B-777: The Book of Revelation  
Fall 2012  
Ronald Allen

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**Purposes of the Course**
The following are the purposes of this course: 1) to give the student and opportunity to work toward developing a pattern of exegesis of Biblical texts that the student can use in weekly parish ministry, especially in preparation for Bible study and preaching; 2) to work toward an exegetical methodology by engaging the Book of Revelation from the standpoints of historical criticism and literary criticism; 3) to consider theological and hermeneutical issues raised by the Bible through considering these issues as they are occasioned by the Book of Revelation; 4) to reflect on the origins, significance and pastoral response to apocalyptic movements of the past and present; 5) to assess the strengths and limitations of the Book of Revelation to the Contemporary Christian community.

**Class Plan**
The class will include lecture from the professor, reading and discussion. After two weeks of introductory considerations, we will move seriatim through the Book of Revelation. Each student needs to follow the syllabus carefully. Most weeks, the student will do a brief weekly paper, read in the commentaries concerning the text for the week and meditate on the passage. The student is urged to pay most direct attention to the Book of Revelation itself. Secondary sources are of value in illumining the text, but interaction with them should not substitute for interacting with the text itself.

**Assignments**
The course is organized around the following assignments.

1. A quiz on the content of the Book of Revelation on September 11. The quiz will consist of 50 questions (True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching). (50 points)

2. Short paper (3 pages) on James M. Efird, *Left Behind: What the Bible Really Says about the End Times.* Due September 18. (50 points)

3. An in-class exegesis of about 20-25 minutes, developed according to the guidelines in Appendix 1. Please turn in a draft of the presentation (it doesn’t have to be polished) and a bibliography at the beginning of the hour on the day the presentation is made. Note the bibliographical requirement in Appendix 1: look up at least 2 articles in journals, 4 articles in Bible dictionaries and 2 commentaries, and 1 of the one-volume commentaries with special focus. (100 points)

   We should have one (at most two) exegesis presentation in each class period.

4. Every student will give a report on a chapter from David Rhoads, ed., *From Every People and Nation: The Book of Revelation in Intercultural Perspective.* (25 points)
5. Four (4) weekly worksheets that can be turned in during any of the weeks between September 18 and December 4. (Note: while students may choose the 4 weeks in which they turn in papers, students are urged to begin this process early in the semester since papers will not be accepted on passages after we have discussed them in class. Papers are due on the day the passage is discussed in class. Write no more than three (3) pages per paper. (100 points each, total of 400 points)

6. A ten-minute creative expression of the passage on which you make your presentation. This expression could be a sermon, a Bible lesson, an artistic rendering (e.g. a painting, a line drawing, a sculpture, a play, a song or hymn), an analysis of a book or movie or TV show with an apocalyptic theme, an explanation of a work of art (e.g. a painting or a wood cutting) of an image of a passage from Book of Revelation. (50 points)

7. Exegetical paper due December 11. The paper should be no more than 12 pages, double spaced, in twelve-point type. Note the bibliographical requirements for the in-class exegetical presentation (class requirement #3). (300 points)

Submit Written Work in a Word-File by the Beginning of the Hour

Please submit all written work as Word files (attachments) emailed to ron.allen@cts.edu.

All written work is due by the beginning of the class hour on the day on which it is assigned. Please do not email your assignments to me from the class period in which they are being discussed. After the beginning of the hour, the assignment is late.

Grades

Grades are based on a total of 1000 points for the semester.

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Grades are awarded according to the following criteria (adopted by the CTS Faculty, 2012):

A = truly superior work according to the declared purposes and criteria
A- = very good work, but not quite reaching excellence on all purposes and criteria
B+ = good work, beyond basic expectations
B = competent work, clearly and solidly fulfilling basic purposes and criteria
B- = satisfies the basic purposes and criteria in a minimal way
C+ = meets many of the basic expectations but does not satisfy some significant purposes and criteria
C = meets some of the purposes and criteria but leaves several unfulfilled
C - meets few purposes of the assignment and satisfies few of the criteria
D = student did something but does not meet the purposes and criteria of the assignment
F = work does not deserve credit or was not turned in
**Required Books**

The HarperCollins NRSV Study Bible with the Apocrypha
James M. Efird, *Left Behind: What the Bible Really Says about the End Times*
David Rhoads, ed., *From Every People and Nation*

