

**NT 3M03/6M06**  
**Experiencing and Living**  
**the Gospel of Mark**

McMaster Divinity College  
Winter 2019  
Saturday 9:00am–4:00pm

Francis G.H. Pang, Ph.D.  
[pangfg@mcmaster.ca](mailto:pangfg@mcmaster.ca)  
Office Hours: Tue, Wed 2–4pm  
Room 238

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an in-depth examination of various historical, literary, and theological themes of the Gospel of Mark. We will explore the text in two “dimensions”: reading the Gospel “vertically” by looking at each episode in its literary context to try to understand how the story of Jesus was told in the time of the second evangelist. We will also look at each episode “horizontally,” comparing the Markan portrayal to the parallel accounts in Matthew and Luke. By focusing on the world behind the text (historical context), the shape of the text (literary context), and the world ‘in front of’ the text (hermeneutical approaches), we can better appreciate Mark’s portrayal of the person and work of Jesus and its relationship with the other two synoptic gospels, and how the Gospel story continues to speak to the church today.

### SPECIALIZATIONS

#### *Biblical Studies (BS)*

Students taking this as a Biblical Studies course will be encouraged to explore the historical, cultural setting and theological emphasis of Mark, as well as scholarly debates concerning the interpretation of the contents.

#### *Church Thought and History (CT)*

Students taking this as a Church History course will be encouraged to explore how Mark is interpreted and received throughout the history of the church and reflect upon the complexities of various hermeneutical issues.

#### *Pastoral Studies (PS)*

Students taking this as a Pastoral Studies course will be encouraged to explore how the ideas and exhortations in Mark are relevant for Christian faith and practice in the contemporary world.

#### *Language Option*

Students taking this with the biblical language option will be encouraged to practice the responsible use of their existing Greek language skills and will undertake translation and exegetical assignments accordingly (see below).

#### *Doctor of Practical Theology (DPT)*

Doctor of Practical Theology students who wish to apply for this course as an Advanced Elective for their degree program must consult with the Program Director of the DPT and the course instructor in order to develop an Advanced Elective approach to the course that fulfills the

specific elements required by the DPT program. Once the elements of the Advanced Elective have been agreed upon by the student, the Program Director, and the instructor, a formal application can be made for an Advanced Elective in connection with this course. Once the application is accepted, DPT students can proceed with the course as part of their degree program.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The following goals are set for the student:

Knowing:

- To become familiar with the historical context and the text of the Gospel of Mark for use in teaching and preaching ministry
- To gain an understanding of problems and issues in the controversial areas of Mark

Being:

- To become competent interpreters of the text
- To become sensitive to the historical and cultural environment of the early church
- To allow the prison epistles to motivate, form and transform our faith, worship and Christian way of life

Doing:

- To develop skills in interpreting the epistles in terms of their theological, historical and social contexts
- To explain key topics and major exegetical issues related to Mark
- Discuss how the Gospel of Mark is relevant to contemporary Christianity

### **TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS**

Students are required to possess the following:

1. The English Bible (modern version such as NASB, NRSV or NIV). The Greek New Testament (for those with Greek competence). Students with facility in Greek are encouraged to use their Greek Bible.
2. Moloney, Francis J., *Mark: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004.
3. One commentary from the recommended commentary list below.
4. Additional reading materials will be distributed on Avenue to Learn (A2L) prior to the first day of class.

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3; phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to complete all of the following assignments. All assignments should be uploaded/posted to the designated Avenue to Learn (A2L) course folder/discussion forum. No unfinished assignments are permitted. See below for late submission policy.

<b>Assignment 1: Reading Notebooks/Journals: 60% (20% each).</b>
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Due before class (Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6) and final version on Apr 10
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We will go over approximately 4 chapters of Mark each month and students are required to read through the assigned passage SIX times before coming to class. Using an English translation (NIV, NASB or NRSV) or the Greek Bible (for language option students), students are to practice three different kinds of reading: Devotional, Exegetical, and Applicational Reading of the Gospel of Mark. Students are to keep notes on three separate notebooks. They will post their notebooks on A2L before class (starting the second class) and also bring them to class to facilitate online and face-to-face discussions. There is no minimum requirement to the length of the notebooks but they should demonstrate that a fair (and substantial) amount of work and self-reflection is being done over the period of the time between lectures (roughly four weeks). The notes do NOT need to employ a formal essay style but should be written in an easy to follow manner and in a style similar to notes for sermon preparation. Students need to hand in all three notebooks at the end of the semester to the instructor (Apr 10). Each notebook is worth 20% of the final grade.

### *1. Devotional Notebook*

You are to read the assigned passage twice as slowly as you can. While you are reading, listen carefully to the Spirit and make notes for yourself as you come across arresting or interesting passages. Consult two commentaries from the list below and see if they help to illuminate your understanding of the passage. Make notes in your notebook and share them in class (each student will be assigned to present their thoughts and insights in the format of a devotional sharing in class). These are not meant to be quotations from a commentary but thoughtful reflections on how reading the text and the commentaries carefully and prayerfully has helped you formulate, develop, or refine your understanding of a particular passage. The posts on A2L will only be visible to the professor and they are meant to be a personal (and semi-private) reflection. The final grade for the notebook will be based primarily on the quality of its personal reflection, but some consideration will also be given to whether or not it shows awareness of the original meaning of the text.

