



Course Syllabus - **DRAFT**

KNB2362HF – You, Your Congregation, & the End of the World: Reclaiming Biblical Apocalyptic for the Church

Knox College, Toronto School of Theology, Winter 2024

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Dr. Brian P. Irwin, Associate Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Scripture
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Course Identification

Course Number:	KNB2362HF
Course Format:	In-person, lectures and discussion
Course Name:	You, Your Congregation, & the End of the World: Reclaiming Biblical Apocalyptic for the Church
Course Location:	Knox College, 23 Kings College Circle
Class Times:	Tuesdays, 2:10–4:00 pm
Prerequisites:	None

A. Course Description and Student Learning Goals

This course will examine popular understandings of end time events and the dispensationalist interpretation that underlies them. It will also provide an overview of biblical apocalyptic texts such as Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation to provide an understanding of what they meant in their original context, how they have been received since, and how they might be applied to the life of the church today.

The Learning Goals listed below relate to the following areas:

- a) Understanding of Area Content (**UAC**)
- b) General Academic Skills (**GAS**)
- c) Ministerial and Public Leadership (**MPL**)
- d) Personal and Spiritual Formation (**PSF**)

Upon successfully completing this course, the student will:

- have a basic understanding of the dispensationalist movement and the way in which it interprets biblical apocalyptic literature (**UAC, PSF**)
- have a thorough knowledge of the content and message of the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation as well as the historical background necessary for understanding each book (**UAC**)
- be able to exercise the exegetical skills necessary for interpreting biblical apocalyptic effectively and faithfully for today (**MPL**)
- be able to demonstrate the research and writing skills necessary for graduate-level Old Testament study (**GAS**)

B. Course Resources

Required Texts

Required texts are available at University of Toronto Bookstore online (<https://uoftbookstore.com/textbooks/>) or at the St. George campus location.

- A modern translation of the Bible (e.g. NRSV, RSV, TNIV, NIV, NJPS, NET, or NASB). The NET Bible offers extensive textual notes and is available for use online or as a free download from www.bible.org. The NJPS (Tanakh) is a translation of the Hebrew Bible by the best in Jewish Biblical scholarship. As such, it provides a helpful complement to any of the standard Christian translations.
- Irwin, Brian P., with Tim Perry. *After Dispensationalism: Reading the Bible for the End of the World*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2023.
- Cook, Stephen L. *The Apocalyptic Literature*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2003.
- Lindsey, Hal, and C.C. Carlson. *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1973.
- LaHaye, Tim, and Jerry B. Jenkins. *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days*, Left Behind. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1989.

Recommended Texts

- Badke, William. *Beyond the Answer Sheet: Academic Success for International Students*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2003.
This valuable work explains how the approach to education in North America differs from that common in many other countries. Includes helpful advice on academic expectations, studying, research, writing, avoiding plagiarism, and dealing with professors. This work is highly recommended for all ESL and International students.
- Collins, Billie Jean, Bob Buller, and John F. Kutsko, eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*. 2nd ed. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014.
An academic style guide based generally on Turabian and used by the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Includes extensive lists of abbreviations related to biblical studies. A recommended purchase for those who plan to continue to do advanced work in biblical studies.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing, ed. John Grossman and Alice Bennett. 9th ed. Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 2018.
This paperback volume has much in common with the larger *Chicago Manual of Style*, which may be consulted for items that Turabian omits. A recommended purchase for students entering a degree programme.

Course Website

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>. For help with Quercus, visit: <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/46670/pages/support>. Students who continue to experience difficulty after consulting online support should contact Knox's head librarian, Joan Pries (joan.pries@utoronto.ca), for further help.

The professor's faculty website can be found at: <https://knox.utoronto.ca/dr-brian-irwin/>

C. Evaluation

The class consists of one two-hour lecture per week. Grading follows the TST grade scale found below in, “G. Toronto School of Theology Grading Scale and Standards.”