**Recommended Books**

David Aune, *Revelation*, Word Biblical Commentary
George R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*
Allen Boesken, *Comfort and Protest*
Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*
Ibid., *Invitation to Revelation*
Ibid., *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*
J. M. Ford, *Revelation, Anchor Bible*
Larry Paul Jones and Jerry L. Sumney, *Preaching Apocalyptic Texts*
Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*
G. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation to John*
Pablo Richard, *Apocalypse: A People’s Commentary on the Book of Revelation*
J.P.M. Sweet, *Revelation*
C. H. Talbert, *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of John*

**One-Volume Commentaries with Special Foci**

Tokunboh Adeyamo, *Africa Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary Written by 70 African Scholars*
Curtis Paul Deyoung, Wilda C. Gaffney, Leticia Guardiola-Saenz and George E. Tinker, *The People’s Bible*
Curtis Paul Deyoung, Wilda C. Gaffney, Leticia Guardiola-Saenz and George E. Tinker, *The People’s Companion to the Bible*
Cain H. Felder, ed., *The Original African Heritage Study Bible* (in Reference)
Deryn Guest, Robert E. Goss, Mona West, and Thomas Bohache, *The Queer Bible Commentary* (in Reference)
Samuel Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the NT*
Bruce J. Malina, *Social Science Commentary on Acts*
Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*
Bruce J. Malina, *Social Science Commentary on Paul*
Carol Newsom and Sharon Ringe, eds., *Woman’s Bible Commentary* (in Reference)
Ann Nyland, *Study New Testament for Lesbians, Gays, Bi and Transgender with Extensive Notes on Greek Word Meaning and Context*
Daniel Patte, *The Global Bible Commentary* (in Reference)
Elizabeth Schuessler Fiorenza, ed., *Searching the Scriptures* (in Reference)
Fernando F. Segovia and R.S. Sugirtharajah, eds., *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*
**Time per week**

The CTS catalogue says that a student should plan to spend 2 hours outside of class for every hour inside. Since our class meets for 3 hours each week, you can expect to spend up to (but no more than) 6 hours *per week* outside of class. If you have trouble confining your efforts to six hours outside of class, either a) rejoice in your enthusiasm and energy for the course, or b) speak to the instructor about adjusting the weekly expectation.
Course Schedule

Sept 4  Prayer
Welcome to the course
Introduction to the course and selection of exegesis assignments.
Questions from class members that they would like to address in the course. Please come prepared with a question concerning the interpretation of Revelation that you can state in class. Continue discussion of the origins of apocalyptic literature and theology.

Lecture and Discussion
Apocalypse as genre
Apocalyptic movements and their sociological origins
Apocalypticism as an interpretation of life
Apocalypticism as social criticism (especially of Empire)

Lecture and Discussion: origins and literature of apocalyptic
Proto-apocalyptic (III Isaiah, Zechariah 9-14, Daniel 7-12)
Jewish apocalypticism 300 BCE-200CE (e.g., Esdras, Enoch)
Christian apocalypticism (e.g., I Thess. 4:16-5:5, Romans 8, Mark 13)

Questions of Introduction concerning the Book of Revelation
1. Who wrote it?
2. When was it written?
3. To whom was it written?
4. Where was it written?
5. What kind of literature is it?
6. What are its message and purposes?

Read: Thompson, pp. 4-44; Blount, pp. 3-26.

Sept. 11  Quiz on the content of Revelation
Discussion of Appendix 1 (and trip to the CTS Library): Exegetical Method for preparing your presentation and paper on Revelation.
This is a key discussion.
Read: Rhoads, From Every People and Nation, pp. 1-26. Note the importance of this material to Phase One in Appendix One.

Sept. 18  The Ruling Christ in the Midst of the Church
Revelation 1:1-20
Due: Short paper on James M. Efird, Left Behind: What the Bible Really Says about the End Times.
The paper should include the following:
1. A brief statement of Efird’s purpose in writing the book;
2. A description of Darbyism, including when it got started and its main teachings;
3. How Efird responds to Darbyism.
4. An assessment of what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the book;
4. A personal pastoral response in which you indicate (a) whether you have encountered Darbyism in congregations and (b) how you think this book might help you.

Note: From this point on, please read in the commentaries on each passage that is assigned for the day. This will help you with the worksheets.

Weekly Worksheet

(If you do the weekly paper, please respond to the following questions.) (Do not spend more than six hours on this project.)

1. Revelation 1:3 claims that the end of the present age of history is “near.” What did John have in mind by this?
2. Where else in the book do you find a formula similar to the one in 1:8. What does the content of this formula suggest? Can you contrast it with a similar formula in Greek religion? How does its placement in Revelation influence your reading of the book?
3. Select one of the images in 1:12-16 (e.g., long robe, eyes like a flame of fire) and write a paragraph exploring how the Jewish background enriches your understanding of the image here. The Bible dictionaries (e.g., HBD, IDB, TDNT, EDNT, NIDB) will be of help.
4. John receives the vision of the ruling Christ in worship (1:9-16). Do you encounter this Christ in worship? When? How can you help your parishioners recognize—and feel—the presence of this Living One?
5. Substitute one of the above questions with your own. State it, and respond to it.

