

# Syllabus

for course at advanced level

**Visions of the End: Apocalypse and Eschatology in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**

**7.5 Higher Education Credits**

**Visioner av slutet: Apokalyps och eskatologi i judendom, kristendom och islam**

**7.5 ECTS credits**

Course code:	RHA312
Valid from:	Spring 2023
Date of approval:	2022-05-18
Department	Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies
Main field:	Comparative Religion/History of Religions
Specialisation:	A1N - Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

## Decision

This syllabus was developed by the Faculty Board of Humanities 2022-05-04 and adopted by the Board of the Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies 2022-05-18.

## Prerequisites and special admittance requirements

180 ECTS credits Bachelor's degree in the humanities, social anthropology or cultural geography. English 6.

## Course structure

Examination code	Name	Higher Education Credits
1001	Visions of the End	7.5

## Course content

The fascination with apocalyptic ideas has been integral part of the Abrahamic religions and is well established in their sacred scriptures. This course aims to offer a historical overview of the emergence of the "apocalypse" as a specific religious category and as a distinct literary genre in its relation to its socio-cultural and historical background. The course will outline the development of apocalyptic thought and literature from antiquity until modern times with a special focus on texts relating to heavenly tours, visions of hell and heaven, and the revival of chiliastic hopes and anxieties. Furthermore, main concepts of apocalyptic thought will be presented and discussed, such as schematization and periodization of history, the end of history as a cosmic catastrophe, apocalyptic fears related to natural disasters, epidemics, etc. as perceived signs of the end, the cosmic and metaphysical mysteries of the heavenly world, the idea of afterlife, the concept of the retribution after death, et al. Modern aspects and interpretations of apocalyptic feelings and ideas in front of contemporary political and historical changes will be taken into consideration. Accordingly, the course will also examine how traditional apocalyptic concepts are being used and manipulated in modern political contexts, in the service of political and religious fundamentalism and in relation with modern geo-political conflicts. In a concluding session, the course will examine the symbolic and literary expansion and elaboration of apocalyptic ideas in modernity, with special attention to the expansion and popularity of end of the world scenarios in contemporary popular culture, as in literature and in film.

## Learning outcomes

In order to pass the course, students are expected to be able to:

- discuss the origins and definition of apocalypticism and eschatology,
- explain historical developments of apocalypticism in the Abrahamic religions,

- critically reflect upon the significance of apocalyptic patterns of thought in history and politics from an interdisciplinary perspective,
- critically reflect upon the use of apocalyptic patterns in modern popular culture,
- apply historical-philological methodology on their examination of primary literature.

### **Education**

Instruction is given in the form of lectures and seminars.

Mandatory course elements: Written seminar assignments are mandatory elements of the course. Attendance at seminars is mandatory. Non-attendance for the seminars can be compensated by completing a replacement assignment given by the examiner. No limit is set for the number of seminars that can be compensated through a replacement assignment.

Instruction is given in the language specified for each respective course offering.

Instruction is either online or campus-based, as specified for each course offering.

For more detailed information, please refer to the course description. The course description will be made available at least one month before the course starts.

### **Forms of examination**

- a. The course is examined on the basis of a written examination in the form of a take-home exam.

The examiner may grant exemption from the forms of instruction and examination as specified in this syllabus for a student who can show a certificate recommending special educational support. The examiner shall in such a decision specify the forms for alternative or adapted examinations or course requirements.

For more detailed information, please refer to the course description. The course description will be made available at least one month before the course starts.

- b. Grades will be set according to a seven-point grading scale related to the learning objectives of the course:

A = Excellent

B = Very good

C = Good

D = Satisfactory

E = Adequate

Fx = Fail, some additional work required

F = Fail, much more work required

- c. Students will be informed of the written grading criteria when the course starts.

- d. In order to pass the course, students must receive a grade E or higher on the examination, complete all mandatory assignments and meet the attendance requirement.

Under special circumstances, the examiner may, after consulting with the coordinating teacher, grant the student an exemption from mandatory participation in certain mandatory course elements. The student may then be assigned a replacement assignment. Assignments not submitted on time will not be graded.

- e. At least three examination opportunities should be offered within a one-year period. At least one examination opportunity should be offered during the year the course is not provided.

Students who receive the grade E or higher may not retake the examination to attain a higher grade.

Students who receive the grade Fx or F twice by the same examiner are entitled to have another examiner appointed for the next examination, opportunity unless there are special reasons to the contrary. Such requests should be made to the department board.

- f. The completion of a supplementary assignment in order to convert the grade Fx into a passing grade on the take-home exam may be permitted if the student is close to meeting the criteria for a passing grade. The assignment should be submitted within a week of the examiner notifying the student of the need to complete a supplementary assignment. Adequate corrections of simple mistakes related to formatting will be graded using the grades A-E. Adequate corrections of flaws related to understanding – minor misunderstandings, minor inaccuracies or too limited arguments – will receive the grade E.

**Interim**

When the syllabus is discontinued, students have the right to be examined according to this syllabus once per semester during a transition period of three semesters.

**Limitations**

This course may not be included in a degree together with a course, taken in Sweden or elsewhere, of identical or partially similar content.

**Required reading**

For up-to-date information about required reading, please refer to the department website at [www.erg.su.se](http://www.erg.su.se). The current reading list will be made available at least two months before the course starts.