The final grade for this course will be based on evaluation in the following areas:

- **Prophecy Preacher Review (3–5 pages) (10%).** View the designated episode of a dispensationalist teacher/preacher and carefully note the scripture passages used. Examine the original literary and historical context of at least three passages and discuss whether the teacher/preacher uses and applies them appropriately or inappropriately. A link to the video will be provided on Quercus. Evaluation will be based on written clarity, degree of insight, and ability to follow assignment instructions. **Due session 4.**
- **Use of the Old Testament in Revelation (5–7 pages) (25%).** Focusing on a specific passage *chosen in consultation with the instructor*, analyse how the Book of Revelation appropriates material from the Old Testament and the ancient world. How does the author of Revelation use this material and to what end? How would the result have been received by the original audience of Revelation? **Due session 7.**
- **Final Paper (12–15 pages) (55%).** Choose *one* of the following assignments.
 - 1) Provide an overview of each of the major views of the millennium (i.e., historic premillennialism, dispensational premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism). Based on your own exegesis, which view best accords with scripture? What are the possible theological and pastoral ramifications of your view?
 - 2) Beginning with your own exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, assess the biblical evidence for and against the doctrine of the Rapture and discuss the ramifications of each for the work of the church in the world.
 - 3) Beginning with your own exegesis, examine Jesus’ message in Matt 24:36–51, discuss its meaning, and suggest options for preaching and teaching.
 - 4) Choose one interpreter each from the periods of, 1) the early church or medieval eras, 2) the period of the reformation, and 3) the period from 1800 to 1946 and examine their understanding of the identity of the Antichrist. How has the context of selected interpreters affected how they have understood this figure?

Evaluation will be based on written clarity, degree of insight, literary awareness and understanding of the text, effective use of secondary sources, and ability to follow assignment instructions. A completed Assignment Checklist (see Syllabus Supplement) must accompany your final paper. Your paper must be submitted both in paper (in class) and electronic form (via the course Quercus page). Details to follow in class. **Due session 12.**

- **Readings and Participation (10%).** Students shall be required to submit a statement via the course Quercus page indicating what portion of the required readings they have completed. E.g., “I, STUDENT NAME, attest that I have completed XX% of the required course readings.” This element will also take into account factors such as attendance and participation in class discussions. **Due session 12.**

Toronto School of Theology Grading Scale and Standards

The following chart presents the standard used for assessment in this course. It is included in the interests of transparency and to assist students in self-appraisal. If you wish to discuss an assignment to be submitted or a grade that has been received, please feel free to make an appointment with the instructor.

Letter Grade	Numerical Value	GPA	Grasp of Subject Matter	Explanation
A Range: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, broad knowledge base.				
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; mastery of an extensive knowledge base.
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	
B Range: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.				
B+	77-79	3.3	Very Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature.
B	73-76	3.0	Good	
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature.
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria.

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. The penalty for late work is 4% deducted per week late (2% off per half week). *This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty advisor or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor.* The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course (or the last day of exam week). Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistent with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<https://tinyurl.com/yav2hkqm>) or college grading policy.

Use of Ouriginal. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq> ([Links to an external site.](#))).

Students who have principled objections to the use of this service should see the course instructor during the first two weeks of the course to arrange an alternative. Typically, this will involve submitting drafts of the assignment at regular intervals throughout the semester. Further information on Ouriginal and Quercus may be found at: <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/resources/student-support/>.

D. Course Policies and Information

Policies for courses are contained in the TST Basic Degree Handbook and the Knox Student Handbook. See further, the Syllabus Supplement available from the class Quercus page. In particular, please note the following:

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism Policy. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to the Knox Director of Academic Programmes. For details, see the *TST Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <https://tinyurl.com/y47hv9ne>) and the *University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<https://tinyurl.com/y7vrsrhu>). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (<https://tinyurl.com/ydbcge4q>).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the *University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Inclusive Language. Knox College has a policy that inclusive language be used in teaching, public worship, class presentations, written assignments, and official communications. This policy may be found at: <https://knox.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Knox-College-Policy-Use-of-Language-Policy-and-Glossary-221003.pdf>.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at <http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca/>. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. For help with your UTORid and password or other technological issues the following options are available: email help.desk@utoronto.ca; phone 416-978-HELP; or visit the Help Desk at the Information Commons at Robarts Library.

Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. Forwarding your utoronto email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. All email communications from students in conjoint programs should be sent from a utoronto email address. Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Attendance. Students should be aware that Knox College policy states that 80% attendance at a lecture course is required for credit.

Use of Technology in Class. Laptops and other computing devices may be used in the classroom for note-taking purposes only. The use of the internet is not permitted while class is in session unless it is part of a specific class activity. Students wishing to text message, search for images, fact check etc. should do so during the break or outside of class.

Much of the learning that goes on in the classroom is founded upon mutual disclosure that takes place between the instructor and the student and between students. Parties outside of that learning community have not committed themselves to this relationship of trust. For this and other reasons, permission to record lectures in audio format is granted for use by registered students only. Video recording is not permitted without the written permission of the instructor. *Recordings and notes of class lectures may not be electronically reproduced, posted, or distributed without the written permission of the instructor.*

E. Weekly Schedule of Classes, Readings & Assignments

Session 1 Jan. 9 COURSE INTRODUCTION ☞ A SHORT HISTORY OF FAILED END TIMES SPECULATION



Session 2 Jan. 16 WHO’S WHO IN AMERICAN TV PROPHECY ☞ LEFT BEHIND: A POPULAR VIEW OF THE LAST DAYS

Syllabus

Citing Sources handout

How Not to Plagiarize (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>)



Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Guide

(<https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/plagiarism>)

The Late Great Planet Earth (complete by session 4)

Left Behind (read at your own pace; complete by session 12)



Session 3 Jan. 23 DISPENSATIONALISM: BELIEF & BEHAVIOUR, PART 1



Session 4 Jan. 30 DISPENSATIONALISM: BELIEF & BEHAVIOUR, PART 2



Prophecy Preacher Review due



Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, chapter 1



Session 5 Feb. 6 INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL PROPHECY



Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, chapter 2



Session 6 Feb. 13 INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL APOCALYPTIC



Ezekiel 1–10, 36–48

Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, chapter 3



Feb. 20 BASIC DEGREE READING WEEK ☞ NO CLASS MEETING

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Session 7 Feb. 27 EZEKIEL



Use of the Old Testament in Revelation paper due



Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, chapter 5

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Session 8 Mar. 5 DANIEL, PART 1



Daniel 1–12

Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, chapter 6

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Session 9 Mar. 12 DANIEL, PART 2



Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, chapter 7

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Session 10 Mar. 19 REVELATION, PART 1



Revelation 1–22

Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, chapter 8

Additional Resources

DeSilva, David A. *Unholy Allegiances: Heeding Revelation's Warning*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013.

Keener, Craig S. *Revelation*. The NIV Application Commentary, Edited by Terry Muck. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

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Session 11 Mar. 26 REVELATION, PART 2



Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature*, chapter 9

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Session 12 Apr. 2 REVELATION, PART 3 ⇨ INTERPRETING & APPLYING APOCALYPTIC FOR TODAY



Final Paper and Readings Completed Attestation due

F. Select Bibliography

Abu-Akel, Fahed. "The Danger of Christian Zionism in the US." *Journal for Preachers* 29, no. 1 (2005): 41-43.

Baxter, M. *Louis Napoleon, the Destined Monarch of the World and Personal Antichrist: Foreshown in Prophecy to Confirm a Seven Years' Covenant with the Jews About, or Soon after 1863, and Then ... Subsequently to Become Completely Supreme over England and Most of America and All Christendom, and Fiercely to Persecute Christians During the Latter Half of the Seven Years until He Finally Perishes at the Descent of Christ at the Battle of Armageddon, About or Soon after 1870*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia, PA: W.S. & A. Martien, 1863. (<http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/193469>)

Beale, G. K. *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John*. Lanham, MD; New York, NY; London: University Press of America, 1984.

