

*“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”*

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| <b>Course</b>                          | <b>REVELATION: HOPE IN A WORLD GONE WRONG</b><br>NEWT 0526 1A  |
| <b>Date, Time, and Delivery Format</b> | JANUARY 8 – APRIL 8, 2023<br>AYSYNCHRONOUS ONLINE  |
| <b>Instructor</b>                      | <b>WILLIAM J. WEBB, Ph.D.</b><br>Email: <a href="mailto:bwebb@tyndale.ca">bwebb@tyndale.ca</a>   |
| <b>Class Information</b>               | This course is web-based asynchronous with no fixed class time.<br><br>Office Hours: You are welcome to post questions in the appropriate forums online. For other matters where more direct communication is helpful, we can set up a phone call, Zoom or, if possible, meet at any Starbucks in Waterloo, ON (where I live). |
| <b>Course Material</b>                 | Access course material at <a href="https://classes.tyndale.ca">classes.tyndale.ca</a> or other services at <a href="#">Tyndale One</a> .<br>Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.  |

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the Book of Revelation with a focus on its literary genre, theological themes, and the various schools of interpretation. A detailed study of the argument with a view to teaching and preaching its contents.

*Prerequisite: BIBL 0501. Recommended: NEWT 0522.*

This course is designed to guide the student in a study of the final and somewhat unique book of the canon, namely, Revelation. Special emphasis will be placed on the genre issue, the different hermeneutical approaches to the book, crucial interpretive issues, the book’s literary structure and artistry, and its distinctively high Christology. We will also discuss the important question of teaching and applying the book in our present-day, apocalyptically fearful/sensitive setting.

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, by:

1. Reading the book of Revelation along with a series of extra-biblical apocalypses,
2. Presenting three original-audience analyses of the “esoteric” apocalyptic visions and critically evaluating other student’s presentations,
3. Discussing the meaning of several challenging texts with the professor and colleagues,
4. Researching and writing an interpretative passage/issue paper, and
5. Reflecting upon course materials (lectures, handouts, textbooks, etc.),

Students will be able to:

1. Trace through the structure and argument of the book of Revelation.
2. Identify the major interpretive issues and begin wrestling through the pros and cons for various options.
3. Utilize the literary and metaphorical artistry of the book to clarify, rather than cloud, the author’s intended meaning.
4. Examine John’s apocalypse within its literary genre and the milieu of extra-biblical apocalyptic writings. [Contrary to popular opinion, the book of Revelation does not present us with “tomorrow’s newspaper” slid underneath our door today].
5. Develop a more resolute faith (despite hardship, difficulties, and setbacks) and be drawn irresistibly into the worship of the Lion and the Lamb.
6. Use the book in various ministry contexts as they better understand how the “strange visions” of John’s apocalypse would have applied to the seven churches (a good starting place for all contemporary application).
7. Trace through certain biblical themes—sacrifice, temple, holy war, God’s glory, creation, covenant(s), etc.—to see canonical development and how these apocalyptic visions provide closure to the broader storyline of Scripture.

## III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. REQUIRED READING AND RESOURCES

\*Mounce, Robert H. [\*The Book of Revelation\*](#). NICNT. Revised edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998. [ISBN: 0-8028-2537-0]

\*Osborne, Grant R. [\*Revelation\*](#). BECNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002. [ISBN: 0-8010-2299-1]

\*Note: Students may choose to read either Mounce or Osborne depending upon various considerations (see discussion below).

## **B. RECOMMENDED READING (OPTIONAL) AND TOOLS**

Nickelsburg, George W. E. and James C. VanderKam. [1 Enoch](#). The Hermeneia Translation. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.

\*Reddish, Mitchell G. ed. [Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader](#). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995. [ISBN: 1-56563-210-9]

\*Note: Reddish's *Apocalyptic Literature* provides a handy collection of many 2TJ (second Temple Judaism) apocalypses and early Christian apocalypses. Unfortunately, it is not always in print. The extra-biblical apocalypses for reading in this course are available online or in numerous other hard-cover volumes.