Lecture and Discussion: Preaching and teaching the book of Revelation.

Read: Pay special attention to Greg Carey, “Teaching and Preaching the Book of Revelation in the Church,” Review and Expositor 98 (2001), pp. 87-100. We will discuss in class the questions and issues that Carey raises:

1. What is ultimately real? (p. 91)
2. From what location in culture do we hear Revelation? (p. 92)
3. To what degree do we regard society as idolatrous? (p. 93)
4. How should the [Eurocentric] church in the US address its position of privilege? (p. 94)
5. What modes of authority are appropriate for Christian discourse? (p. 95)
6. To What degree are we willing to read against the text? (p. 97)

As you have time, read: Fred B. Craddock, “Preaching the Book of Revelation,” Interpretation 40 (1986), pp. 270-82 (on library reserve)
Larry Paul Jones and Jerry L. Sumney, Preaching Apocalyptic Texts, pp. 25-43

Sept. 25  The Letters to the Seven Churches
Revelation 2:1-3:22

Weekly Worksheet
1. The number seven plays a prominent role in the Book of Revelation. Research this number in the Jewish tradition with the help of your concordance and the Bible dictionaries. What does this use of the number seven evoke in the hearts and minds of the reader? How does John intend for us to understand the mention of seven churches?
2. Research the geography of Laodicea. Why does the geography of Laodicea suit it especially well for its message?
3. Each letter contains a word of judgment and a word of promise. Make a chart showing these. What do these letters suggest about the churches to which John wrote? (Boring may be a help here.)
4. Think about the congregation that you serve. Which of the seven churches is your congregation most like? (Be sensitive; do not automatically assume it is Laodicea!). Work hermeneutically from the appropriate passage in Revelation 2-3 to formulate a message to your congregation.
5. Substitute one of the above questions with your own. State it and respond to it.

Passages for possible in-class exegesis:
2: 1-7 (Ephesus) __________________________________________
2: 8-11 (Smyrna) __________________________________________
2:12-17 (Pergamum) ________________________________________
2:18-29 (Thyatira) _________________________________________
3: 1-6 (Sardis) ___________________________________________
3: 7-13 (Philadelphia) ______________________________________
3:14-22 (Laodicea) ________________________________________

Read: Rhoads, From Every People and Nation, pp. 47-61 __________

Oct 2  Worship in Heaven
Revelation 4:1-5:14

Weekly Worksheet
1. 4:9b and 4:11 are hymns. Scan the Book of Revelation looking for other hymns. (The concordance and the commentaries may be of help here.) What is the dominant tone of these hymns? Who is their focus? Why can John sing this way? Without spending too much time, using your growing knowledge of the Book of Revelation, can you cite at least three hymns or other pieces of Christian music that make use of the language and imagery of Revelation?
2. Pick one image from 4:1-6 and study it to learn what ideas and feelings the images evoke (from Jewish traditions). How does this enrich your sense of worship that is spoiled by this passage?
3. In 5:6-14, the dominant Christological image is that of a lamb. Where else in Revelation does this image appear? Do as much research on the image of the lamb as you have time. (The commentaries and Bible dictionaries will be friends.) Comment
on how John uses this image of Jesus as lamb in his Christology. Note especially the remarkable statement concerning the relationship between the lamb and the shepherd in 7:17. What does the image itself suggest about God’s power? Is it an appropriate way?

4. Substitute one of the above questions with one of your own. State it and respond to it.

Passages for possible in-class exegeses:

4: 1- 6 (around the throne) 
4: 7-11 (the creatures and the elders respond to God) 
5: 1- 5 (the one who can open the scroll) 
5: 6-14 (the lamb and the new song) 


Oct. 9

The Seven Seals
Revelation 6:1-8:1

Weekly Worksheet

1. These 2 chapters presuppose a thorough knowledge of Deuteronomy 28:1-68 with its teaching on blessing and curse. Read that section of Deuteronomy and then relate it to the interpretation of the opening of these seals, especially 6:1-8.

2. 6:12-13 describes a cosmic collapse. Put yourself in the frame of mind of a first century person. What do sun, moon and stars represent to you? What does their collapse signify?

3. The number 12 is significant in Jewish life. Explore the significance of this number and tell what it evokes when it is mentioned in 7:4ff.

