

PROVIDENCE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

136.32-2L - BNT: Special Studies in New Testament - Gospel of Mark

3 credit hours

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 audio lectures with power point outlines, and supplementary reading and assignments. The audio / power point lectures were originally offered as a seminary course, and are now presented as part of this college credit.

Prerequisites: 121.11 - BINT and 121.12 - BINT and one set of *either* 132.22/23 - BNT *or* 134.22/23 - BNT.

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. COURSE TEXTS

Note: these texts are available at the Providence Bookstore, 204-433-7488 or 1-800-668-7768; email bookstore@prov.ca.

Required Text

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. Second edition. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009.

Recommended Texts

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

Moloney, Francis. *Mark: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004.

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

Papers can be submitted to me (Ed Neufeld) as electronic files attached to emails, or as paper copy mailed to me (Ed Neufeld, Providence Theological Seminary, 10 College Crescent, Otterburne MB, R0A 0V0). If you do not have my email address, you can send me an email from my personal page under "Faculty" of the Providence Seminary web site. 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.

Do not send the title page as a separate document file when submitting a paper electronically. If the problem is not having a page number on the title page, solve it this way with MS Word: open the "insert page numbers" window, click on "format," and set page numbering to "start at" 0 (zero). Then hide the page number on the first page, which will be your title page, and the first page of text will be page 1.

Papers sent as email attachments should be in MS Word format. 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, only the same double-space as occurs between all the other lines. Biblical studies journals use traditional footnotes or endnotes; the journal articles noted below will illustrate this method of reference. Your papers should follow this. If you need a more precise guide, see *The SBL Handbook of Style*, Hendrickson, 1999.

In addition to the policies outlined in the *Student Handbook*, the full text of the academic policies, procedures and regulations of Providence College is available online (http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx) or in the Library, Admissions Office, and the Dean's Office.

Plagiarism - Issues of academic integrity will be dealt with according to the policies outlined in the Academic Conduct section of the Student Handbook (<http://prov.ca/studentLife/handbook.aspx>), the Providence College document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing," in the Providence College Academic Formation Guide available in the bookstore, or in the Providence College Policies, Procedures, and Regulations (http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx). Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the policies and with the consequences attached to their violation.

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 in one document. 20%

2. Reading Mark

Read the Gospel of Mark completely through eight 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-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 eight responses as one document. 20%

3. Blomberg Summaries

Craig Blomberg's *Jesus and the Gospels* has 19 chapters. Read 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.

I suggest that the Blomberg Summaries be done before the Journal Reviews below, because Blomberg will provide a broader foundation. The Blomberg Summaries could be done before the lectures, or along with the lectures. 20%

4. Journal Article Reviews

Read the following nine journal articles, and write a one to two page summary and response to each article. As with Blomberg, I have in mind that each reading will take one and a half to two hours, although some articles are short and will take much less. Writing the summary and response should not take more than an hour. The summary should state clearly the single purpose of the article, as well as the means by which the writer makes their point. The response can include agreement, disagreement, frustration, inability to understand, and however you experienced the article.

Most of the articles below have full text available as a pdf file by means of the Providence library online databases, specifically the ATLA Religion Database, which is one of several databases that EBSO hosts. Quite a few of those are also in bound hard copy in the library, but I have noted "bound copy in library" only where the particular article is *not* available on a Providence library database. If you are not a campus student you still have access to Providence's online databases. For distance students who want access paper copies, go the Library > Services page of the Providence web site. The "Ask a Librarian" or "Off-Campus Library services" options will enable you to ask a librarian to send you a photocopy of the bound article, and will enable you to ask for other kinds of help. 20%

Crossley, James G. "The Damned Rich (Mark 10:17-31)." *The Expository Times* 116 (2005) 397-401. [Bound copy in Providence library]

Dunn, J. D. J. "The Messianic Secret in Mark." *Tyndale Bulletin* 21 (1970) 92-117. [Providence Library Online database]

Edwards, James R. "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives." *Novum Testamentum* 31 (1989) 193-216. [Online database]

Hellerman, Joseph H. "Wealth and Sacrifice in Early Christianity: Revisiting Mark's Presentation of Jesus' Encounter with the Rich Young Ruler." *Trinity Journal* 21 (2000) 143-64. [Online database]

Malgon, Elizabeth Struthers. "Disciples/crowds/whoever: Markan characters and readers." *Novum Testamentum* 28 (1986) 103-130. [Online database]

Neufeld, Edmund K. "The Gospel in the Gospels: Answering the Question 'What Must I Do to be Saved?' from the Synoptics." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51 (2008) 267-296. [ATLA Religion database]

Stein, R. H. "Is Our Reading the Bible the Bible the Same As the Original Audience's Hearing It? A Case Study in the Gospel of Mark." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46 (2003) 63-78. [ATLA Religion database]

Tannehill, Robert C. "The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role." *Journal of Religion* 57 (1977) 386-405. [Bound copy in Providence library]

_____. "The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology." *Semeia* 16 (1979) 57-95. [Online database]

5. Eight Sermon Background Studies

(*Note: do only this assignment or the next one, the research paper, but not both.*) Write eight one-page outlines from Mark's Gospel. Make sure you get each outline on one page! Single-spaced or double-spaced. Picture yourself preparing either to preach to a church, or to sit in a living room in the evening, leading a group that's hungry to understand Mark's Gospel.