- Brettler, Marc Z. *How to Read the Bible*. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2005.
- Charlesworth, James H. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983.
- Christman, Angela Russell. "'What Did Ezekiel See?': Patristic Exegesis of Ezekiel 1 and Debates About God's Incomprehensibility." *Pro Ecclesia* 8 (1999): 338–63.
- Collins, John J. *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*. Edited by Rolf Knierim and Gene M Tucker, *The Forms of Old Testament Literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Cook, Stephen L. *The Apocalyptic Literature*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2003
- Darby, John Nelson. *Writings*. (<http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/darby/index.html>)
- Davies, Philip R. "Eschatology in the Book of Daniel." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 17 (1980): 33–53.
- Dimant, Devorah. "The Apocalyptic Interpretation of Ezekiel at Qumran." In *Messiah and Christos*, 31–51. Tübingen: Mohr, 1992.
- Emmerson, Richard K., and Ronald B. Herzman. *The Apocalyptic Imagination in Medieval Literature*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.
- Green, Joel B. *How to Read Prophecy*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984.
- Hanson, Paul D. *Old Testament Apocalyptic*. Edited by Lloyd R Bailey and Victor P Furnish, *Interpreting Biblical Texts*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1987.
- Hengstenberg, E. W. *The Prophecies of the Prophet Ezekiel Elucidated*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1869.
- House, H. Wayne. *Charts of Bible Prophecy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
- Hultberg, Alan, ed. *Three Views on the Rapture: Pretribulation, Prewrath, or Posttribulation*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Irwin, Brian P. "Molek Imagery and the Slaughter of Gog in Ezekiel 38 and 39." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 65 (1995): 93–112.
- Irwin, Brian P. "The Book of Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission." In *Christian Mission: Old Testament Foundations and New Testament Developments*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall, 42–63. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010.
- Jastrow, M. "Notes on Meshech and Tubal." *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 13 (1896): 217.
- Jeffrey, Grant R. *Russia's Secret Agenda*. Toronto, ON: Frontier Research.
- Jonaitis, Dorothy. *Unmasking Apocalyptic Texts: A Guide to Preaching and Teaching*. New York, NY: Paulist, 2005.
- Jones, Larry Paul, and Jerry L. Sumney. *Preaching Apocalyptic Texts*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 1999.
- Jones, Timothy Paul, David Gundersen, and Benjamin Galan. *The Rose Guide to End-Times Prophecy*. Torrance, CA: Rose, 2011.
- Kyle, Richard. *The Last Days Are Here Again: A History of the End Times*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998.
- Lindsey, Hal, and C.C. Carlson. *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1973.

- Martens, Elmer A. "Ezekiel's Contribution to a Biblical Theology of Mission." *Direction* 28, no. 1 (1999): 75–87.
- Reddish, Mitchell G., ed. *Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.
- Rennie, Ian S. "Nineteenth-Century Roots of Contemporary Prophetic Interpretation." In *Dreams, Visions and Oracles*, 41–59. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977.
- Roberts, J. J. M. "A Christian Perspective on Prophetic Prediction." *Interpretation* 33 (1979): 240–53.
- Scofield, C. I., ed. *The Scofield Reference Bible. The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments*. New & improved ed. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1917.
- Schoeni, Marc. "The Roots of Christian Zionism." *Theological Review* 26, no. 1 (2005): 3-38.
- Seitz, Christopher R. "Old Testament Apocalyptic." *Evangel* 17, no. 3 (1999): 74-76.
- Seitz, Christopher R. "Ezekiel 37:1-14." *Interpretation* 46, no. 1 (1992): 53-56.
- Sheppard, Gerald T., and Larry Jones. "On Reagan, Prophecy and Nuclear War." *Old Westbury Review* 2 (1986): 9-22.
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- Tanner, J. Paul. "Rethinking Ezekiel's Invasion by Gog." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39 (1996): 29–45.
- Wainwright, Arthur W. *Mysterious Apocalypse: Interpreting the Book of Revelation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993.
- Walters, Stanley D. "The End (of What) Is at Hand?" *Toronto Journal of Theology* 2, no. 1 (1986): 23-46.
- Walters, Stanley D. "The World Will End in 1919: Daniel among the Victorians." *Asbury Theological Journal* 44 (1989): 29-50.
- Walvoord, John F. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1966.
- Walvoord, John F. *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1971.
- Wright, N. T. *The Millennium Myth*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.
- Yamauchi, Edwin M. "Meshech, Tubal, and Company." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 19 (1976): 239–47.