### *2. Exegetical Notebook (Vertical and Horizontal Readings)*

You are to read the assigned passage twice and make notes in the exegetical notebook. The first time should be a “vertical” reading. You should pay attention to the relations between succeeding episodes (repeated words, ideas, scenes, characters, etc.) and how the story progress (plot progression). The goal of this exercise is to help you appreciate various storytelling techniques used by the evangelist and formulate a reading strategy that pays close attention to the details in individual episodes without losing sight of the big picture. After this vertical reading exercise, you need to read a few episodes across the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke). A synopsis of the parallel gospel accounts will be provided either in printed form or electronically. You should pay attention to the similarities and differences between the parallel accounts. You should especially look for things that make the Markan

account stand out from the others, e.g. the use of particular words not found in other accounts, details not found in other accounts, etc. Make note of how these differences help you focus on things that are otherwise unassuming or unnoticeable when reading Mark by itself. Make notes of those in your exegetical notebook.

### ***3. Application Notebook***

In your final two readings of the passage, you should focus on bridging the gaps (cultural, social, historical, linguistic, etc.) between the original context and your contemporary context. Pay attention to the applicability of particular episodes, i.e. not all teaching from Jesus or the evangelist are directly applicable to the contemporary church/world. You can also identify how a particular text is used/misused (in a sermon, a blog post, a conversation, etc.). If you come across good modern illustrations for a particular text, include them in your notebook and share them with your classmates.

<b>Assignment 2: Exegetical Sermon: 40%. Due on Apr 10 at 11:59pm</b>
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Students will prepare a sermon of 4000 words. At least 10 academic secondary sources are required for the sermon, and all must be used and cited in the written submission. Students must consult at least 5 commentaries on the list below in their preparation. Sources may include monographs, commentaries, and articles from journals and books. Sources must NOT include web sites (e.g. blog posts), one volume Bible dictionaries, study Bibles, Bible translations, and dated devotional commentaries. Note, however, students may wish to use relevant websites as additional resources that illustrate application issues.

The assignment consists of two parts (1500–2000 words exegetical comment; 2000–2500 words sermon):

- i. The first part is a 1500-2000 exegetical comment on the selected passage. Students are expected to be able to engage in exegetical analysis. Succinct comments should be made on particular exegetical issues and hermeneutical decisions regarding the selected passage. *This part of the assignment has to follow the MDC style guide.*
- ii. The second part of the assignment is the teaching/preaching component. It should be equivalent to a 20-30 minute presentation. It can be written in a spoken style, intended to be delivered on the pulpit. This part does not have to follow the style guide, but references to sources (e.g. for illustrations) should be included.
- iii. A short summary of the real/imagined target audience (demographic background and settings) as well as a brief description of your homiletic decision are needed.
- iv. The purpose of this assignment is to assess the student's ability to (1) interpret the text of the NT with a theologically and biblically sound hermeneutical method and, (2) apply the message to discipleship, community and ministry formation in contemporary contexts.

#### Student Presentations:

Students will give a short presentation of their preliminary ideas for the sermon (on Apr 6). The presentation should summarize the major exegetical issues of the passage(s) and the main application/implication(s) of the sermon. Each presentation will be followed by a short discussion, which will allow students to gain **constructive** criticism in order to improve their work. The goal of this presentation is to facilitate a collaborative learning environment in which instructor and students are engaged in active learning together.

**Greek Assignment: Translation and Exegetical Notes: 40%. Due on Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6**

Requirements for students taking this course **with the language option**:

1. MDiv or MTS students taking this course with the Greek option need to complete three translation and exegetical exercises on three passages assigned by the instructor INSTEAD OF the devotional notebook and the application notebook. A template for the exegetical assignment will be sent to all students during the first week of class, along with a step by step procedure. These assignments are due on or before 10:00am on the day of our scheduled meeting day, according to the schedule below.
2. Students taking this course as a 6-level Greek exegesis course (MA/PhD) need to complete a weekly translation and exegetical exercise INSTEAD OF the devotional notebook and the application notebook. Students will examine an assigned passage each week (after the first meeting, for eight weeks) and then prepare both exegetical notes and an English translation.

**Contemporary Approaches to Mark – Presentation: 30% (6-level ONLY)**

Due on Feb 2, Mar 2, OR Apr 6

Students taking the course as a 6-level course (non-language option) have an extra requirement (the notebook assignment's weight is 30% instead 60% of the final grade). Each student is required to read Anderson and Moore's *Mark and Method* and choose a contemporary exegetical approach from the following list and apply to a passage of Mark. A 45 minutes presentation (followed by a 15 minutes Q&A) will be scheduled for each student during class. The student will present an overview of the chosen interpretative approach and then exegete a passage in Mark using the selected approach as a demonstration. This must then be followed by a critical review of the approach in terms of its overall strengths and weaknesses as well as its usefulness in ministerial and pedagogical contexts.

