



McMaster Divinity  
College

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

NT 3P1110/ (BS/ PS)  
NT 5P1080

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Winter 2027  
Tuesday, 4–5:50 pm, In Person Class + Live Stream Option

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*The mission of McMaster Divinity College is to develop effective evangelical Christian leaders  
for the Church, academy, and society  
through graduate-level education, spiritual development, and vocational formation.*



**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 and worshipful encounter with God, helps us to navigate our cultures, 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.

### **DPT Course (NT 5P1080)**

DPT students who wish to take the Book of Revelation as an advanced elective will contact the professor ([westfal@mcmaster.ca](mailto:westfal@mcmaster.ca)) and together we will design a syllabus that fits your overall focus so that it will directly contribute to your practice-led research project.

### **Specializations**

This course is an elective for specializations in Biblical Studies (BS), and Pastoral Studies (PS).

#### ***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 on the other hand, 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 participation based on the readings for the week. 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 11** 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 and recommended books for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, students may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

## 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, March 5 (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 (12 to 15 verses).
- Choose target readers
- Write the paper in commentary form--i.e., preceding 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 4 p.m. April 13 (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 12**, submit a paragraph project proposal 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 16 to receive a grade.

## **Classroom Behavior**

### ***In Class Attendance***

- Students who are registered to be in-person do not have the option to livestream. The only exceptions will be in cases of illness or emergency with the professor's permission.
- Students should be on time to class or on site. If there are any issues, e-mail an explanation to the professor (copy GA Namhyo Kim: [kimn34@mcmaster.ca](mailto:kimn34@mcmaster.ca) in advance.
- Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance. Partial attendance will be counted as an absence.

### ***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 what is appropriate in the course outline.
- Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations in class or while they are livestreaming.
- Students are not to access e-mail, take or make phone calls, 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.

### ***Academic Integrity & AI Usage***

- All work submitted must be your own. Use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, etc.) is prohibited for all assignments, discussions, and assessments unless explicitly authorized by the instructor.
- Violations of this policy will be treated as academic misconduct under institutional guidelines.

### ***Privacy***

- Class sessions may be recorded for educational purposes and shared only with enrolled students. Recordings must not be distributed outside the course.
- Respect the privacy of peers: do not share images, voices, or contributions outside the class environment.

### ***Live Streaming***

#### **Attendance & Participation**

- This course meets live online at the scheduled times. Attendance and active participation are required.
- Join the session on time; late arrivals disrupt the class and may affect your participation grade.
- Sessions may be recorded for review, but recordings do not replace live attendance.

#### **Technology Requirements**

- A reliable internet connection (tested before class time),
- A device with audio and video capability
- The correct video conferencing platform installed (e.g., Zoom, Teams).

#### **Webcam & Environment**

- Students must keep their microphones muted except when speaking to minimize background noise.
- Students must keep their webcams on throughout the class session.
- Students must dress appropriately.

- Students must ensure their surroundings are free from unnecessary distractions. Professional virtual backgrounds are permitted.

#### Communication

- Check your email and the LMS regularly for updates, schedule changes, and supplementary materials.
- Monitor any additional communication channels used for the course.

### ***Absence Policy***

#### General

More than 2 absences may result in a penalty. More than 4 absences will result in a failure of the course.

- 2 absences allow leeway in challenges due to issues such as illness, weather, and power outages. Students are expected to get the information they missed from A2L and peers.
- After 2 absences there will be a 5% penalty for the next absence. However, in special cases such as illness the penalty may be waived.
- 4 absences constitute more than 30% of the course and will result in the failure of the course regardless of the nature of the challenges.

#### Absence Due to Illness

If you must miss class due to an illness, you must contact me as soon as possible to let me know. Likewise, if I should become ill, I will communicate with you via A2L about how we will make up class sessions. Even if much of the course content will be made available via A2L, it would still be a good idea to have a friend take notes for you, if possible.

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

***Late Assignments*** lose 2% each day for 7 days, and then 5% a day up to 30%. However, no assignments will be accepted after **11:59 p.m., April 16.**

### ***Bookstore***

All required and recommended books for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, students may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresenting the authorship or ownership of written work through deception or other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include copying or using unauthorized aids during tests or examinations; plagiarism, that is, presenting another person's (or generative AI's) words, ideas, data, or creative work as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement and citation; or submitting work for credit in more than one course without instructor permission.

**A special note about Generative AI:** Students are expected to do their own thinking and write their own papers and assignments. Generative AI is not to be used to do this work. The use of AI to produce content that is then submitted as though it were the student's own work constitutes plagiarism and is a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy. While AI tools may be used to correct errors in English grammar, usage,



and mechanics, Generative AI must not be used to translate assignments from a student's native language into English. All degree programs at MDC are taught in the English language. Students are expected to be sufficiently proficient in English to engage fully in academic discourse in these programs.

