BVNT 682 L – The Book of Revelation (Hybrid, 3 credits)
Eastern Mennonite Seminary – Lancaster, PA
Fall 2017, September–December

Schedule: Two weekend (Fri.–Sat.) sessions, 9:00am-5:00pm, Oct. 6-7 and Nov. 10-11, plus weekly online units starting the week of Sept. 11.
Location: Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown, PA   **E-mail**: laura.brenneman@emu.edu
Faculty: Laura L. Brenneman, Ph.D.   **Phone**: 419-792-9007

Office Hours: You may contact me by e-mail and, except for unusual situations, I will respond within 24 hours. We can also arrange face time on Zoom for individual or group appointments. I prefer to handle class matters online, but you may call me if the Internet is not available, or under other extraordinary circumstances.

Course Description
This course offers an inductive study of the English text of Revelation. Emphasis is on the interconnections between the theological messages, its historical/social/cultural/theological contexts, and its literary genre as an apocalypse. Consideration is given throughout to the relevance of these writings for the present day church.

EMS Mission
Eastern Mennonite Seminary prepares women and men to serve and lead in a global context. In response to God's saving grace, we educate students to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of God's Spirit as wise interpreters, mature practitioners, discerning communicators and transformational leaders. The complete purpose statement can be found at http://www.emu.edu/seminary/about/mission/.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will:
1. Have practice in the skills of *interpretation*, specifically through the development of
    a. a thorough knowledge of the content of Revelation as well as the theology and themes behind and surrounding it.
    b. an awareness of the perennial critical questions concerning this text.
    c. study and research skills to assist in answering questions raised in reading the Bible.
2. Be *formed* in personal and communal ways through opportunities to present, discuss, test, and refine new ideas in a class setting with other scholar-ministers.
3. Use discernment to actively and appropriately *contextualize* Scripture by learning to integrate an awareness of exegetical methods (i.e., discussion of the meaning of the text) with consideration of significance (i.e., reflection about the meaning of the message for life).
4. Demonstrate course skills in the *public practice* of leadership through integration of missional implications of biblical material for communities of faith.

Required Books
A study Bible (HarperCollins NRSV 2006 or Oxford Annotated NRSV 2010 recommended; others accepted).
Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. Rev. &

expanded ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0801046407.

——— . *Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness: Following the Lam into the New Creation*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-1-60608-560-8.

Kraybill, J. Nelson. *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-1-58743-261-3.

Yeatts, John R. *Revelation*. Believers Church Bible Commentary. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2003. ISBN-13: 978-08361-9208-7.

Other readings as assigned by the professor from the *Fortress Commentary on the Bible: New Testament* (2014) and other resources.

Instructions for accessing assigned reading from the *Fortress Commentary on the Bible: New Testament*, held as an ebook at EMU's Hartzler Library: sign in using your network username and password at the EMU library website (emu.edu/library/). Do this by clicking on the link for ebook collection. Once there, instead of searching for the commentary's title, insert the following web address: http://EMU.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=2064002. This will take you to the 2-volume set (but only if you are logged in with your username at the library's website). From there, click on the "Contents" tab and scroll down to the New Testament section to find the assigned essays.

Recommended

Regularly consult at least one other commentary for comparison, such as:

Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999. ISBN-13: 978-0-85364-851-4.

*You may also wish to consult the very good essays on apocalypticism and Revelation in single-volume commentaries, like the *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (2003) and the *HarperCollins Bible Commentary* (2000).

Course Activities and Requirements

A. General Procedures: This hybrid course will be delivered by distance using the Moodle learning management system and through an intensive weekend class format. Each student is responsible to become familiar with Moodle since you will obtain a significant amount of your grade from online participation. The EMU home page for Moodle (https://moodle.emu.edu) includes Moodle FAQs; technical support is available through the IT Helpdesk at helpdesk@emu.edu or 540-432-4357.

A typical class week will consist of: (1) a reading assignment which should be completed early in the week, (2) an occasional activity, and (3) ongoing group discussion on a forum within Moodle. Early in the week this discussion may take the form of preliminary questions and/or comments on the reading or assigned activity. As the week progresses, contributions to the discussion should reflect the learning of the students as well as a deepening round of questions and responses to that week's topic. Each student will submit at least one discussion board contribution by Tuesday at 5 p.m. (Eastern Time) of each week. A second discussion board contribution will be made by Friday at 5 p.m. (ET) each week. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in a grade reduction for the discussion board on that given week. Timely weekly contributions will be important for a good learning experience. Each student is encouraged to scan the entire schedule to note any particular challenges in terms of completing weekly assignments.

