

Veranstalter:	Prof. Dr. Ute Berns
Thema:	Apocalyptic Visions in British Literature and Culture [AA-MA6]
Art der Veranstaltung:	Seminar IV
Veranstaltungsnummer:	53-554
Zeit:	2st., Di 10-12
Raum:	Phil 1250
Beginn:	18. Oktober 2016

Course description:

Contemporary literature and culture abound with narratives and tropes of the apocalypse, and some scenarios locate us in post-apocalyptic times. While the crises that are framed in this way may be those of the twenty-first century, their apocalyptic emplotments and motifs draw on a long religious, cultural and literary tradition. In this seminar we will explore this tradition by addressing some of its crucial stages.

At the beginning of the semester we will acquaint ourselves with passages relating to the apocalypse in the Bible. We will then trace how later writers seized on these powerful motifs and images to represent cataclysmic events of their own time and the hopes and fears bound up with them. Crucial stages are the Romantic period, when poets like Blake, Coleridge and Shelley drew on narratives of apocalypse and millenium to represent the momentous events of the French Revolution and to give shape to their new visions of the future. Another stage we will explore in greater detail is the twenty-first century, where the apocalypse, e.g. in the novels of the Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, enters the arena of posthumanism and climate change and fully exploits the power of the visual media. What is the function and effect of the insistence on mankind's imminent end? How do these narratives shape our perception of a specific historical situation? Are apocalyptic and millennial visions still related? What are its possible ideological pitfalls – or do they harbour a liberating energy?

Requirements for receiving full credits: regular attendance and active participation, good knowledge of the texts, short assignments, a term paper.