



McMaster Divinity  
College

**The Book of Revelation:  
In View of All This, How Then Should We Live?**

MS/NT 3XR3  
Modified Hybrid

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Winter 2022 (Term 2)

Wednesdays 11 a.m.–12:50 p.m.

On Campus: Jan 12, 19, Feb 2, 16, March 9, 23, April 6

Online: Jan 26, Feb 9, 23, March 16, 30



**Course Description**

Revelation is considered to be one of the most difficult and controversial books in the Bible. The sometime bizarre and often repetitive imagery and narrative has generated a wide variety of interpretations of the various characters and events. The interpretations have sometimes had a dramatic impact on the Christian community, though the outcome has not necessarily been godliness. This course particularly focuses on the overall impact and message of Revelation within its socio-historical and apocalyptic context, with responsible and effective contextualization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will discover a book that leads us into a direct encounter with God and which transforms our lives in the present.

This class is an exegetical and interpretative study of the Book of Revelation in English translation. It involves an acquaintance with structure, content, message, context and other interpretive issues of Revelation as well as its meaning for today in discipleship, community and ministry.

## Specializations

### ***Biblical Studies (BS)***

Students taking Revelation as a Biblical Studies (BS) course will closely study not only one of the most challenging books in the Bible in regards to issues of interpretation and prophecy (eschatology), but it is one that is rich in Old Testament allusion as well as transparent references to the Roman context and Jewish community and background. Therefore, this book is an excellent place to hone your exegetical skills in an interesting genre while being challenged by the relevant messages to the believer and the churches.

### ***Pastoral Studies (PS)***

Students taking Revelation as a Pastoral Studies (PS) course will be able to equip themselves to preach, teach and answer the inevitable questions that they themselves have and that others will definitely ask about this provocative book of the Bible that continues to interest and confound believers who want to understand Scripture. Even better, this course will focus on the pastoral message and challenge to the churches that run through the book, and highlight the majestic scenes of worship that have inspired many songs of worship.

### ***As an Elective***

Perhaps you have always wanted to study Revelation, but maybe you have been turned off by the way that Revelation has been presented and taught in the church (anyone left behind?). Take this course and you will encounter Revelation's pragmatic call to a holy life of resistance and a response of worship.

## **Course Objectives**

Specific Objectives – Through reading, lectures, discussion and assignments the student will:

### ***Knowing:***

- Grasp the message and structure of Revelation as a whole and in terms of its component parts
- Understand Revelation in its social, historical, literary and religious Jewish Hellenistic context
- Become familiar with critical views concerning introductory questions (i.e. authorship, date, settings, etc.) and identify the features in the text that illuminate the option

### ***Doing:***

- Highlight the message and themes, exegete significant passages, and understand the major issues in the text and its interpretive problems
- Apply the text to discipleship, community and ministry formation and consider strategies for its re-presentation in contemporary contexts

### ***Being:***

- Appreciate the distinctive theology and goal(s) of the author
- Allow the text to motivate, form and transform righteousness, hope and worship

## **Course Requirements**

### ***Class Participation (10%)***

Student participation will be in a hybrid format involving both in-class and online participation based on the readings for the week and any online videos. Following the introduction of the first day, students will come to class prepared to discuss their impressions of the portion of the Book of Revelation studied for that day

- Key theological insights
- Items of particular exegetical interest or controversy
- Possible applications to contemporary Christian living

### **Reading (10%)**

See the Daily Schedule at the end for the precise dates and pages.

- Students are required to read the portion of Revelation covered in class in Keener. Read the pages for the required reading from Blackwell prior to class on the due dates (see Daily Schedule at the end). Be prepared to interact with the main issues in group discussions.
- Read Revelation three times. Be sure that you read the chapters in Revelation at least once before they are discussed in class.
- At the end of the term, each student will submit a reading report to Avenue to Learn **April 8** indicating the percentage of the reading that has been completed.

### **Textbooks and Materials**

#### **Required Reading**

Blackwell, Ben C. et al. *Reading Revelation in Context*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019.

DeSilva, David. *Discovering Revelation: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. DBT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2021.

#### **Textbook Purchase**

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

### **Written Assignments**

#### ***Commentary, Research or Exegetical Paper***

**Choose and write either an exegetical paper, a commentary- style paper or a research paper due 11:59 p.m. Friday, February 25 (40%)**

Each student will choose to write *an exegetical paper, a commentary or a research paper*.

