



Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) 752

Special Topics Graduate Seminar—Apocalyptic Literature in Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins (Revision 17)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode: [Paced study](#)  . Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits: 3

Area of study: Arts

Prerequisite: None

Precluded: None

Faculty: [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Notes: This course is applicable to [Cultural Studies](#) , [Heritage and Social History](#) , and [Literary Studies](#) .

Overview

This course examines the origins and development of apocalyptic literature and thought from ancient Judaism and early Christianity, tracing the imaginative, political, and theological patterns that shaped some of the most influential and controversial writings in the Western religious tradition. Drawing on historically oriented and multidisciplinary approaches, the course surveys canonical and non-canonical texts from the 3rd century BCE through the 2nd century CE, situating them within their political, economic, and religious contexts and engaging them through digital encounters with manuscript and archaeological evidence.

The course also takes seriously the complex and ongoing afterlife of ancient apocalypticism—its inspiring visions and its tragic appropriations—glimpsing into how these ancient texts have continued to animate movements, interpretations, and expressions into the present. Students progress through content and engage in seminar-style forum discussions.

The course is well suited to students interested in the historical origins of religious ideas and literature, the formation of Jewish and Christian traditions, the enduring impact of ancient thought on western culture, and a general interest in historical and cultural studies.

Outline

MAIS 752 covers the following topics and seminars:

Week 1: Welcome, Icebreakers, and AI Module

Week 2: Historical Critical Studies on Judaism and Christianity

Week 3: Encountering Apocalyptic: Outlooks, Genre, and Movements

Week 4: Origins and Architecture of Apocalyptic Writings

Week 5: Primary Text Seminar 1: “Little Apocalypses” in the Book of Isaiah and Gospel of Mark

Week 6: Apocalyptic Enoch Traditions: Scriptural Exegesis, Origins of Evil, and Ancestral Authority

Week 7: Primary Text Seminar 2: The Enochic Book of Giants

Week 8: The Dynamic Daniel Tradition

Week 9: Dead Sea Scrolls: Apocalyptic Literature, Expectations, and Movements

Week 10: Primary Text Seminar 3: Visions of Amram, Community Rule, and Charter for Israel in the Last Days

Week 11: Study Break

Week 12: Apocalyptic Elements of the Jesus Movement and Christian Origins

Week 13: Apocalypses in the Aftermath: 4 Ezra and Revelation

Week 14: Open Forum on the Ongoing History of Apocalypses/
Apocalypticism

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- 1. Interpret apocalyptic literature in its historical and cultural contexts.**
Students will develop this proficiency through opportunities to analyze a range of canonical and non-canonical apocalyptic texts from ancient Judaism and early Christianity using historically grounded, multidisciplinary frameworks, situating writings within their political, social, economic, and religious environments.
- 2. Critically evaluate scholarly approaches to apocalypticism.** Students will develop this proficiency through opportunities to assess major interpretive methods and debates in the study of apocalyptic literature and thought, articulating well-reasoned positions through discussion, written analysis or creative work, and independent research.
- 3. Trace the formation and development of apocalyptic traditions.**
Students will develop this proficiency through opportunities to identify the literary, scribal, and ideological roots of apocalyptic writings and track how key figures, texts, and traditions evolved across ancient communities and collections.
- 4. Examine the reception and cultural impact of apocalypticism.**
Students will develop this proficiency through opportunities to investigate how ancient apocalyptic literature has been interpreted, appropriated, and transformed across history into the present, engaging

critically with both the generative and harmful dimensions of its reception in Western culture.

5. Communicate historical and cultural analysis in multiple formats.

Students will develop this proficiency through opportunities to produce original research and present scholarly insights through written and creative work, seminar discussion, and a capstone mini-conference format, demonstrating the capacity to engage academic and broader audiences with evidence-based analysis.

Evaluation

To receive **credit** [↗](#) for MAIS 752, students must participate in ongoing discussion activities, complete and submit all assignments, and achieve a minimum grade of **C– (60 percent)** [↗](#) for the entire course.

A student's final grade in the course will be based on the marks achieved for the following activities.

Activity	Weight
Participation in Forum Discussions	30%
Assignment 1: Responsible, Ethical, and Transparent Use of AI – Module Reflection	5%
Assignment 2: Documentary Film Review	15%
Assignment 3: Course Reflection	10%
Assignment 4: Open Project	40%
Total	100%

Materials

Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. 3rd ed. Eerdmans, 2016.

Murphy, Kelly J. and Justin Jeffcoat Schedtler, eds. *Apocalypses in Context: Apocalyptic Currents through History*. 2nd ed. Fortress, 2025.

Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- › [Focus Areas](#) 
- › [Courses](#) 
- › [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 17, September 1, 2026

Updated September 22, 2026

View [previous revision](#) 