4. 7:20ff suggests the importance of repentance. Is repentance mentioned elsewhere in this book? What is repentance in Revelation? Why is it important to John? Do you consider it still important in Christian life and community? Identify specific repentances that you can make.

5. Substitute one of the above questions with one of your own. State it and respond to it.

Passages for possible in-class exegeses:

6: 1- 8 (the first 4 seals) 
6: 9-11 (the 5th seal) 
6:12-17 (the 7th seal) 
7: 1- 3 (withholding damage from earth) 
7: 4- 8 (the 144,000) 
7: 9-17 (the multitude too great to number) 


Oct 16: Reading Week: No Class
Oct. 23  The Seventh Seal (and the Six Trumpets)  
Revelation 8:2-9:21

Weekly Worksheet


2. Locusts figure prominently in 9:1-21. Using your friendly concordance and Bible dictionaries, research the use of locusts in the Jewish traditions. What do they evoke when they appear in Revelation? Why are they especially fitting—or not fitting?

3. The book of Revelation repeatedly uses imagery that depicts the world of nature obeying God’s commands by blessing or cursing humankind or itself. In 8:2ff, for instance, nature inflicts the divine curse upon the cosmos and especially upon human beings. Do you believe that God does (or can) “use” nature in this way? How would you relate these images to natural disasters (e.g., tornadoes, hurricanes)? Are these latter indications of the curse? How do you interpret natural disaster in a theological frame of reference?

4. 8:3-5 is a passage that is part of the rationale that some denominations use to explain why they use incense in worship. State briefly the symbolism of incense in worship. Do you find that your sense of worship is increased by the use of sensory experiences? How? What are the pros and cons of using sensory things in worship?

5. Substitute a question of your own for one of the above and state it and respond to it.

Passages for possible in-class exegeses:

- 8: 3-5 (the prayers of the saints)
- 8: 6-13 (the first trumpets)
- 9: 1-12 (the 5th trumpet—the bottomless pit)
- 9:12-19 (the 6th trumpet—the terrible cavalry)


An Interlude in Heaven 
Revelation 10:1-11:19

Weekly Worksheet

1. Angels appear prominently in the Book of Revelation. With the help of your Bible dictionaries and concordance, trace the origins and functions of angels in the Jewish tradition. What important rules and purposes do they play? What do they represent? How do angels function in the Book of Revelation? How would you explain the contemporary significance of angels to your congregation?

2. I (Allen) think that the two witnesses in 11:1-13 suggest an aspect of the witness of the church to John. Who are the two witnesses and what is their ministry? Does this suggest a continuing purpose for the ministry of the church? What is the word of assurance to the church in this passage?

3. 11:15 is one of the most well known verses in the book of Revelation (and in the Bible). Where do you recognize it from, outside the Bible? Does Handel give the text an adequate exegesis of the feeling and tone of the passage with his music?
Beyond this, in what verse can John say that the world has become the dominion of God in Christ when there is still so much sin, suffering, pain and death? How would you help a congregation make sense of this claim?

4. Substitute one of the above questions with one of your own. State it and respond to it.

Passages for possible in-class exegesis:

10: 1-7 (the angel has the scroll)  
10: 8-11 (John eats the scroll)  
11: 1-3 (the angel measures the temple)  
11: 4-13 (the two witnesses)  
11: 14-19 (the elders worship and the ark opens)

Oct 30  The Woman, the Two Beasts and the Interlude
Revelation 12:1-14:20

Weekly Worksheet

1. A woman plays an important role in Revelation 12:1ff. Indeed, John uses the figure of woman several times in this book. Scan the book and locate these uses and describe them. Which roles are positive? Negative? How do these encourage or frustrate our perceptions of women and their roles in the church and world today?

2. 13:11-18 comments on religion in the world of John. What are the characteristics of this religious life? How does this religious life compare and contrast to that which John sees as true and lasting? How does the life of your Christian community compare and contrast to the one depicted in 13:11-18? What would it take to transform the weaknesses of your community into strengths?

3. The instructor is convinced that 14:7 is a description of the essence of Christian existence, according to John. What does it mean to “fear God” to John? What should the Revelator’s community do in order to give God glory? How well does John’s memory of Christian existence work for you. How is yours similar to John’s? Different?

4. Substitute one of the above questions with one of your own. State it and respond to it.

Passages for possible in-class exegeses.