Text: Anderson, Janice Capel, and Stephen D. Moore. *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2008.

Interpretative Approaches: Narrative Criticism; Reader-Response Criticism; Deconstructive Criticism; Feminist Criticism; Social Criticism; Cultural Studies; and Postcolonial Criticism.

Grading Summary and Due Date (**3-level**):

Reading Notebooks/Journals	60%	Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6, Apr 10
<u>Exegetical Sermon</u>	<u>40%</u>	Apr 10
Total	100%	

Grading Summary and Due Date (**language option**):

Reading Notebooks/Journals	20%	Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6, Apr 10
Translation Exercises	40%	(See above)
<u>Exegetical Sermon</u>	<u>40%</u>	Apr 10
Total	100%	

<b>Grading Summary and Due Date (6-level, non-language option):</b>		
Reading Notebooks/Journals	30%	Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6, Apr 10
Approaches to Mark–Presentation	30%	Feb 2, Mar 2, OR Apr 6
<u>Exegetical Sermon</u>	40%	Apr 10
Total	100%	

**SCHEDULE**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Class Topics</b>	<b>Reading</b>
<b>Jan 12</b>	Course Introduction, Syllabus Two-Step Hermeneutical Approach The Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of Gospel Reading  The World “Behind” Mark: Exploring the Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts of Mark  Text: Mark 1–4  Discussion: The Economy of Mark	Text and Commentary: Mark 1–4  Moloney, 3–46  Commentary (Introductory matters)
<b>Feb 2</b>	The Shape of Mark: Narrative Strategy and Storytelling in Mark  Mark 5–8  Discussion: The Characters in Mark	Text and Commentary: Mark 5–8  Moloney, 47–124  A2L Resources
<b>Mar 2</b>	The World “in Front of” Mark: Contemporary Interpretive Approaches of Mark  Mark 9–12  Discussion: The Messianic Secret and Christology of Mark	Text and Commentary: Mark 9–12  Moloney, 125–184  A2L Resources
<b>Apr 6</b>	The Theology of Mark  Mark 13–16  Discussion: The Eschatology of Mark	Text and Commentary: Mark 13–16  Moloney, 185–216  A2L Resources

## REFERENCES (\* INDICATES RECOMMENDATION)

- Beavis, Mary Ann. *Mark*. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Black, C. Clifton. *Mark*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2010.
- \*Boring, M. Eugene. *Mark*. New Testament Library. Louisville, KY: WJK, 2006.
- Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Mark*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007.
- \*Cranfield, C. E. B., *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.
- \*Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Mark*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- \*Evans, Craig A. *Mark 8:27–16:20*. WBC. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001.
- \*France, R. T. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- \*Guelich, R. A. *Mark 1–8:26*. WBC. Dallas, TX: Word, 1989.
- Gundry, Robert H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Hooker, M. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*. London: A & C Black, 1991.
- \*Hurtado, L. *Mark*. NIBC 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989.
- Juel, Donald H. *The Gospel of Mark*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999.
- \*Lane, W. L. *The Gospel of Mark*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1–8*. Anchor Bible Commentary. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
- Marcus, Joel. *Mark 8–16*. Anchor Bible Commentary. New York: Doubleday, 2009.
- Moloney, F. J. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- \*Stein, Robert H. *Mark*. Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- \*Strauss, Mark L. *Mark*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

\*Witherington, Ben, III. *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

### **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR**

The following guidelines are presented to encourage all students to participate together in this course, and should be kept in mind at all times.

1. Please respect the opinions of others, even if you do not agree with them. Extend courtesy by not ridiculing others' ideas, but feel free to respond to them logically and critically and in an orderly manner.
2. Students should be on time to class, or be prepared to offer an explanation after class to the professor.
3. Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.
4. Students may eat and drink in class so long as they do not distract others or leave a mess behind.
5. Students should not engage in anything during class time that prevents them from focusing and participating in class discussions.
6. Students are not to carry on private conversations in class. If something is unclear, the whole class will benefit by a question being asked out loud.
7. Cell phones and related devices are to be silenced during class. If a student must for some reason accept a phone call, he or she ought to discretely leave the class in order to do so.

Students who fail to respect these guidelines will be dismissed from the class, with all of the consequences implied.

### **LATE SUBMISSION POLICY**

All assignments must be submitted on or before the date due, unless other arrangements are made in advance. A late penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all assignments submitted after the deadline, unless an extension has been obtained from the instructor prior to the deadline. Assignments cannot be submitted after **April 12, 2019** without written permission from the Office of the Registrar ([thomn@mcmaster.ca](mailto:thomn@mcmaster.ca)).

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty

~ <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>



In this course we will be using a web-based service ([turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com)) for plagiarism detection. Students who do not wish to submit their work to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) can submit an electronic copy of their work via email in PDF format and no penalty will be assigned, but all submitted work is subject to normal verification standards in order to ensure that academic integrity has been upheld (e.g. online search).

### **GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

### **STYLE**

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>  
Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

### **DISCLAIMER**

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.