 108-112); 4 Ezra 9:26 –13:58 (Reddish, 84-94); I Enoch 37–71 (Reddish, 170-187).
>Question: How do the various messianic portrayals accord with, and differ from, the portrayal of the Christ in Revelation (e.g., warrior-king motif)?

Symbolism in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature
>Reading: The First Vision: 1 Enoch 83-84 (handout); The Animal Apocalypse: 1 Enoch 85-90 (Reddish, 41-53); Apocalypse of Weeks: 1 Enoch 93, 91 (Reddish, 54-57)
>Moodle: Richard Bauckham, "The Use of Apocalyptic Traditions," in *The Climax of Prophecy*, 38-83.
>Questions: Why are numbers, animals and other symbols so prominent in apocalyptic writings? How did they function for the original ancient readers? Do they affect modern readers the same or differently?

Section 2   Revelation: Interpretive Issues

Authorship, Dating and Stuff like that.
>Reading: Thompson, 19-46
>Questions: What difference do questions of dating and authorship make to one's interpretation and application of Revelation and to one's view of the text's inspiration?

Revelation: Interpretive Systems
>Moodle: Beale, Revelation (NIGTC), pp. 44-49.
>Question: With which interpretive system are you most familiar and what is its strengths and weaknesses?

Revelation: Structure→Problems and Possibilities
>Reading: Michaels, pp. 51-74
>Moodle: Korner, "'And I Saw…' An Apocalyptic Literary Convention for Structural Identification in the Apocalypse," *NovT* 42/2 (2000): 160-83.
>Question: How does a structural outline aid in one's interpretation of Revelation? What are some key structural indicators that need consideration when developing an structural outline?

Section 3   A Close Reading of Revelation

Revelation: Tradition History→Images Transformed
>Reading: Michaels, pp. 107-127.
>Question: How do some modern interpreters re-transform images in Revelation (midrash)?

Revelation 1:1-20: The Purpose of Revelation
>Reading: Thompson, pp. 47-61.
>Question: How does the above modern "midrash" impact one's personal application of the expressed purpose of Revelation?

Revelation 2—3: The Seven Churches
>Reading: Thompson, pp. 62-88; Michaels, pp. 35-50.
>Question: What does an understanding of the structure and genre of the Seven Letters contribute to one's interpretation of their message?

Revelation 2—3: The Seven Churches
    Moodle: Colin Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in their Historical Setting* (1989), 15-34.
    <u>Question</u>: Review Hemer's principles of interpretation (p. 20) and assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Revelation 4—5: The Heavenly Throne Scene
    Reading: Thompson, pp. 88-100.
    Moodle: Beale, 311-16; 337-48; 366-69.
    <u>Question</u>: Take note of the heavenly symbols and participants and map out the throne room scene. What are the interpretive implications?

Revelation 6: The Six Seals
    Reading: Thompson, pp. 100-106.
    Moodle: Beale, 372-74; R. Bauckham, "The Eschatological Earthquake in the Apocalypse of John," *NovT* 19 (1977): 224-33.
    <u>Question</u>: What is the purpose of the six seals in the context of the heavenly throne scene? Why are they literarily separated from the seventh seal? Is the sixth seal the return of Christ? Why?

Revelation 7: The Interlude
    Reading: Thompson, pp. 106-10.
    Moodle: Beale, 409-23; 433-35.
    <u>Question</u>: How do the 144, 000 interrelate with the" great multitude" and why? What purpose does this literary interlude serve at this point in the visionary narrative?

Revelation 8:1–9:21: The Six Trumpets
    Reading: Thompson, pp. 110-122.
    Moodle: Beale, 465-91.
    <u>Question</u>: Compare trumpets five and six with the second woe (ch. 11)? What do you notice?

Revelation 10:1–12:18: The Seventh Trumpet and the Three Signs
    Reading: Thompson, pp. 122-37.
    <u>Question</u>: How important is the heavenly 7th Trumpet scene for the message of Revelation? What is unique about it? Who are the actors in chap. 12, and why?

Revelation 13:1–15:4: The Mark, the Beast and the False Prophet
    Readings: Thompson, pp. 137-51.
    Moodle: R. Bauckham, "Nero and the Beast" in *The Climax of Prophecy*, 384-89; 431-52.
    <u>Question</u>: To what degree does identifying Nero with the Beast fulfill the content of Rev 13?

Revelation 15:5–16:21: The Seven Bowls
    Reading: Thompson, pp. 151-58.
    Moodle: R. Wall, *Revelation* (NIBC), 194-211.
    <u>Question</u>: What does the addition of the hailstorm in the seventh bowl suggest about its connection to the seventh trumpet (11:15-19) and thus to the trumpets judgment*?*

Revelation 17:1–19:10: Babylon and Judgment
    Reading: Thompson, pp. 159-75.
    Moodle: Aune, Revelation 17–22, 919-28.
    <u>Question</u>: What does the "Babylon" symbol mean to its first century audience (cf. 17:1-18, ch. 18 and 11:1-14)? How would you determine if it has application for today?

Revelation 19:11–20:10: The Millennium: Judgment and Salvation
>   Reading: Thompson, pp. 176-80; Michaels, pp.129-147.
>   Question: How much interpretive weight do we attach to this anomalous reference to the millennium in Rev 20? Why?

Revelation 21—22: The New Jerusalem
>   Readings: Thompson, pp. 180-90; Reddish, 237-40 (The New Jerusalem Scroll, 5Q15)
>   Moodle: R. Gundry, "The New Jerusalem: People as Place, not Place for People," *NovT* 29 (1987): 254-64.
>   Question: Summarize the purpose of New Jerusalem imagery in the message of Revelation.

Revelation in Contemporary Society: Old Hat or New News?
>   Question: How does one apply the message of Revelation in culturally meaningful ways? Are there "apocalyptic" cultural modalities that could serve as communication bridges?