12: 1-6, 14-17 (the woman and the child)  
12: 7-9 (war in heaven)  
12:10-12 (song of victory)  
13: 1-10 (the first heart)  
13:11-19 (the second heart)  
14: 1-5 (the singers of the new song)  
14: 6-13 (the coming judgment)  
14:14-20 (the final judgment)
Nov 7 The Seven Bowls of Wrath
Revelation 15:1-16:20

Weekly Worksheet
1. 15:2ff mentions a sea of glass. What is the symbolism of the sea in Jewish life? (You may consult the Bible dictionaries and the concordance.) Where does it appear in Revelation, and how is it used? Why does John stress that it is a sea of glass?
2. The temple is also a permeating symbol in Revelation. What does the mention of the temple evoke in the mind and heart of John’s readers? (Again, the concordance and Bible dictionaries will be a help.) What would evoke similar thoughts and feelings for you?
3. The contents of the bowls of wrath are similar to the plagues on Egypt. Do a quick comparison (16:1-10, Exodus 7-12, esp. 9:10-11, 7:17-21).
4. In the Book of Revelation, God is frequently pictured as pouring out the divine wrath on the earth. God causes people and nature to suffer and to be destroyed because they do not repent. Is this appropriate to your understanding of God? If so, how do you reconcile it with the nation of God’s love? If not, what do you take to be God’s relationship with evil powers and people? How is this “just” in the root sense of justice? How does this compare with conventional ideas of justice in the U.S.?
5. Substitute a question of your own for one of the above. State it and respond to it.

Passages for possible in-class exegeses:
15: 2-8 (scene in heaven – sea of glass temple)
16:1-10 (the first 5 bowls)
16:12-20 (the 6th bowl, demonic spirits)
16:17-20 (the 7th bowl, Babylon splits)

The Fate of Babylon
Revelation 17:1-18:24

Weekly Worksheet
1. What are the clues in 17:1-18 that John sees Rome as Babylon, the Great Whore? What is Rome’s relationship to the devil? Can you cite an example from our setting in which evil is embodied in an institution or in transpersonal forces? What would it take to displace the power of evil with the power of God that embodies love and justice?
2. Using the concordance and Bible dictionaries, trace why fornication is repugnant to God. How does John employ it as a symbol? Do you think it is an adequate symbol for today, or does it have problematic aspects?
3. Revelation 18 presupposes Isaiah 23-24, 47, Jeremiah 50-51, Ezekiel 26-27. How do the passages from the prophets illumine your reading of Revelation 18?
4. One way to think of themes of Revelation 18 is to see them reaching around spheres of life: politics (government), economics (business), transportation and communications (seafarers). Why have these arenas of life fallen under judgment? What have they failed to do? Do you see any parallels in our cultural setting?

5. Substitute one of your own questions for one of the above. State it and respond to it.

Passages for possible in-class exegeses:

17: 1-6 (Babylon described)
17: 8-18 (Babylon explained)
18: 1-10 (sins of Babylon’s government)
18:10-17a (sins of Babylon’s merchants)
18:17b-24 (sins of seafarers and others)

Report: Rhoads, *From Every People and Nation*, “‘Polishing the Unclouded Mirror: A Feminist Reading of Revelation 18:3’

Nov. 20  Thanksgiving Break (no class)

Nov 27  The Great Victory
Revelation 19:1-20:15

Weekly Worksheet

1. Chapter 19 celebrates the great victory of God over Babylon. Quickly read through the book of Revelation and review how God exercises power in this book. Is this appropriate, intelligible and plausible in the light of the ways in which you understand God and God’s working in the world?

2. 19:9 suggests the theme of the eschatological banquet. Can it also urge the reader to associate this banquet with the Lord’s Supper? If so, how would John have the reader think of (and experience) the Lord’s Supper?

3. Wine appears several times in the book of Revelation and may be indirectly suggested in 19:9. How does wine appear in Jewish literature, and what does it represent? In early Christian literature, especially the narratives of the last supper? How does it appear in Revelation? Can you associate aspects of Revelation’s understanding of wine with the Lord’s Supper? If so, how would this association affect your understanding and experience of the Lord’s Supper?

4. Revelation 20 presents a complicated scenario of the end of the world. This chapter concludes with a reference to the lake of fire, probably hell. Using your now well-worn Bible dictionaries and concordance, summarize when and why the Jewish people developed the idea of hell. What questions did it seek to answer? Do you find it a satisfactory answer? If not, how do you propose to help the members of your congregation think about the idea?

5. Substitute one of your own questions for one of the above. State it and respond to it.

Passages for possible in-class exegeses:

19: 1-10 (Heaven celebrates the victory of God)
19:11-16 (the rider on the white horse)
19:17-21 (the final battle) 

20: 1-16 (the first 1000 years) 

20: 7-15 the final destruction of evil) 


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**The New Jerusalem**


**Exegetical Paper Due**

**Weekly Worksheet**

1. Pick one of the elements of 21:10-22:5 and research it. What does it call forth in the minds and hearts of the readers? How does it contribute to the development of the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem.