### ***AODA***

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), McMaster Divinity College (MDC) is committed to supporting a learning environment that is inclusive and accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. Students who require academic accommodations to participate fully in this course must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (<https://sas.mcmaster.ca/>) of McMaster University. SAS will work directly with the MDC Registrar to ensure reasonably appropriate accommodations are in place. Students with accommodations must use the SAS portal to activate the accommodations relevant to each course at the start of each term in which they are enrolled. Please note that accommodations must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation. Accommodations are not retroactive and will not be applied to coursework or activities that have already concluded.

Contact Information:

- **Student Accessibility Services General Inquiries:** [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca)
- **Roksana Sobota (SAS Representative for MDC):** [sobotar@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sobotar@mcmaster.ca)
- **MDC Registrar:** [mdcreg@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mdcreg@mcmaster.ca)

### ***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 student will use inclusive language in all MDC assignments. When referencing biblical texts, students should preserve the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God while using gender-inclusive language when referring to human beings. Biblical quotations should be taken from a gender-inclusive translation such as: NRSVue (2022), NIV (2011), CEB (2011), NLT (1996), or CEV (1995).

### ***Style***

All required and recommended books for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, students may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

### ***Appointments & office hours***

Tuesdays 12-2

Wednesdays 2-4

After class or appointments in person or on zoom can be arranged at other times

### ***Disclaimer***

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

### ***Revelation Weekly Schedule***



| <i><b>Date</b></i> | <i><b>Passage</b></i>                                                                                                           | <i><b>Reading</b></i><br>Passage from Revelation<br>DeSilva on the passage/material<br>Revelation in Context on the passage |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan 12             | Syllabus & Introduction                                                                                                         | DeSilva: 1–54<br>RRC: 19–36                                                                                                 |
| Jan 19             | Opening vision<br>Revelation 1                                                                                                  | DeSilva: 55–68<br>RRC: 37–44                                                                                                |
| Jan 26             | Letters to churches<br>Revelation 2–3                                                                                           | DeSilva 69–88<br>RRC: 45–51                                                                                                 |
| Feb 2              | Scene in Heaven<br>Revelation 4                                                                                                 | DeSilva 89–105<br>RRC: 52–58                                                                                                |
| Feb 9              | Seals<br>Revelation 5–8:1                                                                                                       | DeSilva 106–24<br>RRC: 59–79                                                                                                |
| Feb 15–19          | <b>MDC Reading Week</b>                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                             |
| Feb 23             | Trumpets<br>Revelation 8:2–11:19                                                                                                | DeSilva, same as 2/9<br>RRC: 80–108                                                                                         |
| March 2            | Cast of Characters<br>Revelation 12–14<br><b>Papers due March 5, 11:59 p.m.</b>                                                 | DeSilva 125–45<br>RRC: 109–30                                                                                               |
| March 9            | Bowls<br>Revelation 15–16<br><b>Project proposal due March 12</b>                                                               | DeSilva same as 2/27<br>RRC: 131–37                                                                                         |
| March 16           | Babylon<br>Revelation 17–18                                                                                                     | DeSilva 146–66<br>RRC: 138–52                                                                                               |
| March 23           | Armageddon & Millennium<br>Revelation 19–20                                                                                     | DeSilva 167–82<br>RRC: 153–67                                                                                               |
| March 30           | New Heaven, New Earth<br>Revelation 21–22                                                                                       | DeSilva 182–97<br>RRC: 168–80                                                                                               |
| April 6            | Conclusion: The Theology and Eschatology of Revelation                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |
| April 13           | <b>Projects due 4 p.m.</b><br><b>Presentation of Projects during class</b><br><b>Reading reports due April 16 at 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.
- Beale, G. K. and David Campbell. *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015.
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- Beasley-Murray, George R., Herschel H. Hobbs and Ray F. Robbins. *Revelation: Three Viewpoints*. Nashville: Broadman, 1977.
- Beckwith, I. T. *The Apocalypse of John*. New York: Macmillan, 1922.
- Blackwell, Ben C. et al. *Reading Revelation in Context*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019.
- Boring, M. Eugene. *Revelation*. [Int] Louisville: John Knox, 1989.
- Boxall, Ian. *The Revelation of St. John*. BNTC. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006.
- Burr, David D. *The Book of Revelation*. The Bible in Medieval Tradition. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019.
- Caird, G. B. *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*. HNTC. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
- Charles, R. H. *The Revelation of St John*, 2 vols. ICC. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920.
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- Fanning, Buist M. *Revelation*. ZECNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021.
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- 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, Dennis E. *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2001.
- Keener, Craig S. *Revelation*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
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- \_\_\_\_\_. *Revelation and the End of All Things*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018.
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