

Poster Project

For the poster project required in this class you are to work individually or in pairs to do some reading outside the assigned course reading and to create a poster presenting ideas and information about your topic and its relation to the course. (Groups of three or four are possible, too, but require instructor approval.) On **Monday, June 5**, promptly at 9 a.m., you will present your poster and be ready to talk and answer questions about it. As you enter the room, there will be a sign directing you to set up your poster at a particular booth (they will be numbered). You will also get three "**poster evaluation**" forms. You will peer review the three posters to the right (clockwise around the room), according to the directions on the form; you will turn in these forms. In order to avoid chaos, there will be a schedule of when you will be reviewing and when you will be standing by your poster being reviewed.

You will also write an **abstract** for your poster, which is a one or two paragraph summary submitted a week beforehand *as an e-mail attachment*. This will be "published" in an abstract handout so that everyone will know what your poster is about. More details will be given in a handout later. The abstract will be due by 9 p.m., **Tuesday, May 30**.

Your grade will be a combination of the abstract grade, the poster grade and the poster evaluation forms you turn in.

Nuts and bolts of the poster

A poster is a visual presentation, and thus must contain at least one illustration/graph/visual element **created by you**. This should have its own caption, as should any illustration or visual element you have on the poster.

The poster must also contain *at least* 350 words, **not** including the captions to the visual elements. The poster should have *no more* than 1000 words. Note that the text, as well as the words in the caption, should be word-processed and at least 12-point font size in a **legible** font. Hints: Do not paste 8.5 by 11 inch sheets of paper covered in text on the posterboard. Citations must, as always, be given for any quoted material or specific references or ideas taken from other sources.

The title and authors of the poster should be prominently displayed (i.e., at least 48-point font size, or equivalent, for the title) near the top of the poster, and the bibliography should be found near the bottom of the poster (usually on the right side).

The bibliography should contain *at least* two references: the reading you have done for the project and the course reading to which it relates. Note that it may be possible to do this project by reading just one whole book in addition to course material. Use standard research paper format for the bibliographic entries (for instance, they should all start off with an author's name) whether the source is a book, magazine or journal article, Internet website or an interview. Ask us if you are unclear about the format.

The poster should be on one piece of backing material, and no larger than 3 foot by 4 foot. The tri-fold variety of posterboard is fine to use, but not required.

Topic Choices

The following is a list of ideas, divided into five broad categories, to get you started thinking about your projects. The basic rule is that the poster must concern some aspect of end times that is not covered by the course reading alone. Your projects do not have to come from this list, but in *any* case please talk to us *before* you start work about the appropriateness of a particular topic; we'll have a sign-up sheet so that everyone will know what topics other people choose for their posters. We encourage you to work with a partner on this.

1. *Science fiction about the end.* Choose a science fiction novel or movie that involves the end of the world/solar system/universe. Movies are tough; *Independence Day* and *Terminator 3* are just not big enough scale of “the end”, and we'll be doing *The Matrix* in class (so you can't do that). Some suggestions are given in the list below, but the work does not have to come from the list. Whether from the list or not, please let me know what work you will do, in order to make sure that each pair is doing a different work and to ensure the work's suitability.

Critique the work using the scientific principles we have covered in this class. Specifically, describe the method by which the Earth/solar system/universe ends, and whether this method is consistent or inconsistent with the discussions of scientific principles we've been having in class.

Candidate novels:

- Paul Anderson, *Tau Zero*
- Isaac Asimov, *The End of Eternity*
- Stephen Baxter, *Manifold: Space*
- Greg Bear, *The Forge of God*
- Greg Benford, *Across the Sea of Suns*
- James Blish, *The Triumph of Time*
- Arthur C. Clarke, *Childhood's End*
- Greg Egan, *Diaspora*
- Donald Moffit, *The Genesis Quest*
- David Palmer, *Emergence*
- Dan Simmons, *Hyperion*
- John Varley, *The Ophiuchi Hotline*
- Robert Charles Wilson, *Darwinia*
- George Zebrowski, *Macrolife*

2. *Apocalyptic/eschatological ideas in non-Judeo-Christian cultures.* For this topic, you would use primary and/or secondary texts. (Ancient Iranian apocalypses were written, so

you could find primary texts on the subject; Aztec apocalyptic ideas were not written, so you need to use secondary accounts.)

Candidate cultures:

- Ancient Iran (Zoroastrianism)
- Ancient Egypt
- The Aztec civilization of Mexico.
- North American Indians (Klamath, Nez Perce, others of Washington, Oregon, and California. Hopi ideas on the subject are very interesting to study. See Michael for one good Hopi source.)

3. *Apocalyptic/eschatological ideas in Judeo-Christian writings not included in course readings* There are many Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts, both within the Bible and outside it, that we will not have time to study in this course. Some are quite short, and you might need to supplement the primary texts with secondary texts. They would make good topics for this project. You can get introductory information on many of them right in our Harris textbook.

Candidate writings:

- 2 Esdras (4 Ezra)
- Psalms of Solomon
- 1 Enoch
- 2 Enoch
- 2 Baruch
- The Sibylline Oracles
- Assumption of Moses

4. *Historical contexts of Jewish and Christian apocalypticism.* This would involve learning more about the conditions of Late Judaism and Early Christianity in which Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings arose.

Candidate topics:

- Persecution of Jews in the Hellenistic period
- The Maccabean conflict
- The sects of late Judaism (100 BCE to 100 CE)
- The Messiah: first century expectations
- The Jewish revolt against Rome (66-73 CE)
- Christianity in the Roman Empire.

5. *Modern apocalyptic movements and current manifestation of apocalyptic thinking in politics.* By “modern” is meant the 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.

Candidate topics:

- Millerism in pre-Civil War America
- Apocalyptic responses to the atomic bomb and nuclear war
- Apocalyptic readings of Ezekiel during the Cold War (1950-1990)

- The Rapture in 20th-21st century American prophecy belief
- Prophecy-based interpretations of events in the Middle East and elsewhere in recent and contemporary America. (This could build on the Boyer article read early in the quarter.)
- Apocalypticism in rock and pop music (1960 to the present). (Just collecting lyrics with apocalyptic references for this one won't be enough. There will need to be analysis and relating to the course.)
- 666 and the Mark of the Beast in recent and contemporary America.
- Modern readings and interpretations of Revelation. Note: These may include critiques as well as faith-based interpretations. Michael can suggest individual books. There are at least two feminist critiques of Revelation that Michael knows about and would like to see read and reported on. One is Tina Pippin's *Death and Desire: The Rhetoric of Gender in the Apocalypse of John* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 1992). The other, which Michael has at home and can't remember the author and title of, focuses on the two cities in Revelation, the bride Jerusalem and the whore Babylon.

Psychological studies of apocalyptic thinking and "endism."

Michael knows of one good book on the subject that he'd like to see someone read and report on: Charles B. Strozier's *Apocalypse: On the Psychology of Fundamentalism in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).