



School of Theology and Christian Ministry
BIB 3035 – New Testament Books and Early Churches:
Sermon, Letter, and Apocalypse

Fall 2019 Focus: Johannine Epistles and Revelation

Meeting days: Tuesday and Thursday	Instructor: Dr. Kara Lyons-Pardue
Meeting times: 1:30 – 2:45 P.M.	Phone: (619) 849-2989 Office Location: Smee 203
Meeting location: Smee Wesleyan Center	E-mail: karalyons-pardue@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: Tuesday, Dec 17, 1:30 – 4:00 P.M.	Office hours: Mon. & Wed., 9:00–9:30 A.M. and Thu., 11:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M. (* or by appointment)

PLNU Mission: To Teach – To Shape – To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Description: “This course studies the New Testament books about and addressed to the general church—Acts, Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles, the Johannine Epistles, and/or Revelation—and focuses in on a particular portion of these books. What are the varieties of expressions of faithfulness to God and God’s own faithfulness expressed in early Christian churches? How do these foster the diversity of Christian communities today?”

Specific Course Description: Our study will follow three major trajectories for interpretation:

- (1) Content of the Johannine Epistles and Revelation, including themes, literary scope, imagery, and message;
- (2) Social Context of Revelation, in particular, and the genre of other ancient apocalypses; and
- (3) Theology: divine and human faithfulness as expressed in the portrait of Jesus, worship of the Triune God, and vision for the Church, world, and *kosmos* (universe).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to ...

1. Describe themes and content of the Johannine Epistles and Revelation;
2. Analyze and engage the historical, symbolic, and theological world of the focal biblical texts;
3. Interpret the key messages for a contemporary audience, particularly church communities; and
4. Develop a portrait of Jesus in Revelation’s portrayal that is in harmony with the collective biblical witness.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. A Bible in the NRSV translation (to be brought to class daily).
2. Brian K. Blount, *Revelation* (The New Testament Library; WJK, 2009). ISBN 9780664221218
3. Michael J. Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship & Witness* (2017). ISBN 9781606085608

RECOMMENDED:

4. Judith M. Lieu, *I, II, III John: A Commentary*. (The New Testament Library; WJK, 2008). ISBN 9780664239527
5. Ben C. Blackwell, *Reading Revelation in Context*. (Zondervan, 2019 **not yet released). ISBN 9780310566236

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

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PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the school urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussion, and in their writings. Thus, terms like "man" or "mankind" or the pronoun "he," should not be used to refer to all humans. Instead "people," "humanity," "humans," and "he or she" better acknowledge women as full persons.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Students are encouraged to use technology, especially the Canvas site, for learning and communication *outside* of class. In fact, students should be checking their email daily to receive timely course-related communication. *In class, however, the professor has banned the use of electronic devices*, except by permission or in the case of specific need. (Contact the prof. for accommodations.) For the sake of optimal student learning, and knowing the distractions available with just one click, you may not use laptops, iPads, or any mobile phone during class.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

This course's final exam is **Tuesday, Dec 17, 1:30 – 4:00 P.M.** Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due, as indicated by the schedule below. A point-deduction of 10% per day will be applied to any assignment turned in late.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

This course will be graded on a 1,000-point scale. The following are the grading categories and point-values:

Assessment Item	% of Total GRADE
Attendance & Classroom Participation	15% = 150 points
Preparation and Comprehension	30% = 300 points
Investigative Studies and Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dictionary Abstract & Presentation (75 pts) Apocalypse Summary & Presentation (125 pts) City Study & Presentation (100 pts) 	30% = 300 points
Application: Paper and Video on Christocentric Reading of Revelation	25% = 250 points

Attendance & Classroom Participation is worth 15% of the student's total grade. Seminar-style classes like this stand or fall based on student investment and participation. Student learning is enhanced by the combined efforts of student reading and research (covered in the next two assessment items), an expert guide through the material (the professor), and student engagement in the learning experience. Showing up daily is part of this grade, but distracted or disruptive attendance will be penalized and count as half-absences. Come ready to learn and engage the subject matter. The semester's points will be awarded according to this scale:

Unexcused Absences:	0	1-2	3	4	5+
Total Points:	150 pts	135 pts	105 pts	75 pts	0 pts

Fulfills Outcomes #1-4.

Preparation and Comprehension is required in order for our engaged class participation to have any substance. It is so foundational that it is valued at 25% of the student's grade, total (250 pts). Based on biblical and secondary assigned readings, the student's "readiness" for class will be assessed before proceeding each class. The first 15-minute portion of nearly every class will be a two-part quiz over assigned readings. For up to 10 min., each student takes a *brief* (3-5 questions) comprehension quiz individually without books or notes (iRAT). The next 5 minutes, the students will collaborate in teams to take the same quiz again with access to hard-copy resources (tRAT). If the earns a 65% or higher on the day's iRAT, s/he receives her/his team's collaborative score (tRAT). Student's lowest 2 will be dropped; Professor reserves the right to cancel up to 2 other scheduled i/tRATs.

Fulfills Outcomes #1-2.

