

## RE 167 : Cults and the End of the World

What is a cult and why would somebody want to join one? What might the end of the world look like? Why are people worried about the apocalypse? This course will attempt to answer these questions through the study of different groups that have been labelled "cults." We will explore why people choose to join new religions and why others call those new religions "cults" but why we're supposed to call them "New Religious Movements." We will also try to discover why many of these new religions focus on the end of the world, the coming apocalypse, and the rebirth of humanity and society. Throughout the semester we will use a variety of groups from America and Asia to illustrate four key themes within New Religious Movements: charismatic leadership, the end of the world, race and gender, and violence.

**Credits** 4.0