

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary  
**NT 639 THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

Instructor: John E. Toews  
Term: Fall, 2006  
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Units: 3  
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**Course Description**

A seminar on the Apocalypse to determine its meaning for Christian churches in the first and twenty-first centuries. The course will be a reading/discussion/lecture class.

**Course Objectives**

1. Develop first-hand knowledge of and familiarity with the text of Revelation.
2. Develop an understanding of the nature of apocalyptic literature.
3. Work toward a biblical exegetical methodology by studying the Apocalypse.
4. Develop an understanding of the hermeneutical issues involved in the interpretation of the Apocalypse.
5. Reflect on the meaning of the Apocalypse for contemporary churches in different cultural settings.

**MBBS Program Objectives**

This course contributes to the larger goals of the Seminary program by helping the student:

1. Discern the subject-matter to which the biblical texts gives witness then and now (biblical formation).
2. Develop skills in sound biblical exegesis and interpretation (ministry formation).
3. Engage the hermeneutical task by exploring how to interpret the biblical text for the contemporary Christian community (ecclesial formation).
4. Nurture healthy interpersonal relationships and effective communication patterns in the classroom (character formation).

**Course Texts**

The text of the Apocalypse in a modern translation, e.g., NRSV, NIT, or in Greek.

John R. Yeatts. Revelation, Believers Church Bible Commentary. Herald Press, 2003.

David L. Barr, Tales of the End. Polebridge Press, 1998.

Eugene H. Peterson, Reversed Thunder. The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination. Harper and Row, 1988.

### **Course Schedule**

August 30 Introduction to the Course

September 6 Introduction to the Apocalypse

**Read:**

The entire Apocalypse twice in one reading in two different versions

Barr, 1-24, 151-180

Yeatts, pp. 19-29

Peterson, pp. 1-10

September 13 The Letter Scroll, 1.1-3.22

**Read:**

Yeatts, pp. 30-93

Barr, 25-60

Peterson, pp. 11-56

September 20 The Letter Scroll (cont)

September 27 The Worship Scroll, 4.1-5.14

**Read:**

Yeatts, pp. 94-120

Barr, pp. 61-81

Peterson, pp. 57-71

October 4 The Worship Scroll, 6.1-7.17

**Read:**

Yeatts, pp. 121-153

Barr, pp. 81-88

Peterson, pp. 72-86

October 11 Module Week - NO CLASS

October 18 The Worship Scroll, 8.1-9.20

**Read:**

Yeatts, pp. 154-180

Barr, pp. 88-93

Peterson, pp. 87-101

October 25 - The Worship Scroll, 10.1-11.19

**Read:**

Yeatts, pp. 181-214

Barr, pp. 93-100  
 Peterson, pp. 102-116

November 1 The War Scroll, 12.1-13.18

**Read:**  
 Yeatts, pp. 215-260  
 Barr, pp. 101-128  
 Peterson, pp. 117-134

November 8 The War Scroll, 14.1-20

**Read:**  
 Yeatts, pp. 261-281  
 Barr, pp. 128-132

November 15 The War Scroll, 15.1-16.21

**Read:**  
 Yeatts, pp. 282-309  
 Barr, pp. 132-133  
 Peterson, pp. 135-150

November 22 The War Scroll, 17.1-18.24

**Read:**  
 Yeatts, pp. 310-347  
 Barr, pp. 133-136

November 29 The War Scroll, 19.1-20.15

**Read:**  
 Yeatts, pp. 348-395  
 Barr, pp. 136-140  
 Peterson, pp. 141-167

December 6 The War Scroll, 21.1-22.21

**Read:**  
 Yeatts, pp. 396-434  
 Barr, pp. 140-149  
 Peterson, pp. 168-194

December 13 The Theology of the Apocalypse

### **Course Requirements**

1. Attendance and participation in class.
2. The reading of the assigned biblical text and readings for each class.

3. An exegetical and theological reflections notebook. Each student is expected to submit a weekly reflections notebook which records the student's thoughts, reflections, questions on the previous class lecture and discussions, the assigned readings for each class, responses to the assigned questions for the class.
4. Lead a seminar session on the designated text unit, e.g., 6.1-7.17.
5. A 10-15 page research paper on one of the images or symbols in the text unit of the seminar (i.e., lamb, lion, 24 elders, angel, beast, white robe, 666). See the "Outline for the Paper" for details about the content of the paper. Each student will present a summary of his/her findings re the image/symbol as part of the seminar session. **Paper due:** December 6.

### Course Grading

Class attendance and participation	10%
Reflections Notebook	30%
Seminar Session	30%
Image/Symbol Paper	30%

### Course Notes

Academic Policies. MBBS academic policies are described in the *Academic Handbook*, which is updated annually. The *Handbook* includes policies on extensions for incomplete course work, academic integrity, non-discriminatory language, academic appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with MBBS academic policies and to follow them. Copies of the *Academic Handbook* are available at the reception desks at MBBS.

Inclusive Language. Inclusive and/or non-discriminatory language is expected in the class and in all assignments.

Evaluation. The Research Paper will be assessed according to the following categories: appropriateness, clarity, comprehensiveness, creativity, argumentation, form, and care (see *Appendix A*).

All assignments must be completed to be eligible to earn a passing grade for the course.

Please note that "student work will be evaluated by two standards: a) by what is considered the appropriate level of graduate performance, and b) by comparison with work submitted in a given class" (*Academic Handbook*).

The letter grade conversions follow the MBBS Grading Template: A (100-94%), A- (93-90%), B+ (89-87%), B (86-83%), B- (82-80%), C+ (79-77%), C (76-73%), C- (72-70%), and F (69-0%).

The performance expectations are as follows: "A 'B' grade is the baseline. A 'B' grade means the student is doing satisfactory work. The 'B+' or higher grade indicates that the student has

exceeded the baseline performance standard. The ‘C’ grade indicates that the student has not achieved the baseline level” (Academic Handbook).

Due dates. All assignments are to be submitted on or before the due dates posted in the syllabus. Late assignments will be graded down 2% for each day (or part thereof) after the due date. The late penalty may not apply to students who have a documented emergency which prevents them from submitting the assignment on the due date. Check with the instructor to see if alternative arrangements can be made.

Formatting specifications. Any of the three standard citation styles is acceptable (Chicago, APA, or MLA). Choose one and follow it consistently. Consult *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1999) which is in the Reference Section (Ref PN 147.S26) or Slade’s, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 2000).

## APPENDIX A: EVALUATION TEMPLATE

EVALUATION of *Exegetical Paper* for \_\_\_\_\_  
 (student)

\_\_\_\_\_ APPROPRIATENESS (re: compliance with assignment criteria)

suitable/fitting/apropos

irrelevant/unrelated/improper

\_\_\_\_\_ ARGUMENTATION (re: development of topic/arrangement of critique)

reasonable/coherent/sequential

rambles/disjointed/illogical

\_\_\_\_\_ CLARITY (re: style of writing)

flowing/lucid/succinct

broken/obscure/repetitive

\_\_\_\_\_ COMPREHENSIVENESS (re: coverage of topic or depth of analysis)

thorough/extensive/deep

superficial/sketchy/shallow

\_\_\_\_\_ CREATIVITY (re: reader reception)

novel/fresh/innovative

ordinary/average/routine

\_\_\_\_\_ FORM (re: spelling, grammar, diction, and citation conventions)

correct/accurate/appropriate

incorrect/sloppy/inappropriate

\_\_\_\_\_ CARE (re: quality of presentation)

tidy/legible/impressive

untidy/illegible/distracting

Note: Late assignments will be penalized 2% for each day (or part thereof) after due date.