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English 1028G: The Storyteller's Art II **Introduction to Narrative: Narrating the End**

Course Description

In early twentieth century, the great German thinker Walter Benjamin said that “the art of storytelling is coming to an end.” This course is trying to revive and “see a new beauty in what is vanishing.” In this course, we will examine stories about different forms of endings; the most general one being the end of the world or Armageddon (*Book of Revelation*, *Daniel 7-22*, the Norse Ragnarök or the Hindu eschatology). We will also read stories about calamities induced through a plague (Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man*) or nuclear disasters (*Watchmen*). Further, we will not overlook fantastic cataclysms in the form of a zombie apocalypse (*The Walking Dead*) or alien invasions (H. G. Wells’ *War of the Worlds*.) The Holocaust as it is retold in Anne Frank’s *Diary of a Young Girl* will occasion considerations about man-made atrocities. Anne Frank’s account will also introduce the inner dimension of the end in the form of psychological traumas, amnesia, blackouts or blockages (*Blade Runner*.) Finally, we will look through network news narratives about imminent destruction such as global warming and its relation to corporatism.