Although we won't be meeting in person every week, we will do some video conferencing by Zoom, provided for all students by EMS (http://zoom.us/). You should download this program if you don't already have it. I anticipate that we will be able to develop a sense of community as we work and learn together. Please feel free to share non course-related items from your personal life as appropriate, such as prayer requests or items of joy and celebration.

B. Grading & Specific Requirements
       Participation (40%)
           o   Overall Participation (30%)
           o   Leadership (10%)
       Assignments (60%)
           o   Passage Performance (10%)
           o   Sermon (25% [manuscript 20%; presentation 5%])
           o   Inductive (25%)

<u>Attendance</u> (from EMS Catalog): Students are required to attend class meetings of all courses for which they are enrolled unless excused for satisfactory reasons. Work missed by late entrance or absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the instructor. Excuses may be secured for sickness, funerals in the family and similar circumstances. Each faculty member is responsible for granting excuses. Students should not absent themselves from classes without clearance from their respective professors.

<u>Participation</u>: In order to receive full credit for participation, students must demonstrate that they have read and considered the assigned reading material. Students will do this by being able to provide the key points and an informed opinion on assigned reading during Moodle and class discussions. In addition, each student will take the lead on a topic of choice from the assigned weekly reading. As a group, we will discuss certain key aspects of texts and all students are expected to participate in some way. The overall quality of participation grade will be based on a global assessment of participation in the course including the following dimensions:
1. depth of reflection and quality of contributions;
2. evidence of growth in content and interpretive awareness;
3. originality and creativity.
Discussions should proceed with respect, kindness, and critical thinking. I encourage you to thoughtfully agree and disagree with each other and with me. There is, however, no reason to move outside of respect and kindness in exercising critical thinking skills.

<u>Assignments</u>: Weekly Moodle Expectations, Passage Performance, Inductive Paper, and Sermon
- *Weekly Moodle Expectations*: You will find your reading assignment posted to Moodle every week. Each weekly unit runs from Monday to Sunday and you will post twice each week (by 5 p.m. [ET] on Tuesdays and Fridays). You are expected to post as follows:
    - o Tuesday posts will be in response to questions I post with the assigned weekly reading.
    - o Friday posts will be in response to questions or discussion threads that pique your interest from your peers' Tuesday posts.
    - o At least once during the semester, each student will be designated as the "leader" for the Friday posts, which means being responsible to introduce a discussion topic of interest to you from your peers' Tuesday posts. When you introduce your topic you should include why it is of interest to you, your informed opinion (i.e., based on evidence from the reading), what you think is the significance of your observations, and questions for further discussion for the class.
- *Passage Performance*: Memorize a passage longer than ten verses from Revelation to present in class. After the performance, students will write a short, reflective essay on the process of choosing, memorizing, and performing the passage. See the Passage Performance Guide (provided on Moodle) for more information. See schedule for due date.

- *Sermon*: Students will prepare a 15–20-minute sermon for presentation to the class. A significant part of the sermon should address how the passage is used and/or could be used in contemporary Christian ministries. Students will present their sermons during online Zoom meetings. See the Sermon Guide, example paper, and Presentation Guide (provided on Moodle) for more information.
- *Inductive Paper*: Students will submit a report about a passage from Revelation using the inductive method of Bible study. See the Inductive Guide and example paper (provided on Moodle) for more information.

NOTE: Failure to turn in any assignment on the due date without prior discussion with the professor will result in an automatic grade reduction of 5% for that assignment.

Assessment: All assignments will be assessed according to the standards detailed in the rubrics included at the end of this syllabus. All guides for specific assignments will be provided by the professor to students in advance.

List of Assignment Rubrics
- Posting Criteria (posted on Moodle)
- Passage Performance Guide & Rubric (posted on Moodle)
- Sermon Guide & Example Paper (posted on Moodle)
- Presentation Guide (posted on Moodle)
- Inductive Bible Study Guide, Example Paper, & Grading Rubric (posted on Moodle)
- Writing Standards: Graduate Level (provided in this syllabus)
- Reading Assessment Rubric (provided in this syllabus)

The rubrics "Writing Standards: Graduate Level" and "Reading Assessment Rubric" are useful for understanding the graduate-level standards expected at EMS. Please read them thoroughly

Grading Scale:

94–100 = A		90–93 = A-
87–89 = B+	84–86 = B	80–83 = B-
77–79 = C+	74–76 = C	70–73 = C-
Below 70 = F		

Academic Style: Choose a bibliographic style and use consistently for all papers. I recommend SBL style (all example papers posted on Moodle conform to this) or Turabian style for all papers. For basic examples, see the *SBL Style Handbook for Students* (posted on Moodle and at http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/sblhs_ss92804_revised_ed.pdf) and for Turabian style, see http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html. Consult print editions for more comprehensive situations. Please be in touch with me if you have any questions.