Stone, Michael E. and Matthias Henze. [4 Ezra and 2 Baruch](#). *Translations, Introductions, and Notes*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.

Tyndale recommends [www.stepbible.org](http://www.stepbible.org) – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

## **C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS**

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at [classes.tyndale.ca](http://classes.tyndale.ca).

## **D. DISCUSSION FORUMS, EXPECTATIONS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

*Discussion Forums.* Discussion forums are a key aspect of this course. They are your opportunity to wrestle with the assignments/relevant issues under consideration, to share your ideas with your peers, and to engage in shaping the evolving group consensus on some core concepts. There are two types of forums in this course: (a) research-based forums

and (b) fun forums. You will discover the difference between these two forum types as you read through the assignment section (below) and in the “Forum Rules” posted online.

*Forum Expectations and Responsibilities.* As you know, the course is being offered online. An online course, by its very nature, is different from one presented using traditional classroom methods. Thus, it is important for you as a student to approach this course differently than you might approach a classroom course.

You have more personal responsibility in a course such as this. We are an online community building our knowledge and understanding together. Doing your readings and regularly showing up online by collaborating in discussions, asking questions, and providing feedback to your learning cohort are important community responsibilities. Additionally, to keep up in the course it will be important for you to work consistently throughout the semester. You will need to be disciplined and take the initiative to participate.

You are also expected to complete the anonymous course evaluation in the final week of the course.

The role of your instructor is different as well. In an online course, the main role of the instructor is to function as a coach. I will be striving in various ways to fulfill that function. I will be presenting information in various formats along the way, but my main role will be to help guide you through the course so that you can get as much from the course as possible. Throughout, I will be encouraging you to think critically about the course content and the views of others, mine included. *I will be online regularly, but I will not be responding to every post in the discussion forums. Rather, I will make intermittent contributions, summarizing, challenging, and at times suggesting new directions.* One last thing, make sure that you read the documents related to forums that you will find in the resources section of the website (the main window before the 12 weeks start)—i.e., (a) Forum Rules and (b) specific instructions for each forum. These resources provide more detailed information about specific course requirements.

## **E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Attendance in this course is demonstrated by regular log-ins and up-to-date participation in forums.

### **1. Reading (10%)**

There are four areas of reading requirement for students: (a) the book of Revelation itself, (b) a commentary, (c) ancient Jewish and Christian apocalypses and (d) periodical articles and handouts that are provided online.

*The Book of Revelation.* The student is required to read the biblical text of Revelation four times during the course:

- twice before the 2nd week (complete book of Revelation)
- twice before each week's lectures (only the portion to be studied)

*A Commentary.* A student must read through the appropriate portion of the course textbook once (either Mounce or Osborne, not both) *before* each class period. Osborne's commentary is 869 pages; Mounce is a mere 439 pages. Your choice between these two commentaries ought to be influenced by the following considerations:

- reading abilities
- how much do you want to "dig deeper" into the subject matter
- the grade you wish to achieve (see grading rubric)

*Apocalyptic Literature.* If one is to appreciate the literary genre of Revelation, s/he must have done at least a minimal amount of background reading in similar kinds of apocalyptic literature. By the 4<sup>th</sup> week, the student is to read one "sample piece" of apocalyptic literature (either 2 Baruch or 1 Enoch 1—36, which is known as, "The Book of the Watchers"). This sample reading anticipates our discussion of apocalyptic genre for that week. The student may choose to read a certain number of extra-biblical apocalypses based upon the reading grade that they wish to achieve (see grading rubric).

