

Course Syllabus
KNB2921 – The Gospel according to Mark
Knox College
Toronto School of Theology
Winter 2022

1. Instructor Information

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

2. Course Identification

Course Number: KNB2921H
Course Format: Online (Zoom)
Course Name: Gospel of Mark
Course Location: Knox College
Class Times: Mondays 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. (starting 10 January)

Course Delivery Format

This course is offered using a remote delivery method. In this circumstance, the course outcomes and requirements will remain unchanged, but some accommodations may be made in the areas of content delivery and the manner of assessment. This format will require a computer with a webcam and microphone as well as access to high speed internet. If you have questions about what remote delivery might mean for you, please feel free to contact the course instructor or the Knox College registrar.

3. Course Description

The purpose of this course is to facilitate a more detailed and a more comprehensive understanding of the Gospel of Mark both as early Christian text. Attention will be paid to issues of narrative structure, distinctive themes, theological outlook, and its historical contexts. The course content delivery of this course will be *seminar style*.

4. 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
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<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 question and observation 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; • Speculate about implications of such theories to the interpretation of the Gospel of Mark. 	<p>Class participation</p> <p>Weekly question and observation papers</p> <p>Annotated bibliography and 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. • Accurately explain key ideas in the secondary literature. 	<p>Annotated bibliography and research paper</p>
<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 	<p>Class participation</p> <p>Weekly question and observation papers</p> <p>Annotated bibliography and research paper</p>

	discussion of assigned readings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate a thesis and providing relevant supporting arguments. 	
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5. Evaluation

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

- 20% informed class participation: 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.
- 30% Weekly Question and Observation Papers (presented in class) (§ 7)
- 20% Annotated Bibliography Project (§ 8)
- 30% Final Research Paper (§ 9)

6. Course Schedule

Unit 1 - January 10

Topic: Gospel of Mark – narrative structure (theme 1)

Unit 2 - January 17

Topic: Mark 1:2-45

Assigned Reading: TBA

Unit 3 - January 24

Topic: How to research your annotated bibliography

- Basic tips on using LibrarySearch
- Finding articles on specific biblical texts
- Searching subject-specific databases and research guides
- Finding eBooks
- Managing your searches (saving items, generating citations, etc.)

Unit 4 - January 31

Topic: Mark 2-3

Assigned Reading: TBA

Unit 5 - February 7

Topic: Mark 4

Assigned Reading: TBA

Unit 6 - February 14

Topic: Mark 5

Assigned Reading: TBA

[February 21 – Reading Week]

Unit 7 - February 28

Topic: Mark 6-7

Assigned Reading: TBA

Annotated Bibliography due

Unit 8 - March 7

Topic: Mark 8:1-30

Assigned Reading: TBA

Unit 9 - March 14

Topic: Mark 8:31-10:52

Assigned Reading: TBA

Unit 10 - March 21

Topic: Mark 11-13

Assigned Reading: TBA

Unit 11 - March 28

Topic: Mark 14

Assigned Reading: TBA

Unit 12 - April 4

Topic: Mark 15-16:8 (shorter ending of Mark)

Assigned Reading: TBA

Final Research Paper due

7. Question and Observation Papers

Prior to each class, you are *expected* to consult biblical commentaries and scholarly articles to enrich their hermeneutical reflects (see bibliography). Many focused articles are available to

your through the Quercus site for this course. You are also strongly encouraged to find your own resources through the U of T Library Services.¹

In class, *every* student will present their own weekly reflections, which will include:

- One significant question based on one or more of the hermeneutical perspectives of the course;
- One significant observation based on one or more of the hermeneutical perspectives of the course.

At the end of class, students will hand in their reflection papers. Important: provide a bibliography of the academic sources that you consulted in the process of writing up your weekly reflection paper.

Length: 250 words maximum

a) The purpose of these Q&O papers is to:

1. clarify key ideas and concepts;
2. relate new knowledge to previous knowledge;
3. compare and contrast ideas and concepts
4. speculate about implications of a particular method for textual interpretation.

b) Each 'question & observation' paper should include each of the following:

1. One significant question you have about the assigned reading in Ehrman;
2. One significant observation that you have about the assigned reading;
3. List of any significant terminology that requires clarification in class.

Submit your 'Question & Observation' papers through Quercus.

c) Grading Rubric for Question & Observation papers

- familiarity with required readings
- thoughtful and relevant contributions
- appropriate use of relevant terminology
- clarity and reasonableness

8. Annotated Bibliography Project

- *Due Date:* February 29

¹ Go to onesearch.library.utoronto.ca: Click on Databases. For *New Testament Abstracts*, click on Article databases by title A-Z, then select NTA. For Atla Religion Databases, click on Popular databases, then select Atla Religion database.