The **Investigative Studies and Reports** (300 pts total) will give students opportunities to study three subjects in greater detail and resource classmates with their findings. Because of the brevity of these studies, the research will be limited and given specific guidelines. Each will represent the early stages of a research inquiry and initial use and synthesis of resources, rather than the proof and conclusion of a thesis.

Fulfills Outcomes #1-3.

The three studies will be quite different:

- (1) Dictionary Abstract and Presentation (75 pts) requires the student to summarize briefly an assigned entry from the *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (unless otherwise specified), chosen from a list of instructor-approved options. See Assignment Guide for more information. *Dates will vary based on student choices.*
- (2) Apocalypse Summary and Presentation (125 pts): In this assignment each student will be responsible for reading and studying a different ancient apocalypse or part thereof. The student must read their primary source—the appointed apocalypse—and gain expert interpretive help through our course textbooks Blount and Gorman, an additional approved commentary, Bible Dictionary article and/or scholarly article (the professor will assist with recommendations). The presentation requirements will be specified in further assignment details. *Dates varied.*
- (3) City Study and Presentation (100 points) is a research project that focuses on the ancient context for reading Revelation, but also makes forays into contemporary contexts. Using known aspects of a specific location referenced in Revelation, students will compare and contrast "what the Spirit is saying to the churches" to what we can know about its ancient circumstances and inhabitants. Present-day connections to the situations and messages will be suggested in the final portion of the paper. Students will be responsible for presenting the most pertinent information regarding their ancient city in a class session.

Application: Paper and Video on Christocentric Reading of Revelation (200 pts) is the pinnacle of the coursework; a final two-part project. As a culminating activity, this staggered-deadline paper and video should show evidence of reading and class discussion from throughout the semester (incl. insights from the Johannine Epistles). The reflection on the book's message should be constructive rather than merely descriptive. What is the message to be proclaimed from the Revelation of Jesus Christ given through his servant John for our contemporary contexts? What challenges does Revelation pose for today's churches? How can Revelation's symbolic universe be interpreted and imaginatively engaged in our world to point us to the Alpha and Omega? How should Christ be proclaimed? The paper is due first (see course schedule); feedback from the paper should be evident in the final 5-minute video in which each student expresses the theological vision of Revelation *as if* to their/a particular church context. *Fulfills Outcome #4.*

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Student classroom leadership will entail responsibilities for the Tues. class. Many student presentations will take place in Thurs. classes. This schedule will surely be altered frequently (esp. for other presentations), but what follows should provides the basic pattern for class sessions:

Tuesday	Thursday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer iRAT/tRAT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>: 15-20 min. (including discussion) Big questions (L-P & Student observations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer iRAT/tRAT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>: 15-20 min. (including discussion) Dictionary Article(s) Presentations Focal Texts and Guided Exegesis (L-P)

Wk	Date	"R" = <i>Have read by class time</i> ; For better comprehension, students should look up answers to ?s in the Rev. commentary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = iRAT/tRAT; <input type="checkbox"/> Assignments Due	CLASS TOPIC	<input type="checkbox"/> Dictionary Abstract & Presentation Due (selected students)
1	Thurs, Sept 5		INTRODUCTION TO BIB 3035; PERILS AND PROMISE OF JOHANNINE EPISTLES AND REVELATION	→ <i>ASSIGN ABSTRACTS</i>
2	Tues, Sept 10	R: 1 John (with care, attending to themes & questions) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Practice R: Margaret Mitchell, "John, Letters of" [NIDB]	JOHANNINE EPISTLES DUALISTIC IMAGERY	<input type="checkbox"/> EXAMPLE: Jew & Jews in the NT
	Thurs, Sept 12	R: 2 & 3 John <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 R: Judith M. Lieu, "Introduction" (pp. 1-25)		→ <i>ASSIGN STUDENT LEADERSHIP</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Antichrist
3	Tues, Sept 17	R: Revelation Ch. 1–5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 R: Blount, "Genre: Apocalyptic" (pp. 14-20) R: Gorman, pp. 1-9	OVERVIEW: INTRODUCTION TO APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE	→ <i>ASSIGN APOCALYPSES</i>
	Thurs, Sept 19	R: Revelation Ch. 6–15 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 R: Gorman, pp. 10-30	OVERVIEW: SYMBOLISM IN APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Dualism & Gnosticism
4	Tues, Sept 24	R: Revelation Ch. 16–21 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 R: Gorman, pp. 31-60	OVERVIEW: VISIONARY STRUCTURE OF APOCALYPTIC	<input type="checkbox"/> Angel
	Thurs, Sept 26	R: Gorman, pp. 61-80 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 R: Blount, "Introduction" (pp. 1-14) R: Eugene Peterson, "Last ... Scripture" (15pp)	APPROACHES TO INTERPRETING REVELATION'S SYMBOLIC WORLD	