[Explanatory Aside: In most courses a grade is not given for reading. However, a course on Revelation requires an "added element" of reading because of its unusual kind of literature, namely, its apocalyptic genre. Aside from completing the grading rubric as a measure of one's reading, the professor will expect students to interact with apocalyptic literature in their final research paper on Revelation. For example, if you choose to do a paper on "Hell", you will need to work through about 5-6 different (mutually exclusive) options in terms of how Christians understand this subject through asking the question, "Which option is most convincing?" A major part of your discussion will focus on weighing the competing evidence within the book of Revelation itself for choosing between views. In addition to this, however, the presentation of hell within apocalyptic literature more broadly is very important to a genre-based discussion (and validation) of what one finds in the book of Revelation. Other apocalypses can help build a case concerning what John *more likely* meant to say within the book of Revelation. Accordingly, the professor will be looking for interaction with apocalyptic literature in the final paper. Papers on almost every facet of Revelation—the millennium, heaven, the fall of Babylon, etc.—have interpretive issues that require interaction with apocalyptic literature in choosing between competing views.]

*Periodical Articles/Handouts.* All students must at least read Chisholm’s periodical article on prophetic genre to pass the course. Beyond this minimum reading requirement for this fourth category of periodical articles/handouts, consult the grading rubric for further details.

The grading rubric for course readings will (a) assist in making decisions about how much course reading a student wishes to accomplish and (b) help in understanding exactly how one’s grade for this assignment is derived.

Due date for reading grade submission: see schedule below.

## **2. Research-Based Forums [Echoes and Images, parts I, II and III] (45%)**

If one is to apply the apocalyptic visions of Revelation to today’s generation in a cogent manner, they must think through what “sermonic/pastoral/theological impact” the scroll would have had upon those who first encountered the text. The best measure of the intended impact on the original audience is to picture what would have gone through the minds of the various congregations, i.e., the seven churches (chapters 2—3) and John himself (chapter 1), as they listened to the letter being read aloud. What were these visions saying to them about how they ought to act/think/feel in their own life setting?

One way to gain this kind of first-audience perspective is to listen carefully in the text of chps. 4\*—22 for “echoes and images” that correlate with the seven letters. In other words, listen for where you detect a verbal link or a conceptual link between the chapters 1—3 (John and the seven churches) and chapters 4\*—22 (the apocalyptic visions). List these verbal links and conceptual links.

Echoes. For *verbal links* (we will call them, “echoes”), it is helpful to type out the visions portion of biblical text first. Below this material from chapters 4\*—22, type out the connecting section of the “John on Patmos and the letters” (chapters 1—3). Then, highlight in bold or italic the material that corresponds. For example, a clear verbal link obviously exists between 19:15 and 2:26-27:

### 19:15

Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. **He will rule them with an iron scepter.** He treads the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

### 2:26-27

To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—**he will rule them with an iron scepter**; he will dash them to pieces like pottery—just as I have received authority from my Father.

Images. For *conceptual links* (we will call them, “images”), simply type out both portions of text, underline or italics the related material in each, and specify (in your own words) the nature of the conceptual link. Such an example of conceptual linkage would appear to exist between 20:1-6 and 2:10:

20:1-7

I saw an angel . . . holding in his hand a **great chain**. He **seized** the dragon/devil . . . and **bound** him for a **thousand years**. . . . I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. . . . They came to life and reigned with Christ a **thousand years**. . . . they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his **prison** . . .

2:10

I tell you, the devil will put some of you [Christians] **in prison** to test you, and you will suffer persecution for **ten days**. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Link/point: contrast between a “short” time of persecution *versus* a “long . . . long” time of better things to come.<sup>1</sup> Cf. short time of devil’s persecution (imprisoning Christians) *versus* long time of his being imprisoned! Aside from the theme of eschatological reversal (one answer to theodicy) in terms of terms of imprisonment, there is a short-vs.-long dichotomy in the sentencing.

This assignment is to be completed as three separate Research-Based [RB] Forums:

- Research-Based Forum #1 [Echoes and Images, part I] (**6:1—11:14**)
- Research-Based Forum #2 [Echoes and Images, part II] (**11:15—16:21**)
- Research-Based Forum #3 [Echoes and Images, part III] (**17:1—22:5**)

Please organize the materials according to the progress of verse designations throughout the visions, i.e., according to the flow of the biblical text from 4:1\* to 22:5 (not according to the church letters). Mix the echoes and images as they naturally surface within the flow of the biblical text (no need to keep them in two distinct categories). In close proximity to the grading rubric for this two-part assignment, the professor will give a brief lecture covering a series of practical hints or tips for achieving greater success in this assignment. Unlike the final paper (see below), the form/style of these two forum assignments does not need to conform to Chicago writing style.

