

PROVIDENCE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
NT5302N Synoptic Gospels: Mark
Instructor: Ed Neufeld, PhD

SYLLABUS

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the Gospel of Mark, second book in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. The course assumes that the Gospel of Mark is historical, literary, and theological. It is historical in that it reflects the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, as well as addressing an unnamed audience at the time it was written. The Gospel is also literature, written to lead its readers along certain lines of thought and behaviour. And this Gospel is theological, in that it speaks of matters between God and people. It claims to describe what God has done and it calls people to respond. The course will explore these aspects of the Gospel of Mark.

This course is designed as an independent study, based on ten audio lectures with power point outlines, and supplementary reading and assignments.

Prerequisite: BI5102 Reading the Church's Bible

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The following course objectives flow out of various learning opportunities available to students, including assigned readings, audio lectures, and individual student research. As with all courses, students play an integral role in learning outcomes, which are commensurate with student initiative and effort. As a collective effort, this course aims:

Students will demonstrate an awareness of the history of Gospel criticism, and how contemporary scholarship views Mark.

Students will show familiarity with the text of Mark.

Students will show their ability to see how Biblical narrative conveys a message by how it portrays the events it describes.

Students will demonstrate some familiarity with the purpose and central message of Mark.

C. REQUIRED TEXTS

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. Second edition. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009. (The first edition would be enough.)

Hurtado, Larry W. *Mark*. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989. (This commentary also appears in the "Understanding the Bible" series, and some other series. It is all the same commentary.)

D. COURSE AUDIO LECTURE OUTLINE

- Lecture 1 Synoptic Gospels and Historical Reliability of Mark
- Lecture 2 Mark 1:1-20
- Lecture 3 Mark 1:21 - 3:6
- Lecture 4 Mark 3:7 - 6:6a
- Lecture 5 Mark 6:6b - 8:21
- Lecture 6 Mark 8:22 - 9:50
- Lecture 7 Mark 10 - 11
- Lecture 8 Mark 12-13
- Lecture 9 Mark 14
- Lecture 10 Mark 15:1 - 16:8

E. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

General Guidelines

Students get quicker response if they submit independent study assignments as attachments to my prov.ca email address, than by posting them on the *itslearning* web site. If you do not have my email address, you can send me an email from my personal page under "Faculty" of the Providence web site. All questions should come to this email address.

All electronic papers should be set up just as a hard-copy paper essay would be set up. That is, I should be able to print your electronic file and get paper copy in complete format. This includes a title page of some kind, page numbers, proper margins and spacing, and so on. Assignments

can be sent in one at a time as you complete them, or all at once when you have completed everything. If you send them in one at a time, I will try to get them graded within two weeks and return them to you. At certain times of year it will take longer than two weeks.

Papers sent as email attachments should be in MS Word format or RTF. All papers should use #12 Times New Roman font, and do not justify the right margin.

All work should be double-spaced unless stated otherwise. Note that single-spaced writing places an extra space between paragraphs. Double-spaced writing, however, does not put any extra space between paragraphs. Biblical studies journals use traditional footnotes or endnotes. Your papers should follow this, which reflects Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 8th edition. But Turabian does accept author date citations.

Academic Dishonesty: Providence operates on the honour system, assuming that all course work, both oral and written, is the product of the student's own work. Cheating and plagiarism in any form are prohibited and are considered grave offenses. Cheating is the purposeful, willful, and concealed use of unauthorized sources for a test, exam, or other forms of academic work. Plagiarism is a specific kind of cheating that involves taking and using the thoughts, ideas, writings or other creative works of another person or persons, and passing them off as one's own. The penalties for academic dishonesty may include failing the course.

Time Management: A college or graduate three credit course assumes about 120 hours of time from an average student. (3 hrs/week x 13 weeks = 39 hours in class, and 2 hours outside of class for every hour of class ≈ 120 hours.) This means an assignment worth 10% should take roughly 12 hours for an average student to complete. I hope you to read every paragraph of Scripture, but skimming is acceptable in other assignments, given that you understand the reading.