**Late papers will lose 2% a day for a week, then 5% a day to a maximum of 30%.**

#### ***Exegetical Paper***

Student may choose to write a type of exegetical paper which is the traditional seminary assignment for the preparation of a sermon or a Bible Study.

#### **Approach:**

- Choose a text from Revelation according to the course you registered for. It must form a cohesive unit, of 10–15 verses.
- Detailed instructions (“Steps to Exegesis”) will be placed on Avenue to Learn and in the course DropBox.

Length & style: it should be approximately 5,000 words (about 15 pages of text) excluding footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, see the MDC Style Guide. There should be a minimum of 15 good quality sources used in the footnotes and bibliography. For all other matters, follow the “Steps to Exegesis,” including the subheadings.

See Rubric on A2L for Grading

### *Commentary-style paper on a selected passage*

#### Approach:

- Choose a passage from Revelation (up to 15 verses).
- Choose target readers
- Write the paper in commentary form--i.e., proceeding sequentially through a discrete passage. Choose a specific commentary style and stick with it.
- Reflect awareness of a wide variety of perspectives as represented in the literature given in the course bibliography.
- Come to clearly articulated positions, however tentative, which are defended and not merely asserted.

Length & style: It should be no more than 4,000 words (about 15 pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster style guide. There should be a minimum of 15 good quality sources in the research and documentation

See Rubric on A2L for grading.

### *Research paper*

#### Approach:

- Select one of the rich topics in Revelation
- Watch the PowerPoint presentation on “Writing a Research Paper” available on A2L and (advised) watch the videos on how to write a research paper by Mary Conway (link given)
- Discuss your topic with the professor.
- Write a research paper with research and documentation of at least 15 good quality sources.

Length & style: It should be no more than 5,000 words (about 15 pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster style guide:

See the Rubrics on A2L for grading

### ***Project & Presentation due class time April 6 (30%+10%)***

Each student will complete a paper or project suitable for their specialization and designed to make the discourse, a section or a significant passage accessible in a specific contemporary context. They will do a short presentation of their project during the class.

Late projects lose 2% a day for a week, and 5% each day following (Saturdays and Sundays excluded) up to a maximum of 30%.

#### Approach:

- Choose your project.  
Creativity is encouraged. Some suggestions include:
  - Write a study guide that will assist young adult learners in exploring or understanding all or part of Revelation. Include questions, explanations, directions and other material that both enlightens the text in its historical context and helps learners to connect the text with life today.
  - Design a movie presentation, critical review and discussion which encapsulates a theme of Revelation with a modern metaphor.
  - Write a parable or allegory that utilizes significant or powerful contemporary imagery, symbols or metaphors that express the message and content of Revelations.
  - Write a collection of poetry or songs that explore thought, themes and/or emotions in

- Revelation.
  - Design an experience/retreat for a small group that simulates the situation of the recipients and the achievement of the goal(s) of the author.
  - Describe connections between the characters, contexts and themes in your life story and Revelation.
- Identity and profile your target audience. The approach to your projects will largely be determined by what application you choose.

If your project is an artifact, provide an exegetical explanation of its features. Marking will be based on

- The expression of the biblical message/content,
- The quality of the medium
- Appropriateness for the target groups
- The calculated effort expended.

Length & style: If written, it should be no more than 3000 words (about 12 pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Style Divinity College Style Guide (above). If it is a project, it should involve somewhat comparable in time and effort to a 12 pg. research paper.

On **March 11**, submit a paragraph to A2L describing the specific contemporary context targeted, the passage that is being re-presented, the goal of the project and the approach. Choose mediums other than the traditional letters or sermons. You will receive timely feedback from the professor.

See the Rubric on A2L for grading

#### ***Grading Summary***

➤ Participation	10%
➤ Reading	10%
➤ Commentary/Paper	40%
➤ Project	30%
➤ Presentation	10%

All papers must be turned in by April 8 to receive a grade.

#### ***Attendance***

- Students should be on time to class or be prepared to offer an explanation to the professor.
- Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.
- Online attendance and watching any course videos is similarly expected
- Absence from more than 2 classes (or the equivalent) will result in grade penalties

#### ***Participation***

- Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond logically and critically in an orderly manner.
- Students are not expected to be doing work on any other subject except that which is appropriate in the course outline.
- Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations in class.