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5	Tues, Oct 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Apocalypse Studies DUE & In-Class Presentations	THE WEEK OF MANY APOCALYPSES: SCOPE, VARIETY, AND COMMON FEATURES OF ANCIENT APOCALYPTIC	
	Thurs, Oct 3			→ <i>ASSIGN CITIES</i>
6	Tues, Oct 8	R: Revelation 1–2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 R: Gorman, pp. 81-101	MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH	<input type="checkbox"/> Roman Empire
	Thurs, Oct 10	R: Revelation 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7 R: Blount, pp. 27-39; "Letters" (pp.47-48)		
7	Tues, Oct 15	R: Revelation 4–5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8 R: Blount, pp. 84-85, 95-118	THE SCROLL AND THE LAMB; WORSHIP IN REVELATION	<input type="checkbox"/> Book & Scribe & Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Throne & Lamb
	Thurs, Oct 17	R: Gorman, pp. 102-115 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9 R: Peterson, "Last ... Worship" (15pp)		
8	Tues, Oct 22	<input type="checkbox"/> City Studies DUE & In-Class Presentations	CONTEXT MATTERS, THEN AND NOW	
	Thurs, Oct 24			
9	Tues, Oct 29	R: Revelation 6–7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10 R: Gorman, pp. 116-137 R: Blount, "The Opening ..." (pp.120-121), "The 144,000" (pp.144-147)	THE SEALS AND THE 144,000; NUMBER SYMBOLISM	<input type="checkbox"/> Tribe & Twelve <input type="checkbox"/> Seven & Numbers, Numbering
	Thurs, Oct 31	R: Revelation 8–9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 R: Blount, "Judgment as ..." (pp.171-172)	JUDGMENT, SUFFERING, AND THE KINGDOM	
10	Tues, Nov 5	R: Revelation 10–11 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12 R: Gorman, pp. 138-159 R: Blount, "A Pause ..." (p.186), Comm. on 10:4-7 (pp.192-197)	SEVEN PLAGUES, SEVEN BOWLS	<input type="checkbox"/> Nero <input type="checkbox"/> Domitian & Emperor Worship <input type="checkbox"/> Zion
	Thurs, Nov 7	R: Revelation 12–14 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13 R: Blount, pp. 223-232; "Resistance" through Comm. on 12:3 (pp.242-249); on 13:18 (pp.261-263); "God strikes ..." (p.263)	DRAGONS, ANGELS, AND BEASTS! OH MY!	
11	Tues, Nov 12	R: Revelation 15–16 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 14 R: Blount, Comm. on 16:1-7 (pp.293-299)	WRATH; WOMEN & SYMBOLISM IN APOCALYPTIC THOUGHT	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex, Sexuality
	Thurs, Nov 14	R: Revelation 17–18 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 15 R: Blount, "Exposing the Great ..." (pp.309-310); Comm. on 17:9 (pp.319-320); Comm. on 18:9-10 (pp.332-334)	BYE BYE, BABYLON THE WHORE!	
12	Tues, Nov 19	R: Revelation 19–20 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16 R: Blount, "Hallelujah" (pp.338-339); Comm. on 19:1-2 (pp.340-343); "Rider" (pp.348-349); Comm. on 20:4 (pp.364-367)	JUDGMENT, DEFEAT, THE MILLENNIUM ... HALLELUJAH	<input type="checkbox"/> Heaven & Dead, Abode of the <input type="checkbox"/> Satan <input type="checkbox"/> Millenium [ABD]
	Thurs, Nov 21	R: Popular (but not technical nor ideal) e-resource from Blue Letter Bible <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 17 https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/mill.cfm R: LeAnn Flesher, "Historical Development of Premillennial Dispensationalism"	END TIME THEOLOGY AND "MILLENNIAL" VIEWPOINTS	

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13	Tues, Nov 26*	<i>Field Trip (details to come): Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting 2019 in San Diego</i>		
	Thurs, Nov 28	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK		
14	Tues, Dec 3	R: Revelation 21–22. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18 R: Gorman, pp. 160-175 R: Blount, Comm. on 21:1-8 (pp.374-383)	IN THE END, GOD IS WITH US	<input type="checkbox"/> Jerusalem
	Thurs, Dec 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Application: Paper DUE & In-Class Reflection		
15	Tues, Dec 10	R: Gorman, pp. 176-190 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19 R: Peterson, "Last Words" (9pp)	JESUS IN REVELATION; REVELATION'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES	
	Thurs, Dec 12	→ Theological Reflection, Workshopping the Application Videos		

PLNU FINAL EXAMINATION WEEK: December 16-20, 2019

→ **OUR FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, Dec 17, 1:30 – 4:00 P.M.**

"Worship is ... an act of rehearsal. It is an anticipation of things to come. It is the moment at which we are reminded that our lives and our world have a goal, and that this goal is that day when every nation and tribe and people and language will worship God and the Lamb. It must be a foretaste, within our small community of worship, of that great city, the New Jerusalem, which John saw coming down from heaven, from God. It is practice for the Kingdom. It is a foretaste of the Reign of God."

– Justo L. Gonzalez, *For the Healing of the Nations: The Book of Revelation in an Age of Cultural Conflict* (Orbis, 1999), p. 109.

* This is among a list of ways that Gonzalez connects *worship* to Revelation.