These eight background studies are not sermon outlines, but the background work from which you would write an outline. Your eight texts should be spaced more or less evenly through Mark, and the total of the eight should give your audience a helpful view of the structure and message of Mark as a whole.

Each one-page study should have the chapter and verse of the passage you have chosen, and a title, at the top. Then it should have 4 paragraphs: (i) a *short* one-sentence paragraph stating the *main idea* of this sermon; (ii) a lengthier paragraph *describing* in some detail the passage, not interpreting it too much, just *observing* its tone and how it is written; (iii) a paragraph indicating what Mark was saying to his *original audience*, and how they would have perceived this passage (i.e. *interpretation*); and (iv) your *application*, describing the call you hear for yourself, and your call to the people who listen to you, or at least what you hope they hear.

At the end of this syllabus is a sample background study. 20%

6. Exegetical Research Paper

(*Note: do only this assignment or the previous one, the sermon background studies, but not both.*) Pick a story from Mark, research enough to find out what scholars agree on in your text, and what the problems are. This is a good paper in which to explore some debated aspect of Mark, or a section 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. Write eight to ten pages of text using the footnote format common in the journal articles listed above. 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 commentaries, and by means of the Providence library databases find and use a few journal articles that pertain to your paper. Plan ahead - if you are not near a library, get the commentary by interlibrary loan, which means you will need to order the book some time before you need it. 20%

F. 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.
- Boring, M. Eugene. *Mark: A Commentary*. New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. German edition: 1931. Trans. J. Marsh. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968.
- Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Mark*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
- Cranfield, C. E. B. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary. Cambridge: University Press, 1959, 1977.
- 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.
- Gould, Ezra P. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1896.
- Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1 - 8:26*. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, 1989. [See Evans for the second volume.]
- Hooker, Morna D. *The Gospel According to St Mark*. Black's New Testament Commentaries. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrikson, 1991.
- Huck, Albert. *Synopsis of the First Three Gospels*. [In Greek.] Ninth Edition Revised by H. Lietzmann. English Edition by F. L. Cross. 1936. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976.

Kelber, Werner H. *Mark's Story of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Kingsbury, Jack Dean. *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989.

Lane, William L. *The Gospel of Mark*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974.

Mansfield, M. Robert. *"Spirit & Gospel" in Mark*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987.

Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Yale Bible. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

_____. *Mark 8-16*. Anchor Yale Bible. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Martin, Ralph. *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian*. Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1972.

Moloney, Francis. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002.

_____. *Mark: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*. Hendrickson, 2004.

Nineham, D. E. *Saint Mark*. Westminster Pelican Commentaries. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963.

Rhoads, David and Donald Michie. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.

Schweizer, Eduard. *The Good News According to Mark*. Trans. D. Madvig. Atlanta: Kohn Knox, 1970.

Swete, H. B. *The Gospel According to Mark*. London: Macmillan, 1913.

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.

Sample Background Study

Text – Mark 12:28-34: Jesus gives the Two Great Commands

One sentence summary: Jesus taught that not one command but two commands are over all the others: love God without reservation, and love people as ourselves.

Observations: This paragraph records a conversation between Jesus and a law teacher. Before this paragraph, different Jewish leaders in the Jerusalem temple (11:27) asked Jesus questions to trick him, or get him in trouble. At first it seems this will be the same, but it is not. The law teacher asked a short question: which is the most important commandment? Jesus answered the man's question, saying that the most important command is to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength.

But Jesus was not satisfied to just to answer that question. The one question with its answer apparently seemed incomplete to Jesus. He added another "like it," to love ones neighbour as ones self. The law teacher agreed completely, and then he restated what Jesus had said, adding to what Jesus had said, but he does not seem to change anything important. Mark records the whole answer, so it must be important that the two commands each get stated twice. The section ends with Jesus saying that the man was not far from the kingdom, and Mark's comment that no one dared ask Jesus questions after this.

Audience: The audience in the Temple were all Jews. I assume that "which command is the most important" was something Jews debated. The disciples and the Jews would have heard which part of Moses' Law was most important. I think they would have been surprised that the greatest command was really two commands, not just one. Maybe they would also have been surprised that two "love" commands were the center of Moses' law, but maybe not.

Mark's Gospel was probably written to Gentiles, and Gentile believers would get something different from this. They were not asking which of Moses' commands were most important. They wanted to know what Jesus thought was most important. From this section, Gentile readers would learn what Jesus thought was most important, and they would also learn that by loving God and loving people they were obeying the most important parts of Moses' law.

My Church: Preachers call believers to do many different things. There are many voices out there, too many. It is good to hear what is the most important. These two commands of Jesus tell all believers what is most important. We all know that loving God is important, but we hear all kinds of ways to do that. The most important way to love God is to love ones neighbour. How we treat the person next to us is the center of loving God with all we have. But don't get rid of the first command, which is to love God with all we have. These two summarize what Moses' Law commanded, and they also summarize what Jesus commanded. These two are the center. It is always safe to come back to these two, and hold them up. These are the ruling pair.