



## McMaster Divinity College

# The Book of Revelation

MS 3XR3  
Biblical Studies  
Pastoral Studies

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Winter 2020 (Term 2)  
Saturday Course: January 11, February 1, 29, March 28

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### 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.

An exegetical and interpretative study of the Book of Revelation in English translation. This class involves and acquaintance with structure, content, message, context and other interpretive issues of Revelations 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 background. Therefore, this book is an excellent place to hone

your exegetical skills while being challenged by the relevant messages to the believer and the churches.

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

Students taking the Book of Hebrews 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:

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#### ***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 in a seminar format, interactive lectures and class and group discussions is expected, based on your readings for the week. Following the introduction of the first day, students will come to class prepared to discuss their impressions of

The outline of that 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 Osbourne. Read the pages for the required reading from Reddish 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 10** 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.

Keener, Craig S. *Revelation*. [NIVAC] Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

#### **Textbook Purchase**

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. 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**

1. **Choose and Write one of the following Papers due 11:59 p.m. Friday, February 28 (30%)**  
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 the Old Testament or New Testament 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 Avenue for Grading

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

Approach:

- Choose a passage from Revelation (up to 15 verses).
- 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 Avenue for grading.

***Research paper***

Approach:

- Select a topic on one of the rich topics in Revelation
- Watch the PowerPoint presentation on “Writing a Research Paper” available on Avenue to Learn and
- 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 4,000 words (about 15 pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster style guide:

See the Rubric on Avenue for grading

2. ***Project & Presentation due class time March 28*** (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 Revelations. 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 Revelations 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 Revelations.
- 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 Revelations.
- 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 2**, submit a paragraph to Avenue to Learn 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 Avenue 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.

### **Textbooks and Materials**

#### **Required Reading**

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#### **Textbook Purchase**

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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.

## **Classroom Behavior**

### ***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.
- A student should not plan to be absent from any of the four Saturday sessions. While accommodations to emergencies can be made, missing more than 6 hours of class will result in a reduction of one's grade, and passing the course is not guaranteed.

### **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  
Friend me on Facebook and send me a message!  
Phone: 905-525-9140 ext. 23605

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

Tuesday 12–2

Wednesday 1–3

## MS 3XR3 Daily Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Passage</i>	<i>Reading</i> Keener on the passage Revelation in Context on the passage
January 11	Introduction Opening vision Letters to churches Scene in Heaven	Rev 1 Rev 2-3 Rev 4
February 1	Seals Trumpets	Rev 5–8:1 Rev 8:2–11
February 28	<b>Papers due 11:59 p.m.</b>	
February 29	Cast of Characters Bowls Babylon	Rev 12–14 Rev 15–16 Rev 17–18
March 2	<b>Paragraph describing Projects due</b>	
March 28	Armageddon & Mil New Heaven, New Earth <b>Projects due</b> <b>Presentation of Projects</b>	Rev 19-20 Rev 21-22
April 8	<b>Reading reports due 11:59 p.m.</b>	



## REVELATION COMMENTARIES

- \*Aune, David. *Revelation*, 3 vols. [WBC] Vol. 1--Dallas: Word, 1997. Vols. 2-3CNashville: Nelson, 1998.CDetailed commentary on the Greek text
- \*Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation*. [NIGTC]. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- \*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.
- 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.
- \*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.
- \*Collins, Adela Yarbro. *The Apocalypse*. [NTM] Wilmington: Glazier, 1979.
- Fiorenza, Elizabeth Schüssler. *Invitation to the Book of Revelation*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1981.
- Ford, J. Massyngberde. *Revelation*. [AB] Garden City: Doubleday, 1975.
- Foulkes, Ricardo. *El Apocalypsis de San Juan*. Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- 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.
- Hughes, Philip E. *The Book of the Revelation*. [PNTC] Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
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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.
- Kistemaker, Simon J. *Revelation*. [NTC] Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
- \*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.
- Malina, Bruce J. and J. J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Revelation*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1992.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. *Revelation*. [IVPNTC] Downers Grove: IVP, 1997.
- Morris, Leon. *The Revelation of St. John*. [TNTC] Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, rev. 1987.
- \*Mounce, Robert H. *The Book of Revelation*. [NIC] Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, rev. 1998.
- Mounce, Robert H. *What Are We Waiting For?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Murphy, Frederick J. *Fallen Is Babylon: The Revelation to John*. [NT in Context].
- \*Osborne, Grant R. *Revelation*. [BECNT] Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- \*Peterson, Eugene H. *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination*.
- Quispel, Gilles. *The Secret Book of Revelation*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979.
- Richard, Pablo. *Apocalypse: A People's Commentary on the Book of Revelation*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985.
- Roloff, Jürgen. *The Revelation of John: A Continental Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- \*Smalley, Steven S. *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.
- Summers, Ray. *Worthy Is the Lamb*. Nashville: Broadman, 1951.
- Sweet, John P. M. *Revelation*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979.
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- Talbert, C. H. *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of John*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994.
- Thomas, Robert L. *Revelation*, 2 vols. Chicago: Moody, 1992, 1996.
- Thompson, Leonard L. *Revelation*. [ANTC] Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.

\*Wall, Robert W. *Revelation* [NIBC] Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991.

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

Wilcock, Michael. *I Saw Heaven Opened*. [BST] Downers Grove: IVP, 1975.

\*Witherington, Ben. *Revelation*. [NCBC] Cambridge, UK: Cambridge, 2003.

\*Commentaries placed on reserve in the library