Assignments

1. Lecture Responses

Type a one and a half to two page response to each audio lecture. For the most part do not simply summarize the lecture. Rather pick a few points made in the audio lecture that caught your attention for one reason or another. Describe these points and explain why this attracted your interest. These responses may express approval, disapproval, or surprise, or something else. Submit all ten as one document. 20%

2. Reading Mark

Read the Gospel of Mark completely through six times in the translation (and language) of your choice. I suggest that the student intersperse the lectures and lecture responses with reading through Mark. That is, don't listen to all the lectures and then do all the readings of Mark, nor do all the readings of Mark and then listen to the lectures. Rather proceed through both together. As much as possible read Mark right through in one sitting, or at least all in one day. Do not read it through more than once in a single day, and not more than twice a week. *Date each entry.* After each reading, type a one to two page response to your reading. Write out a reflective

impression of what you gained from that reading. If possible, respond to the whole writing (or some theme in it) rather than just one sentence that caught your attention. Look for recurring themes, or transitions from one kind of story to another kind, or characterization Jesus or disciples or others, and so on. What did the Gospel of Mark do to you as you read it? Your response should answer that question. Date each entry. Submit all six responses as one document. 20%

3. Blomberg Summaries

Craig Blomberg's *Jesus and the Gospels* has 19 chapters. Read only the following nine chapters: 1-6, 10, 18, 19. Write a one to two page summary of each of those nine chapters, and hand in all nine summaries as one document. Make sure the full bibliographic details of the book are mentioned somewhere in your paper, and each summary should have the chapter's title at the top (not just the chapter number). Evaluation is always welcome, and I expect some personal response, but for the most part these are to be careful summaries. I have in mind that the reading would take approximately one and one half hours, and composing the summary about one hour. If the reading takes you more than two hours, you should skim some parts of the chapter. In one and a half hours of reading you should be able to learn enough about the chapter to compose a respectable summary. The Blomberg Summaries could be done before the lectures, or along with the lectures. 15%

4. Hurtado Introduction

In eight to ten pages (pages of text), summarize Hurtado's "Introduction" (pages 1-12) concerning the following questions: How does Mark relate to the other Gospels? Why was Mark written? Who wrote Mark? When was Mark written? What are the main themes of this Gospel? Provide more than just Hurtado's conclusions regarding these things, also describe his process. Include your own opinions from time to time, but do not focus on that. 15%

5. The Christ and his Followers: an Explanation of Discipleship in Mark 8:22-38.

Using your Bible and Hurtado's commentary, write a seven to nine page paper with this title. You can go through the text verse by verse, but it is probably better to proceed in paragraphs (vv22-26, 27-30, 31-33, 34-38). This section is a major turning point in the Gospel of Mark, and the center of the picture of discipleship in the Gospel of Mark. Explain the view of following Jesus that emerges from this part of Mark. You are welcome to use other commentaries, but that is not required. 15%

6. Research Paper

Seven to nine pages. Pick a text from Mark, research enough to find out what commentators agree on in your text, and what the problems are. Four or five verses are usually enough. This is a good paper in which to explore a section of Mark that you have grappled with for some reason. Explain the passage as you understand it. It is appropriate to suggest an application of your text, but not before the last paragraph or two. Do not take more than one page to get to the core of

your text or issue. Imagine that you are writing to a fellow student, one who is taking the course with you, but knows little about the matter you are researching.

Use three or four sources besides Hurtado. The course bibliography below has asterisks before commentaries that I think would serve you well (which does not mean I agree with them). Plan ahead - if you are not near a library, get the commentary from Providence by interlibrary loan, which means you will need to order the book some time before you need it. You should also be able to get an article or two through the Providence library data bases. 15%

F. COMMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beasley-Murray, George R. *Jesus and the Last Days*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1997.

Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

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Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Mark*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.

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Edwards, James. *The Gospel According to Mark*. Pillar New Testament Commentaries. Eerdmans, 2002.

Evans, Graig A. *Mark 8:27 - 16:20*. Word Biblical Commentary. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001. [See Guelich for volume one.]

France, R. T. *The Gospel of Mark*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Eerdmans, 2002.

Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992.

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- Taylor, Vincent. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. London: Macmillan, 1959.
- Throckmorton, Burton H. Jr. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*, 5th ed. New Revised Standard Version. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1992.
- Weeden, Theodore J., Sr. *Mark: Traditions in Conflict*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.