Fall 2017  
Department for the Study of Religion  
RLG101 Introducing Religion: It’s the End of the World As We Know It  
Thursdays 11am-1pm

Professor Laura Beth Bugg  
Office Hours: Thursdays 9:30-11am or by appointment, JHB 314  
Email: laura.bugg@utoronto.ca  
Teaching Assistants:

Course description:  
Throughout history, many religious movements have envisioned the end of the world. This course will explore the ways in which different religious movements have prepared for and expected an end time, from fears, symbols, and rituals to failed prophecies and social violence. By examining traditions such as Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts through to fears of nuclear apocalypse and zombies, the course seeks to understand the ways in which ancient and modern claims of “the end” reflect the aspirations, anxieties, and religious concerns of communities.

Course readings:  
Readings listed under each topic are required readings, which will be discussed during class and tutorials. All course readings (with the exception of the two books listed below) are available as PDFs on the course Blackboard site. To access the readings on the Blackboard site go to “Course Materials” then “Required Course Readings” and you will see all readings organized by date.

There are two required books that are available through the UofT bookstore, on reserve at Robarts Library, or as e-books through various online booksellers:  

Requirements:

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<th>Class Participation</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>15%</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Critical Response Papers</td>
<td>4x/semester (15% each)</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Final Essay Exam</td>
<td>Date TBA</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Class Participation (15%)
In order to receive the full participation mark you must make a positive contribution to the class as a whole. This means coming to class prepared and on time, and participating in weekly tutorials. This semester our TAs will lead scheduled tutorials directly after lecture (1-2pm) on designated Thursdays. Attendance at tutorials is mandatory; the only excused absences for tutorials will be for documented medical or family caring obligations. Tutorials will afford you the opportunity to discuss the weekly readings, think about your critical response papers, and prepare for the final exam.

Critical Response Papers (Total = 60%)
This semester you will be asked to write four critical response papers, each 1-2 pages in length and worth 15% of your total grade. You may choose to write a response to ANY four of the papers that are marked on the syllabus with an asterisk (*). Although there are more than four readings listed with an asterisk, you may not write more than four papers to receive extra credit. We will discuss expectations for the response papers in class later, but for now please keep in mind the following:

- You must include your name and student ID on each page of each paper.
- Please provide the full bibliographic citation for each article or book chapter that you review.
- Please proofread your work before you submit it.
- Response papers must be uploaded on Blackboard by 10am on the due date on which the reading is assigned. Please submit under the “Assignments” folder (no hard copies).
- Penalties for late assignments are 5% per day unless there is a documented medical or family emergency. The only documentation I will accept is the official UofT illness verification certificate, which you must have signed by your physician (available here: http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/undergraduate/forms). In the case of family emergency, I will accept a letter from your registrar.
- Assignments more than a week late will not be accepted unless there is a documented medical or family emergency.

Final Essay Exam (25%)
The final exam will consist of both short and long essay questions. We will discuss the exam format in both lecture and tutorials, and offer strategies for writing the exam (specifically, we will discuss strategies for reading and taking notes in preparation for the exam, as well as strategies for completing timed essay exams). The date and time of the final exam will be announced as soon as it is scheduled.

Student Services
The University of Toronto offers a wealth of resources for students, including help with academic (http://www.asc.utoronto.ca/) and personal (http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/) issues. Everyone is encouraged to make use of the Writing Centre website (http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/). Please contact me directly if you have difficulties navigating University resources.

Accommodations for Disability
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you feel that you may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060; http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as.
Academic Integrity
There is a zero-tolerance policy toward plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty in this course. Please refer to the University’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters) found on the website of the Office of Student Academic Integrity (http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai).

Communication
- Email is the best way to reach me. I will do my best to respond within 48 hours of receiving your email.
- As weekends are family time, I do not respond to emails after 5pm on Friday through Monday at 9am.
- I am always happy to meet with students during office hours. If those hours do not work for you, please contact me and we can arrange an alternate time.
- All communication from me will go to your official University of Toronto email. Please check this email even if you use an alternate email address. Please send any email communication from your UofT email address.

Classroom culture
I want our classroom to be a place where we listen deeply to each other and respect the feelings, experience and wisdom behind what we all say. Before speaking, I would ask all of us to consider the positions from which we speak or do not speak (for ex., gender, class, race, sexuality, age, religion, and so on). If you ever have questions or concerns about the class environment or the way in which I facilitate discussion, please do not hesitate to contact me with your concerns.

Out of respect for the learning process I ask that all students observe the following:
- Please show up on time.
- Do not disrupt others by leaving early.
- Please refrain from using cellphones and other electronic devices unless it is part of our learning exercise.
- If you use a laptop to take notes, please do not use it for other activities.
- If you have caring or medical obligations that mean you must arrive late or leave early, please speak to me.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

September 7
Introduction: What in the World is “The End of the World”?
Required Readings:

September 14
Monsters, Visions and Revolt: Jewish Apocalypse
Required Readings:
- The Book of Daniel (NRSV)
September 21  Beasts, Bloodshed and Empire: Early Christian Apocalypse

Required Readings:
- Book of Revelation (NRSV)

September 28  Resistance, Conquest and Islamic Prophecies of the End

Required Readings:

October 05  Millerites, Adventists and Abolitionists

Required Readings:

October 12  The Atomic Bomb, Nuclear Panic and the First Cold War

Required Readings:
- Lindsey, H. (1970) The Late Great Planet Earth. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Read chs. 1, 4-8, 11-13)

October 19  Evangelical Christians and Rapture Prophecy

Required Readings:

October 26  New Religious Movements and Apocalypse: The People’s Temple and the Branch Davidians

Required Readings:

November 02  The Mayans and Prophecies of 2012 as the End of the World

Required Readings:
November 9 – NO CLASS – READING WEEK

November 16 Prepping for the Apocalypse: Survivalists & the Militia Movement

Required Readings:

November 23 Zombie Apocalypse

Required Readings:

November 30 Conclusions: Thinking about the end of the world