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<sup>1</sup> Most examples will be comparative. However, you will want to think contrastively as well.

[\*Note: For pragmatic/scheduling reasons we are going to only start the first Echoes and Images assignment at 6:1 (not 4:1) even though 4:1 would be the natural starting place.]

A grading rubric will assist in understanding how the grade for this assignment is derived. For late submissions of a Research-Based Forum, see below under [H. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK](#).

Due dates: see schedule below.

### **3. Final Research Paper (45%)**

Students must write a final research paper on some aspect of meaning in the book of Revelation. You may choose (a) an interpretive issue, (b) an ethical problem, or (c) a thematic development of a subject. The grade ceiling of “B” will most likely follow for the third option (thematic development) because a descriptive paper is *generally* easier than an interpretive-issue or an ethical-problem paper.

The final paper must strive for excellence in three areas: research, writing style and argumentation. A discussion of these three areas along with a grading rubric will be provided. Use the instructions, grading rubric and various resources posted on the course site under “Final Research Paper.” The paper is due *through email submission* as an attached file [[bwebb@tyndale.ca](mailto:bwebb@tyndale.ca)] on the date specified in the syllabus schedule below. See discussion of late submissions below. Length: 15 to 20 double-spaced, 12-point font pages (not including bibliography). Please use single-spaced 10-point footnotes (no endnotes and no short-form, author-year citations within the body of the text). Going over the allowable page limit will result in a reduction of the grade. The final paper must use correct Chicago style in its components—font size, title page, headings, paragraph spacing, margins, block quotes, footnotes, bibliography, etc. See grading rubric.

Due date: **Wednesday April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. See the discussion of late final paper submissions below.

### **4. Fun Forums (5% bonus on Research Paper)**

Every course needs some fun. Students can achieve a 5% bonus (maximum) towards their final research paper by participation in some “fun forums” during the semester. If you contribute something to the fun forum and interact with at least two other students in that forum, you have just earned yourself a 1% bonus. With each fun forum you participate in, you accumulate another 1% bonus mark towards your final paper. I, the professor, mark(s) your final paper, give it a grade, check to see what your Fun Forum bonus marks are and, hopefully, I can add 5% to boost your grade! So, join us for some fun.



## F. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to register and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

## G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following:

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Reading   | 10%                 |
| Researched-Based Forums [Echoes and Images, parts I, II and II] | 45%                 |
| Final Research Paper  | 45%                 |
| Fun Forums [bonus added to Research-Paper grade]                | *5% bonus (maximum) |
| Total Grade   | 100%                |

## H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

**Submissions.** Kindly email only the final research paper as an attached file (either MSWord or PDF format) to the professor at: [bwebb@tyndale.ca](mailto:bwebb@tyndale.ca) All other research-based assignments are submitted online through postings within the course forums.

**Late FORUM Submissions.** The initial “assignment” post to a RB Forum is due between Monday and Thursday (midnight, Eastern Standard Time) of the week it is scheduled in the course. Two subsequent “critical interaction” posts are due by the end of the week—i.e., by Sunday (midnight, Eastern Standard Time). Any interaction the following week is encouraged but optional. *The penalty for late RB Forum submissions is one letter grade reduction per day late* (rather weighty) since these submissions play an educational component for all students within the course.