2. Compare and contrast the life of your church with that of the church in 21:1-22:5. As a pastor, what are some steps you can take to move your congregation closer to the vision of Revelation?

3. Do you believe that God is bringing a renewed social world of the kind described in Revelation 21-22? If not, how can you help your congregation think about this passage? If so, how is God bringing it? What is God’s role? Our role?

4. In Revelation 22:17, John issues an invitation to the people of the world to come into the new city. “Come.” According to John, what is necessary to “come?” Can you commend these steps to people today? What, specifically, do they mean to people today? To you?

5. Substitute one of your own questions for one of the above. State it and respond to it.

**Discussion in class:**

21: 1-8 (God’s plan for the new world) 

21: 9-14 (the first part of the city) 

21:15-21 (more of the city) 

21:22-22:5 (still more of the city) 


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**Dec 4 Creative Expression: Please limit your presentation to 10 minutes.**

Using the passage on which you made your presentation, please offer a contemporary interpretation. The presentation could be a sermon, a Bible lesson, an analysis of an apocalyptic theme in a movie, an explanation of a piece of art depicting an image from the Book of Revelation, a hymn or song that you write yourself, a work of art (painting, dance, sculpture, etc.).

The ten minute time limit will be strictly enforced. At the end of ten minutes, you will have to stop.
Dec 11 Continue Creative Expressions from Dec 4

9.  
10.  
11.  
12.  
13.  
14.  
15.  
16.  

Dec. 18 Final Paper Due: (exegesis paper per instructions in Appendix 1)

Class discussion: pastoral strategies using the Book of Revelation in the church today.
APPENDIX 1

Possible Outline for the Preparation of an In-Class Exegetical Presentation on the Book of Revelation

Please remember that you need to include the following in your research, writing, and bibliography:

- 2 articles from journals;
- 4 articles from reputable Bible dictionaries (e.g., AB, EDNT, HCBD, IDB, MBD NIDB);
- 2 conventional commentaries;
- 2 commentaries from the one-volume commentaries with special foci.

The articles can usually be found by entering your passage into the ATLA database and by searching New Testament Abstracts.

The class presentation is a work in progress, a report on where your work is going. You have 45 minutes.

The exegetical paper needs to be a formal work in double-spaced twelve-point font. It should be no more than 12 pages (plus bibliography).

The goal of this presentation is to interpret a passage from Revelation in light of its place in the overall structure of the work by giving an account of what John asks the reader to believe and do.

This plan for exegesis unfolds in four phases:

Phase One: Becoming self-aware and self-critical

1. Tell us what attracted you to this text. What prompted you to want to do a presentation and paper on it.
2. In the paper (but not in the presentation) give the translation from which you are working. In your presentation (but not in your paper) read the text.
3. Identify your social location as our interpreter and how that location influences what you expect (perhaps unconsciously) in the text. Take account of your:
   - Gender
   - Race/ethnicity
   - Social class
   - Political affiliation
   - Theological orientation
   - Other mores and values

   Of help here, Rhoads, From Every People and Nation, “Reading Profile: Cultural Identity/Social Location/Personal Perspectives,” pp. 241-243

Phase Two: Getting the big historical and literary picture

Phase Three: Looking at the details of the text

Phase Four: Reflecting theologically on what the text asks the reader to believe and do.
4. **Without** consulting the interpretive helps, (commentaries, Bible dictionaries, scholarly journal articles, etc.) identify the most naïve associations and questions that come to mind: memories, expectations, questions. As the exegesis proceeds, you need to bring these naïve impressions into conversation with your developing discoveries.

**Phase Two: The Big Historical and Literary Picture**

5. Summarize in a paragraph or two your understanding of the historical context to which John wrote. What was going on in Rome and in the life of the congregations(s) that prompted John to write?

6. What do you take to be the overall message and purpose of the Book of Revelation for the congregations to whom John write? What did John want to happen in the congregations when they received this material?

7. The Book of Revelation is divided into several large literary units (e.g., the vision of the seven seals).
   a. Identify the larger unit in which your passage is found.
   b. What is the purpose of that larger segment in the overall purpose of the Book of Revelation? You may need to take account of the literary form of the larger setting.

8. How does your passage fit into the larger vision in which it is found? How does the larger passage help you understand the place and function of your passage? (NB: You may need to engage in the detailed study of the passage itself before you can really deal with these issues).