Classroom Conduct: Out of respect for your colleagues, please commit to being as fully mentally present as possible during class and online class meetings (i.e., in a distraction-free environment).

Plan for faculty and student interactions: Please see the Posting Criteria (provided on Moodle) for my expectations about your weekly posting. I will "quietly" moderate sessions (i.e., only intervening to curtail discussion if it goes outside the bounds of respect) during the week and comment on posts at the end of the week, when all students have submitted their comments. My comments will be along the

lines of observations, questions for deeper reflection, and reminders to make connections between posts and the course's assigned reading.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to practice academic integrity in this course. Students found cheating or engaging in plagiarism will fail the particular assignment in question and, depending on the severity of the incident, may receive a failing grade for the course. See the on-line Graduate Catalog (pp. 1–5) at http://www.emu.edu/catalog/ (scroll down to click on "University-wide graduate program policies" in a sidebar on the right-hand side of the page) for particular details regarding the EMU policy on academic integrity.

Special Accommodations Statement: Eastern Mennonite Seminary is committed to working out reasonable and acceptable arrangements for satisfactory completion of course requirements for students with learning difficulties. When the student or instructor becomes aware of such difficulties, the instructor may refer the student to the Academic Success Center (540-432-4233, academicsupport@emu.edu). In consultation with the student and the Academic Support Center, the instructor will develop reasonable and appropriate alternatives for course requirements that are directly affected by the disabilities. The student's advisor and the associate dean should be informed of these arrangements. In case of failure to reach agreement, the student may appeal to the Seminary Academic Committee. See the tab for Academic Support at http://www.emu.edu/catalog/ toward the bottom of the list under "Undergraduate Catalog."

Reading & Class Schedule: TBA
When posted, the schedule is subject to change, but each change will be announced in advance.

Writing Standards: Graduate Level (Grid Version)

Criteria	A (excellent)	B (minimal expectations)	C (below expectations)	Comments
Content *(quality of the information/ideas and sources/details used to support them)*	- shows clarity of purpose - shows depth of content - applies insight or originality of thought -demonstrates quality and breadth of resources	- shows clarity of purpose - shows substantial information and sufficient support - almost always represents originality of thought - uses quality resources	- shows clarity of purpose - lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - represents little originality of thought - uses mostly quality resources	
Structure *(logical order or sequence of the writing)*	- is coherent and logically developed - uses effective transitions	- is coherent and logically developed - uses smooth transitions	- logically (but not fully) developed - has some awkward transitions	
Style *(appropriate attention to audience: effective word choice, sentence variety, voice; appropriate level of formality for academic writing vs. informal text messages and email)*	- is concise, eloquent and rhetorically effective - composes varied sentence structure	- displays concern for careful expression - composes varied sentence structure	- displays some personality <u>but</u> lacks imagination and may be stilted - composes little varied sentence structure - frequently uses jargon and clichés	
Conventions *(adherence to grammar rules: usage, mechanics)*	- composes well-constructed sentences - makes virtually no errors in grammar and spelling - makes accurate word choices	- almost always composes well-constructed sentences - makes minimal errors in grammar and spelling, - makes accurate word choices	- usually has well-constructed sentences - makes several errors - makes word choices that distract the reader	

Source Integrity *(appropriate acknowledgment of sources used in research)*	- cites sources for all quotations - composes credible paraphrases, cited correctly - includes reference page - makes virtually no errors in documentation style	- cites sources for all quotations - has credible paraphrases, usually cited correctly - includes reference page - makes minimal errors in documentation style	- cites sources for all quotations - composes mostly credible paraphrases sometimes cited correctly - includes reference page - makes several errors in documentation style	
The weighting of each of the five areas is dependent on the specific written assignment and the teacher's preference. Plagiarism occurs when a person presents as one's own "someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source" (adapted from Council of Writing Program Administrators).				**Grade**

Reading Assessment Rubric
Eastern Mennonite Seminary

Instructors may assign reading as a significant portion of course requirements. This reading needs to be assessed to gauge the learning outcomes from the reading. Among the tools of assessment can be classroom discussion of the reading, completion of study guides, reflective reading reviews, annotated bibliographies, and class presentations. The following is a rubric to assist instructors and students in assessing the quality of learning from reading requirements.

