

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

Instructor Information

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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:

BASIC DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
<p>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.</p>	<p>Participants in this course will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Class participation</p> <p>Weekly reflection papers</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Participants in this course will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Class participation</p> <p>Weekly reflection papers</p> <p>Research paper</p>
<p>3. Level of Application of Knowledge is defined as the ability to engage in self-directed research, and to produce a textual analysis.</p>	<p>Participants in this course will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately interpret passages in the Gospel of Mark, including evaluating relevant its narrative structure, social context. 	<p>Research paper</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately explain key ideas in the secondary literature. 	
<p>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.</p>	<p>Participants in this course will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to represent accurately the ideas of scholars in the secondary literature, in an approved academic style. • Demonstrate the ability to participate in the seminar discussion of assigned readings. • Formulate a thesis and providing relevant supporting arguments. 	<p>Class participation</p> <p>Weekly reflection papers</p> <p>Research paper</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Participants in this course will:</p> <p>Demonstrate the ability to articulate the ambiguities relating to 1) its narrative structure; 2) the reader's distancing from the text; 3) the implied symbolic world; 4) the intended and unintended effects of the text on the reader; 5) changes in the reader's self-understanding.</p>	<p>Class participation</p> <p>Weekly reflection papers</p> <p>Research paper</p>

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 distancing 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

Jan. 22 *Topic: 1:21-28 – Demonic exorcism; 2:1-3:6 [7:1-23] – A Question of Judaism*

Unit 4

Jan. 29 *Topic: 4:1-34 – Jesus secret teaching in ‘Parables’; 5:1-20 - Gerasene Demoniac*

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 - Syrophenician 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
March 11 Topic: Mark 10:17-31 [9:42-50; 10:13-16] - Kingdom of God; 10:32-34, Third Passion prediction; 10:45 - Ransom

Unit 10
March 18 Topic: 13:1-37 – Secret teaching: Apocalyptic Discourse; including 13:24-31 - apocalyptic Son of Man

Unit 11
March 25 Topic: 15:33-39 - crucifixion of Jesus; including 15:39 (climax)

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

Course Resources

Select Bibliography: Monographs and Commentaries

Beech, Amanda, and Robin Mackay and James Wiltgen, ed. *Language and Possible Worlds*. Urbanomic, 2019.

Cahill, Michael. *The First Commentary on Mark: An Annotated Translation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Dewey, Joanna. "The Gospel of Mark," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, 470-509, ed. Elisabeth Schlüssler Fiorenza, Vol. 2, New York: Crossroad, 1994.

Donahue, John R., and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*. Sacra Pagina 2. Collegeville: Liturgical Press/Michael Glazier, 2002.

Dowd, Sharyn E. *Reading Mark: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2000.

- Evans, Craig. *Mark 8:27-16:20*. WBC 34b. Dallas: Word, 2001.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method* (1975), 2nd Rev. Ed. New York: Continuum.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1984), "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion," in *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, ed. Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica, Amherst: U of Massachusetts Press.
- Hare, Douglas. *Mark*. Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville: Westminster, 1996.
- Iersel, Bas M. F. van. *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Mack, Burton L. *A Myth of Innocence: The Gospel of Mark and Christian Origins*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.
- Malina, Bruce, and Richard L. Rohrbaugh. Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1992, 171-278.
- Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1-8*. AB, 27A. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
- McLean, B. H. *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- McLean, B. H. (2015), 'The Rationality of Early Christian Discourse,' *Toronto Journal of Theology*, Supplement 31:43-65.
- Oden, Thomas C. and Christopher A. Hall, eds. *Mark*. Ancient Commentary on Scripture: New Testament, 2. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1998.
- Painter, John. *Mark's Gospel: Worlds in Conflict*. NT Readings. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, Trans. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, esp. 63-100.
- Witherington, Ben. *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Focused Articles

Mark 1:1

Giblin, Charles H. "The Beginning of the Ongoing Gospel (Mark 1,2-16,8)." In *Four Gospels*, 975-986. Leuven: Peeters, 1992.

Mark 1:9-11

Vaage, Leif E. "Bird-Watching at the Baptism of Jesus: Early Christian Mythmaking in Mark 1:9-11." In *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack*, ed. Elizabeth A. Castelli and Hal Taussig, 280-294. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996.

Mark 1:16-20

Shiner, Whitney Taylor. *Follow Me! Disciples in Markan Rhetoric*. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars, 1995: 171-98

Mark 1:21-28

Lagrand, James. "The First of the Miracle Stories According to Mark (1:21-28)." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 20 (1993): 479-84.

Mark 2:1-3:6

Stegmann, Ekkehard W. "From Criticism to Enmity: An Interpretation of Mark." In *God of the Lowly*, 104-17. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1984.

Mark 3:20-35

Ahearne-Kroll, Stephen P. " 'Who are my Mother and my Brothers?': Family Relations and Family Language in the Gospel of Mark." *Journal of Religion* 81/1 (2001): 1-25.

Mark 4:1-34

Fay, Greg. "Introduction to Incomprehension: The Literary Structure of Mark 4:1-34." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51 (1989): 65-81

Mark 4:35-8:26

Achtemeier, Paul J. "The Origin and Function of the Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 198-221

Mark 5:1-20

Johnson, Earl S. Mark 5:1-20: The Other Side. *Irish Biblical Studies* 20 (1998): 50-74

Mark 7:24-30

Downing, F. Gerald. "The Woman from Syrophoenicia." In *Women in the Biblical Tradition*, ed. George J. Brooke, 129-49. Lewiston, New York: Mellen, 1992.

Mark 10:1-12, 13-16

Bailey, James L. "Experiencing the Kingdom of God as a Little Child: A Rereading of Mark 10:13-16." *Word & World* 15 (1995): 58-67.

Mark 10:46-52

Robbins, Vernon K. "The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10,46-52) in Marcan Theology." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973): 224-43.

Mark 10:17-22, 23-31

Smit, Joop F. M. "Propagating a New Oikos: A Rhetorical Reading of Mark 10:17-31." In *Persuasion and Dissuasion in Early Christianity, Ancient Judaism, and Hellenism*, 109-123. Leuven: Peeters, 2003.

Mark 11:12-25

Oakman, Douglas E. "Cursing Fig Trees and Robbers' Dens: Pronouncement Stories Within Social-Systemic Perspective: Mark 11:12-25 and Parallels." *Semeia* 64 (1994): 253-72.

Mark 12:1-12

Milavec, Aaron. "The Identity of 'the Son' and 'the Others': Mark's Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen Reconsidered." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 20 (1990): 30-7.

Mark 13:1-36

Heil, John Paul. "The Narrative Strategy and Pragmatics of the Temple Theme in Mark." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 59 (1997): 76-100.

Mark 15:33-47

Shiner, Whitney Taylor. "The Ambiguous Pronouncement of the Centurion and the Shrouding of Meaning in Mark." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 78 (2000): 3-22.

Mark 16:1-8

Smith, Daniel A. "Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Post-mortem Vindication of Jesus in Mark and Q." *Novum Testamentum* 45 (2003): 123-37.

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.

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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).