**Phase Three: Look at the Details of the Text (the heart of the assignment)**

The purpose of this part of the exegesis is to examine the following elements:

9. Go through the passage segment by segment. As you go identity the important details, including the following:
   a. setting, e.g., geographical details, the location of the text
   b. characters
   c. actions
   d. dialogue
   e. plot
   f. key words
   g. theological themes
   h. pay special attention to associations with passages from the Torah, Prophets and Writings and from other apocalyptic documents
   i. the response in the reader that is excited by the text.

My recommendation is that you not use the above list as the structure of this part of the presentation or paper but that you use the format of verse by verse commentary and integrate the above discussions into the flow of your paper. See No. 10 below.

Remember: no detail is too small or insignificant. “The artist gives us everything we need to know in order to interpret the work, and everything in the work is something we need to know.”
Note especially the background of the material in Judaism, in the Hebrew Bible and most especially in the Septuagint and in the pseudepigrapha and the apocrypha.

What feelings and ideas and actions would these elements have evoked in the minds of first century listeners?

Valuable helps:

- Anchor Bible Dictionary
- Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament
- Harper’s Bible Dictionary
- Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible
- Mercer Bible Dictionary
- New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible
- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

The commentaries and monographs

(Be careful, of course, not to think that because you have looked up a “dictionary definition” that you have caught John’s meaning!)

10. Using what you learned in number 9 (above), follow the action of the passage itself, being careful to note what happens to you, the reader, as you enter into the world of the passage.

Some questions that might help:

A. What is the setting and situation at the beginning of the text?
B. Who are the characters both expressly mentioned and implied?
C. What happens in the text? What is the plot? How does the text get from the beginning to the end?
D. What is the situation at the end?
E. With whom do you, the reader, identify as you read the text?
F. Are there surprises along the way? Difficulties that are not resolved at the end?
G. What is the effect of the movement on the heart and mind of the reader?

11. Investigate the way in which similar (or contrasting) materials may appear elsewhere in Revelation.

A. Where (and how) does the same (or similar) theme appear elsewhere in Revelation?
B. How do these other passages affect your reading of the pericope on which you are making your presentation?

Your best friends:

- Your own sense of where the passage is leading you;
- Eerdmans Analytical Concordance
- Studies in the journals of Biblical scholarship
- The commentaries and monographs
12. In light of the hard work you have done to this point, put it all together. Without being too reductionistic, summarize what John wants the community to believe and do in light of their historical context.

* Can you state the intention of this text, i.e. its intended effect as text upon the listener or reader? What does John want the reader to see, to feel, to understand?

Phase Four: Theological and Hermeneutical Reflection

The purpose of this exegesis, of course, is to position the interpreter to make appropriate use of the passage in interpreting the gospel through the life of the church. Therefore, the interpreter’s work is unfinished until the text has been engaged theologically. The following questions furnish a possible means for doing so:

13. What is the theological witness of this text? What does the text ask the current congregation to believe and do? (This is a reprise of number 12.).

14. Is what the text asks the congregation to believe and do:
   a. Appropriate to the gospel?
   b. Intelligible in light of our experience of the world and our reason?
      (1) Can we understand it?
      (2) Is it logically coherent with other things you have identified as core theological convictions?
      (3) Is what the passage asks the reader to believe and do consistent with the scientific world view?
   c. Morally credible?

15. What is your theological and hermeneutical relationship to the text? Here the interpreter has three main options:
   a. Agree with what the text asks the interpreter to believe and do, and consequently, attempt to make its witness accessible to the modern world.
   b. Agree with parts of what the text invites the interpreter to believe and do, of but not agree with other parts, thus needing to decide how to interpret the text for contemporary listeners. The hermeneutic of analogy may help here. Discerning the deeper purpose of the text may help.
   c. Disagree with what the text asks readers to believe and do, in which case the interpreter needs not only to be clear about the grounds for disagreeing with the text, but help the congregation understand how an encounter with the text helps the congregation today clarify its own convictions.

   What is your theological evaluation of the text and why?
   This determines whether one will preach the gospel through the text, through parts of the text, or will disagree with the text.

16. Make a suggestion as to how you would use this text in a particular setting in the life of the church, e.g., in preaching, in teaching. What, specifically, would you want to say to today’s community through the text? What would be your “news”?