Assessment Tool	Excellent	Competent	Below expectations
Classroom discussion of reading 1. Verbal participation	Engages actively in the discussion and demonstrates complete familiarity with material.	Speaks up occasionally and demonstrates a general knowledge of the material.	Is silent or speaks up in ways that demonstrate the material was not read completely.
2. Comprehension	Understands the key concepts, theory and principles of the material.	Demonstrates familiarity with the perspective of the author(s) and the main point.	Is unable to grasp the author's point of view.
3. Critical thinking	Recognizes presuppositions and implications, and evaluates arguments with logic and clarity of thought.	Shows insight into material and can assess what appears valid or invalid.	Reacts emotionally and repeats ideas generated by others.
Reading Study Guides 1. Completion	Handed in on time with all items completed thoroughly according to instructions.	Handed in on time, or late by permission, with all items completed according to instructions.	Handed in late or not at all and without all items completed or not following instructions.
2. Comprehension	Demonstrates a full understanding of the content requested in the study guide.	Demonstrates a partial understanding of the content requested in the study guide.	Fails to show a grasp of the ideas requested in the study guide.
3. Critical thinking	Evaluates the reading material with insight, clarity and originality.	Evaluates the reading material with adequate insight and some creativity.	Reacts to the material with commonplace arguments and little originality.
4. Writing standards	Meets the "excellent" criteria for graduate level writing (appropriate to study guides).	Meets the "competent" criteria for graduate level writing (appropriate to study guides).	Falls "below expectations" according to the criteria for graduate level writing (appropriate to study guides).

Assessment Tool	Excellent	Competent	Below expectations
Reflective Reading Reviews 1. Completion	Handed in on time with all assignment instructions explicitly followed.	Handed in on time, or late by permission, with most of the instructions followed.	Handed in late or not at all and with few of the instructions followed.
2. Comprehension	Reflects mastery and a thorough understanding of the thesis and main points of the reading.	Reflects a general understanding of what the author communicated.	Fails to demonstrate an understanding of what the author communicated.
3. Critical thinking and discussion	Clearly identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the author's point of view and demonstrates in-depth analysis of the implications.	Identifies some of the strengths and weaknesses of the author's point of view and considers the implications.	Reacts to material with clichés & simplistic characterizations, and inadequately considers the implications.
4. Writing standards (see	Meets the "excellent"	Meets the "competent"	Falls "below

writing rubric for EMU graduate studies)	criteria for graduate level writing.	criteria for graduate level writing.	expectations" according to the criteria for graduate level writing.
Annotated Bibliographies 1. Completion	Handed in on time with all assignment instructions explicitly followed.	Handed in on time, or late by permission, with most instruction followed.	Handed in late or not at all and with few of the instructions followed.
2. Scope	Exceeds the pages or literary works required; selections exhibit attention to a wide range of quality sources & perspectives.	Meets the requirement of pages or literary works; selections reflect attention to varying sources and perspectives.	Does not read the required pages or literary works; selections show limited awareness of varying perspective.
3. Content	Annotations demonstrate a clear understanding and concise summary of the literary work.	Annotations demonstrate substantial understanding of the literary work.	Annotations are fragmentary and vague.

Assessment Tool	Excellent	Competent	Below expectations
Class Presentations from Reading 1. Organization	Demonstrates coherent and logical thought development, with effective transitions, that leads to strong conclusion.	Demonstrates sequential thought development, with smooth transitions, toward a logical conclusion.	Demonstrates inconsistent and scattered thought development that reaches a vague or disconnected conclusion.
2. Content	Exhibits a rich understanding of the topic and originality of thought; displays a balanced and yet pointed argument based on the reading and study.	Exhibits a solid understanding of the topic and some originality of thought; displays a thoughtful argument based on the reading and study.	Exhibits a weak grasp of the topic and relies on generalities; quotes extensively rather than developing a clearly reasoned point of view.
3. Method	Makes use of presentational tools and techniques that communicate mastery of the reading.	Makes use of presentational tools and techniques that communicate a clear understanding of the reading.	Makes use of presentational tools and techniques that inadequately communicate an understanding of the reading.
4. References	Cites wide-ranging and quality sources that demonstrate careful research and reading.	Cites quality sources that demonstrate solid research and reading.	Cites sources from under-qualified authors or is dependent on only one or two authors.