Course Syllabus

KNB2921HS – The Gospel according to Mark
Knox College
Toronto School of Theology
Winter 2020

Instructor Information

Instructor: Bradley McLean, Full Associate Professor
Office Location: Knox College
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E-mail: bhm.mclean@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: TBA

Course Identification

Course Number: KNB2921H
Course Format: Blended delivery: In-class and online
Course Name: Gospel of Mark
Course Location: Knox College
Class Times: Wednesdays 11:10am – 1:00pm

Course Description

This course will facilitate an understanding of the Gospel of Mark with reference to five themes: 1) its narrative structure; 2) the reader’s distanciation from the text; 3) its implied symbolic world; 4) the intended and unintended effects of the text on the reader; 5) changes in the reader’s self-understanding.

Course content delivery will be seminar style. Evaluation will be based on class participation (20%), weekly reflection papers (30%), and a final research paper (50%).

Course Website

During some weeks, this course will use Quercus for the seminar. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at https://q.utoronto.ca/ and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the My Courses module, where you’ll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701. Students who have trouble accessing Quercus should ask [insert college contact] for further help.
**Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

In this course students are expected to demonstrate the following:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>BASIC DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS</th>
<th>CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES</th>
<th>CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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| **1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge** is defined as a set of increasing levels of understanding within an area of methodologies, and primary and secondary sources. | Participants in this course will:  
• Employ hermeneutic reflection to analyze the particular message and theology of the Gospel of Mark.  
• Discuss the theological claims of the Gospel of Mark with respect to the five themes specified in the course description. | Class participation  
Weekly reflection papers                                      |
| **2. Research and Scholarship** is defined as the ability to identify new question and unresolved questions within scholarly literature, to critically assess the relevant literature, and to formulate a thesis and reasoned arguments based on the basis of evidence. | Participants in this course will:  
• Relate new knowledge to the previously studied ideas and concepts of an introductory New Testament course;  
• Compare and contrast concepts relevant hermeneutic theories;  
• Speculate about implications of such theories to the interpretation of the Gospel of Mark. | Class participation  
Weekly reflection papers  
Research paper                                                   |
| **3. Level of Application of Knowledge** is defined as the ability to engage in self-directed research, and to produce a textual analysis. | Participants in this course will:  
• Accurately interpret passages in the Gospel of Mark, including evaluating relevant its narrative structure, social context. | Research paper                                      |
4. Level of Communication Skills is defined as clear and effective communication in both oral and written forms; the construction of logical arguments; making informed judgments; and facility with standard conventions of style for scholarly writing.

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<td>Class participation</td>
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<td>• Demonstrate the ability to represent accurately the ideas of scholars in the secondary literature, in an approved academic style.</td>
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<td>• Formulate a thesis and providing relevant supporting arguments.</td>
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5. Awareness of the Limits of Knowledge is defined as the recognition of the complexity of textual interpretation, the broad array of methods of interpretation and textual sources, and social contexts, and insights from other disciplines.

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**Evaluation**

**Requirements**

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in three areas:

(1) *Class participation (20%)* – Active participation requires that each student be ready to articulate and support his or her own ideas and to respectfully engage the ideas of others.

(2) *Weekly Reflection papers (30%)* – Each student will present in class a weekly reflection paper, which will include: 1) One significant question based on the five themes of the
course; 2) One significant observation based on the five themes. At the end of class, students will hand in their reflection papers.

(3) Final Research Paper (50%) – Each student will submit a final research paper. This paper is due on the last day of class. In a paper of 12-15 pages (double-spaced, 1” margins, 12 point type) select a specific episode in the Gospel of Mark that you consider to be a particularly ‘telling text.’

1. Explain why you deem your chosen text to be important. Describe in detail and with precision those features of this text that strike you as being especially important. Be sure to explain why you deem them to be so in terms of the five themes: 1) its narrative structure; 2) the reader’s distanciation from the text; 3) its implied symbolic world; 4) the intended and unintended effects of the text on the reader; 5) changes in the reader’s self-understanding. How do these features and features make a significant difference to your understanding of this text.

2. Explain how these features make a significant difference to your understanding of the Gospel of Mark as a whole. In other words, if what you say about the text is true, it should ‘reverberate’ throughout the gospel.

This is a research paper. Students should make good use of secondary sources (academic articles and books). However, the primary purpose of the research paper, however, is not to rehearse the history of modern biblical scholarship on the text, but to demonstrate that you have learned to read the Gospel of Mark with increased understanding and nuance.

Course Schedule

Unit 1
Jan. 8  Topic: 1:1 - Beginning of the Gospel of God’s Son

Unit 2
Jan. 15  Topic: 1:9-13 - John the Baptist

Unit 3

Unit 4

Unit 5
Feb. 5  Topic: 5:24-34 - Woman with a hemorrhage of blood; 6:1-6a – Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth
Unit 6
Feb. 12  Topic: 6:30-7:37 (Cycle A); 7:24-30 - Syrophoenician woman

[Feb. 19 – Reading week ]

Unit 7
Feb. 26  Topic: 8:1-8:26 (Cycle B), including 8:11-9:29 (pivot), and 8:27-30 (climax) 9:2-8 – Transfiguration

Unit 8
March 4  Topic: Mark 9-16; 8:31-33 – First Passion prediction; 9:30-32 – Second Passion prediction

Unit 9

Unit 10

Unit 11

Unit 12
April 1  Topic: 16:1-8 - Resurrection of Jesus [8:31; 15:45]

Course Resources

Select Bibliography: Monographs and Commentaries


**Focused Articles**
Mark 1:1

Mark 1:9-11

Mark 1:16-20

Mark 1:21-28
Mark 2:1-3:6

Mark 3:20-35

Mark 4:1-34

Mark 4:35-8:26

Mark 5:1-20

Mark 7:24-30

Mark 10:1-12, 13-16

Mark 10:46-52

Mark 10:17-22, 23-31

Mark 11:12-25

Mark 12:1-12

Mark 13:1-36

Mark 15:33-47

Mark 16:1-8

**Policies**

**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation Marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST Basic Degree Handbook and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks and the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in. Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which
is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. Forwarding your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address. Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Grading System
1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale (see section 11.2 of the BD Handbook):

- 90-100 (A+) Exceptional
- 85-89 (A) Outstanding
- 80-84 (A-) Excellent
- 77-79 (B+) Very Good
- 73-76 (B) Good
- 70-72 (B-) Acceptable
- 0-69 (FZ) Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).