### Late FINAL PAPER Submissions, part I: **ON OR BEFORE** the “Last Day of Exams” [LDOE]

**Deadline.** The last day of exams in a semester is the official deadline for any late submissions. After that day the professor cannot accept late work without the explicit/written approval of the dean’s office (see below). If student recognizes that a late submission on or before the LDOE deadline does not involve clear extenuating circumstances (defined below), they may submit the material to the professor as **(i) a late submission with penalty** until midnight of the LDOE. In this case there is no need to contact the professor for approval. For every day late, the grade will be reduced by 5 %, a half a letter grade (i.e., one day late: 82 % A- becomes 77% B+; two days late, 82 % becomes 72 % B-, etc.). Please note that the deduction for a partial day

late counts that same as a full day late. On the other hand, if there are clear extenuating circumstances, the student may ask the professor for **(ii) a late submission without penalty** (or with partial penalty). By clear mitigating circumstances I mean something along the following lines. Suppose I as your professor were to take your circumstances to the class (hypothetically, not in reality) and ask them the following question, “Should I treat this student differently regarding late penalties than I would treat the rest of you based upon their particular [mitigating?] circumstances?” If the class were to respond with an overwhelming, “Yes, of course,” then you have a case of clear mitigating circumstances. If you wish to ask for this sort of late submission without penalty (or with only partial penalty) where the submission is on or before the LDOE, please contact the professor. The student must take the initiative in this matter.

**Late FINAL PAPER Submissions, part II: AFTER the “Last Day of Exams” [LDOE] Deadline.** Any submissions after the LDOE require a formal process of appeal to the Registrar’s Office (not to the professor). Requests for such extensions beyond the LDOE must be (a) submitted in writing using the Tyndale Extension Forms, explaining the reason why the extension is needed and (b) submitted to the registrar before the LDOE unless there are reasons why this was not possible. No assignments will be accepted after the LDOE unless the student has a valid reason for an extension. In that case, the student must apply for an extension to the dean/registrar (again, not to the professor). Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to a heavy workload, other assignments, professional or ministry obligations or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the *Chicago Manual of Style* or reference the [tip sheet, “How to Cite Sources in Theology”](#).

### **Academic Integrity**

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

### Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office ([aa@tyndale.ca](mailto:aa@tyndale.ca)) before proceeding.

## I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

## IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

|               |   |  |
|---------------|---|--|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Syllabus<br>Authorship, Date, Origin/Destination, & Setting<br>Excursus: "A Biblical Theology of Suffering—Derived from Revelation" |  |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Literary Structure<br>1:1-20  | <b>Reading Revelation (2x)</b>                         |
| <b>Week 3</b> | 2:1 – 3:22<br>Seven Churches<br>Excursus: "The Overcomers: All Christians or Some Christians?"                                      |  |
| <b>Week 4</b> | 4:1 – 5:14<br>Excursus: "The Literary Genre of 4:1 – 22:5"<br>Excursus: "Methods of Interpreting 4:1 – 22:5"                        | <b>2 Baruch; 1 Enoch 1 – 36<br/>Chisholm (article)</b> |

Excursus: "Who are the 24 Elders?"

**Week 5**      6:1 – 17      **Echoes and Images, part I**  
Excursus: "The Structure of the STBs—Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls"  
Excursus: "Apocalyptic Cosmic Catastrophe—Literal or Figurative?"

**Week 6**      7:1-17  
Excursus: "Who are the 144,000?"  
Excursus: "Who are the Great Multitude?"

**READING WEEK:**

Feb 19—25<sup>th</sup>. This week does not count within the 12-week course schedule.

**Week 7**      8:1—9:21  
10:1—11:14

**Week 8**      11:15—13:1      **Echoes and Images, part II**  
13:2-18  
Excursus: "666—Calculating the Number of the Beast"

**Week 9**      14:1-20  
15:1—16:21  
Excursus: "Armageddon, The Place of the Eschatological Battle—Literally?"

**Week 10**      17:1—19:10      **Echoes and Images, part III**  
Excursus: "Babylon the Great: Literal or Figurative Babylon?"

**Week 11**      19:11—21:8

**Week 12**      21:9—22:5  
22:6-21

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPER: Due Wednesday April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

**V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals](#), [e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

Aune, David E. "Revelation." In *Harper's Bible Commentary*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988.

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- Farrer, Austin Marsden. *A Rebirth of Images. The Making of St. John's Apocalypse*.

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