- Length: 750 words total
- 150-words per annotation (X 4) = 600 words + 150-words on the two most useful resources and why.

An annotated bibliography is a reference list that includes a short 150-word paragraph that 1. summarizes and 2. briefly evaluates the usefulness of each bibliographic resource in relation to your research project. You must rely on your skills in summarizing and paraphrasing to capture the main ideas of the resource, and your critical thinking skills to evaluate the resource.

- Please remember the policy on plagiarism when you paraphrase the articles.
- Your summaries should not contain the words “I” or “my” or any other informal pronoun.
- Summaries and evaluations should not include direct quotations from the bibliographic source.
- Submit your 4 chosen articles with your annotated bibliography.

Task 1: Four Annotated Scholarly Sources (150-words each) – 15%

Choose one or two uses of the Septuagint in any New Testament text. Identify 4 academic articles that would be useful for writing an academic research paper on these passages. Each academic resource in the alphabetized list should have the following:

- A properly cited academic reference, using Turabian (www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/citation-guide.html), to a scholarly article.
- A 150-word summary and evaluation of the article. The summary should capture significant points of the article.
- At least one sentence should address why you selected this resource.

Task 2: 150-words on the best TWO sources – 5%

Write a 150-word paragraph that does the following:

- Indicate which of the two academic articles you think are the best one’s for your own imagined research project. Explain your reasoning.

Evaluation

Your annotated bibliography will be evaluated on the following:

- Annotations are arranged in alphabetical order.
- Citations follow the Turabian style and are correctly formatted.
- Annotations are double-spaced and do not exceed the allowable word-count.
- Summary of the resource is accurate and captures the most important points.
- Summary is selective in which it captures about the article and does not give extraneous details.

- Your evaluation of the resource is accurate to the resource.
- The best two sources are clearly stated and you have demonstrated critical thinking skills in justifying those that you judge to be most useful for your academic purchases.
- The language of the whole assignment is appropriate (formal) and has been proofread for grammatical and mechanical errors.
- No part of your project shows signs of plagiarism will result in a grade of 0 on the assignment.

9. Final Research Paper

In a paper of 10-12 pages (double-spaced, 1” margins, 12 point type) select, first, a specific episode or other unit of the Gospel of Mark that you consider to be a particularly “telling text” and explain why you deem it to be so. Then, describe in detail and with exegetical precision those features of this text which strike you as being especially important. Again, be sure to explain why you deem them to be so: i.e., how they make a significant difference to our understanding of this text and/or some aspect of the Gospel of Mark as a whole.

Then, in conclusion, demonstrate how your reading of this “telling text” belongs to the overall story of the Gospel of Mark. In other words, if what you say about the text is true, it should “reverberate” elsewhere in the same work. This is meant to be a research paper. Students should consult with the professor regarding the choice of focus. The primary purpose, however, is not to rehearse the history of modern biblical scholarship on the text, but to demonstrate that the student has learned to read the Gospel of Mark itself with increased acumen and understanding.

Style: follow the *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.²

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 is not to rehearse the history of modern biblical scholarship on a given text, but to demonstrate that you have learned to read the Gospel of Mark with increased hermeneutical understanding and self-awareness of your role as a reader.

10. 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

² <https://www-chicagomanualofstyle-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/book/ed17/frontmatter/toc.html>

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).

Anchor Bible Commentaries

UTL has purchased the Anchor Bible Commentaries series online for those of you who may be interested. As yet, they are not catalogued and listed in LibrarySearch but you can use direct link below:

<https://www-theologyandreligiononline-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/anchor-yale-bible-commentaries>

Click on "Browse Full Title List" or Expand +Old Testament or + New Testament

11. Course Resources

New Commentaries (available in Knox's Caven Library)

- Beaver, Caurie. *Mark: A Twice-Told Tale*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009.
- Byrne, Brendan. *A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008.
- Horsley, Richard A. *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Placher, William. *Mark. Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.
- St. Clair, Raquel A. *Call and Consequences. A Womanist Reading of Mark*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.
- Witherington, Ben. *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

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.
- Hare, Douglas. *Mark*. Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville: Westminster, 1996.
- Iersel, Bas M. F. van. *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic

Press, 1998.

Iverson, Kelly R., and Christopher W. Skinner, eds. *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

Mack, Burton L. *A Myth of Innocence: The Gospel of Mark and Christian Origins*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.

Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers. *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986.

Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers. *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009.

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.

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

Lagrang, 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 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 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.