* When you make your presentation, please give the instructor a rough copy of your presentation that shows all the secondary literature from which you drew.
TERM PAPERS GUIDELINES

Every student who enrolls at Christian Theological Seminary will be required to do considerable theological research and reflection, much of which will be submitted in written form. There is no guarantee that a term paper submitted in proper form will save a poor paper; neither is there any guarantee that poor form will ruin a good paper. There does, however, seem to be some correlation between excellence of form and excellence of presentation. In order to submit papers in proper form, the following guidelines are suggested:

SPACING
Double-space the text of the paper. Direct quotations of two or more sentences or more than three lines in length should be single-spaced and blocked in to a margin of four spaces on the left side of the text.

MARGINS
The margin on the left side of the page should be 1½”. Margins on the other three sides should be 1”. The first page of the paper and subsequent main divisions should have a 2” margin at the top.

INDENTATIONS
Paragraphs should be indented six spaces for the text. Paragraphs within a direct quote should be indented four spaces from the body of the quotation.

CORRECTIONS
Do not turn in a photocopy as the original. Typewritten (rather than computer generated) papers should be corrected using correcting paper or liquid paper. Do not make corrections in pencil. Do not strike over mistakes.

PROOFREADING
It may take a little extra time to proofread the paper, but even the best typists make mistakes. Proofread one time for content only; proofread again for typographical errors.

QUOTATIONS
All term papers are to be your original work. It is not original if you type what others have written and use connecting phrases to tie it all together. Good research will naturally involve consulting others to discover what has been written and to assist you in the development of your own ideas on the subject. **If the exact words of someone else are essential to the thrust of your paper, this constitutes a direct quotation and must be noted by the use of quotation marks to avoid plagiarism. When the ideas of another person are incorporated into your paper and you have either paraphrased or summarized that person’s material, it is known as an indirect quotation and must be footnoted to avoid plagiarism.** (See the CTS “Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism.”)
NOTES
There are two kinds of notes -- content and reference. Content notes provide incidental comments upon, amplify, or explain the text but are disruptive to the flow of the paper. These notes should be placed at the bottom of the page. Reference notes cite the authority for statements in the text and acknowledge the source of the information. **Information used directly or indirectly must be acknowledged.**

Term papers submitted as part of the requirements for a class may use the following form for acknowledging borrowed material within the text of the paper -- set in parentheses the author’s last name, the date of the material used, and the page number. Footnotes may still be used with this method of citation to provide information not relevant to the body of the paper but may be helpful as background.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Sources used in the preparation of the paper should be listed at the conclusion of the paper in a bibliography. Include materials quoted as well as those consulted (though not quoted) if they were important in the development of the paper. All materials should be arranged alphabetically by the last name of the authors. If more than one work is used by the same author, arrange them chronologically by date of publication.

TITLE PAGE
Each term paper should have a title page providing the following: title of paper, name of student, professor and course title for which the paper is being submitted, date, name of the Seminary, and student mailbox number.

CONTENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.
If the paper contains chapters, charts, illustrations, or other divisions or explanatory material, a preliminary page should be provided listing them and the page number for the explanatory material or the beginning of the chapters. For spacing and format consult John L. Sayre, A Manual of Forms for Term Papers and Theses, 4th ed. rev. (Enid, Oklahoma: Seminary Press, 1979). For basic reference to form, footnotes and bibliography, great use can be made of Kate L. Turabian’s A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations, 6th edition, 1996.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
Except when quoting from other writings, writers of papers are urged to use inclusive language. For example, generic language phrased in sex-specific terms and the use of gender designations for inanimate objects should be avoided (e.g. “brother” when the meaning is human being or person; “her” as the pronoun for an inanimate object). Language for “God” should be selected with great care so that the metaphors and grammatical forms are faithful to the biblical revelation of God whose being transcends titles, names and metaphors. The following may be helpful guides: Keith Watkins, Faithful and Fair, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, ©1981) and “Inclusive Language Guidelines for Use and Study in the United Church of Christ,” June 1980, United Church of Christ Leadership Resources, P.O. Box 179, St. Louis, MO, 63166.

Adopted by CTS Faculty, 2012
“Plagiarism is the failure to distinguish the student’s own words and ideas from those of a source the student has consulted. Ideas derived from another, whether presented as exact words, a paraphrase, summary or quoted phrase, must always be appropriately referenced to the source, whether the source is printed, electronic, or spoken. Students must also use proper attribution with artistic media (images, music, website elements, etc.) and attend to all copyright restrictions on the use of such media. Whenever exact words are used, quotations marks or an indented block indicator of a quotation must be used, together with the proper citation in a style required by the professor.” (Robert A. Harris, *The Plagiarism handbook* [Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing, 2011], p. 132). (Adopted by the CTS Faculty, 2012)

The instructor is required to report all instances of plagiarism to the Dean.