- Students are not to access e-mail, send or receive text messages, surf the net, etc., while class is in session
- Students may eat or drink in class if they do not distract others and they clean up their desks.

Students who fail to respect these guidelines may lose participation points and/or be dismissed from the class.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>

### **Gender Inclusive Language**

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

### **Style**

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <http://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

### **Appointments**

Contact me if I can assist you in any way via E-mail (most effective): [westfal@mcmaster.ca](mailto:westfal@mcmaster.ca)

Friend me on Facebook and send me a message!

Phone: 905-525-9140 ext. 23605

### **Office hours (Rm 242):**

Tuesday 2–4

Wednesday 1–3

Available by appointment in person or on Zoom calls

### MS 3XR3 Weekly Schedule

<i><b>Date</b></i>	<i><b>Passage</b></i>	<i><b>Reading</b></i> Passage from Revelation DeSilva on the passage/material Revelation in Context on the passage
Jan 12 On Campus	Syllabus & Introduction	DeSilva: 1–54 RRC: 19–36
Jan 19 On campus	Opening vision Revelation 1	DeSilva: 55–68 RRC: 37–44
Jan 26 Online	Letters to churches Revelation 2–3	DeSilva 69–88 RRC: 45–51
Feb 2 On campus	Scene in Heaven Revelation 4	DeSilva 89–105 RRC: 52–58
Feb 9 Online	Seals Revelation 5–8:1	DeSilva 106–24 RRC: 59–79
Feb 16 On campus	Trumpets Revelation 8:2–11:19	DeSilva, same as 2/9 RRC: 80–108
Feb 23 Online	Cast of Characters Revelation 12–14	DeSilva 125–45 RRC: 109–30
Feb 25	<b>Papers due 11:59 p.m</b>	
Feb 28– March 4	READING WEEK INTENSIVE HYBRID WEEK	
March 9 On Campus	Bowls Revelation 15–16	DeSilva same as 2/9 RRC: 131–37
March 11	<b>Paragraph describing Projects due</b>	
March 16 Online	Babylon Revelation 17–18	DeSilva 146–66 RRC: 138–52
March 23 On Campus	Armageddon & Millennium Revelation 19–20	DeSilva 167–82 RRC: 153–67
March 30 Online	New Heaven, New Earth Revelation 21–22	DeSilva 182–97 RRC: 168–80
April 6 On Campus	<b>Projects due 11 a.m.</b> <b>Presentation of Projects during class</b>	
April 8	<b>Reading reports due 11:59 p.m.</b>	

*Select Bibliography on Revelation Commentaries*

- Aune, David. *Revelation*, 3 vols. WBC. Vol. 1--Dallas: Word, 1997. Vols. 2-3--Nashville: Nelson, 1998. CDetailed commentary on the Greek text
- Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
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- Beasley-Murray, George R. *The Book of Revelation*. NCB. London: Oliphants, 1974.
- Beasley-Murray, George R., Herschel H. Hobbs and Ray F. Robbins. *Revelation: Three Viewpoints*. Nashville: Broadman, 1977.
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- Caird, G. B. *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*. HNTC. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
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- Collins, Adela Yarbro. *The Apocalypse*. NTM. Wilmington: Glazier, 1979.
- DeSilva, David. *Discovering Revelation: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. DBT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2021.
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- Fiorenza, Elizabeth Schüssler. *Invitation to the Book of Revelation*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1981.
- Ford, J. Massyngberde. *Revelation*. AB. Garden City: Doubleday, 1975.
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- González, Catherine G. and Justo L. González, *Revelation*. [WestBibComp]



- Gregg, Steve. *Revelation: Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*. Nashville: Nelson, 1997.
- Hendriksen, William. *More Than Conquerors*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1944.
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- Johnson, Alan. "Revelation." In *Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Ed. Frank E. Gaebelein. Vol. 12. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981. Pp. 399-603.
- Johnson, Dennis E. *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2001.
- Keener, Craig S. *Revelation*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Kistemaker, Simon J. *Revelation*. NTC. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
- Koester, Craig R. *Revelation: A New Translation with Commentary*. AB. London: Yale University Press, 2015.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Revelation and the End of All Things*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018.
- Ladd, George E. *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.
- Lupieri, Edmondo. *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.
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