



McMaster Divinity
College

GOSPEL OF MARK

NT 5XM5/6XM6

McMaster Divinity College
Dr. Christopher D. Land
landc@mcmaster.ca

Winter 2024
Wednesday 4:00–5:50pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Gospel of Mark tells a whirlwind story about the coming Kingdom of God and the role that Jesus of Nazareth is playing in its coming. The book has played (and continues to play) an important role in shaping the church's understanding of Jesus and of discipleship. This course is primarily an exegetical study of the Gospel of Mark. It will examine the book's historical, literary, and theological qualities, and will situate these within relevant first-century contexts. It will also involve a sustained discussion of how the message of Mark's Gospel can be heard, considered, and integrated into the life of the church today.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through their active participation in this course, students will:

KNOWING

- Remember the story told in the Gospel of Mark;
- Become familiar with introductory issues and scholarly debates concerning the Gospel of Mark;
- Understand the major theological themes of the Gospel of Mark;

BEING

- Appreciate the importance of participating in respectful discussions about biblical texts;
- Become self-aware as a modern reader of the Bible, recognizing both the antiquity of the texts and the various ways in which contemporary life influences our understanding of it;
- Embody the life of discipleship that is so central to the Gospel of Mark;

DOING

- Have the ability to quickly locate reliable scholarly resources that discuss a particular NT book or passage;
- Have the ability to ask key questions in order to explore the meaning of a NT book or passage;
- Have the ability to reflect canonically, theologically, and contextually so as to explore how people can/should understand the New Testament today;
- Engage in doctoral-level research that invokes the New Testament in a responsible manner.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Note: You are required to complete all of the following assignments. No unfinished assignments are permitted. *Written assignments must be uploaded to Avenue to Learn either as Word documents (.doc, .docx) or in Rich Text Format (.rtf). A penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all late assignments, including assignments submitted in incorrect file formats. Assignments cannot be submitted after April 5th without written permission from the Office of the Registrar (mdcreg@mcmaster.ca).*

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to complete weekly readings on schedule, to attend class, and to participate in class discussions. No grades are allotted for this, but it is an essential part of the learning experience.

REFLECTION PAPERS (5% INITIAL + 10% CONCLUDING = 15% TOTAL)

At the beginning of the semester, each student will *briefly* describe how they view the Gospel of Mark and how they understand the book's relevance today. Please note the first person is an integral part of these assignments. You should not just talk about Mark; the goal is to self-reflect on the state of *your understanding of Mark*.

At the end of the semester, the same assignment will be repeated. Your concluding reflection need not offer a totally changed perspective on Mark, but it should somehow convey the influence that the course has had on your understanding. To prepare for your concluding reflection, I suggest that you re-read or re-watch your original reflection. Then, take a moment to reflect on your own learning, to observe how you have matured in your understanding, and to ponder how you might continue your learning after the conclusion of the course. Please point to specific areas of (past, present, or future) growth in your understanding of the Gospel of Mark and its implications for today.

Your reflections can be submitted either as written posts or as video posts. While your reflections must be thoughtful, they need not be long. **Your initial reflection must be no longer than 750 words or 5 minutes. The concluding reflection must be no longer than 1,500 words or 10 minutes.** Videos can be recorded in any format that can be posted to an A2L discussion forum (<https://avenuehelp.mcmaster.ca/exec/how-do-i-use-the-avenue-to-learn-macvideo-integration>).

NT 5XM5: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (20%)

DPT students will produce an annotated bibliography that surveys recent biblical scholarship regarding the Gospel of Mark. This bibliography must include at least 15 resources (including at most three commentaries) for a total of around 3,000–4,000 pages of reading. The bibliography should manifest the wide range of New Testament studies, exemplifying a variety of different questions and approaches as well as different confessional and/or non-confessional perspectives. It can be tailored somewhat towards your own research interests, but it must nevertheless demonstrate a general knowledge regarding the Gospel of Mark. Each annotation should, in approximately 100–150 words, summarize the content of a particular resource and its distinctive contribution to our understanding of Mark. It is due according to the Course Schedule below.

NT 5XM5: MARK FOR NON-DUMMIES (25%)

Drawing upon the above annotated bibliography, DPT students will compose an introduction to the Gospel of Mark such as would be suitable for a graduate student (or alum) seeking to think and speak about Mark without being ignorant of contemporary scholarship. This overview should touch on the main issues that impact our understanding of the book and/or its importance for subsequent Christian history and theology. While you need not attempt to be unbiased, it is not the focus of the assignment to advocate for a particular point of view. Instead, focus on laying a general foundation for more specialized research. The paper will be approximately 3,000 words. It is due according to the Course Schedule below.

NT 6XM6: SURVEY PAPER (30%)

In lieu of a bibliography, PhD students will write an essay that surveys the primary ways in which the Gospel of Mark has been engaged by NT scholarship. The essay need not advance innovative hypotheses or arguments, but it should demonstrate familiarity with contemporary scholarship as regards Mark and should assess this work (in very general terms) from the student's own perspective. If there are neglected areas of study, this can also be noted. The paper must be approximately 5,000 words in length. It is due according to the Course Schedule below.

NT 6XM6: COURSE SYLLABUS (15%)

PhD students will prepare a course syllabus designed for a college or seminary course. The course must deal with Mark and must be intended for a post-secondary institution. Although the format of the course and syllabus are not prescribed, your syllabus must clearly define not only the content and organization of the course but also its objectives. In a supplementary document, you must explain in brief paragraphs how each component of the course contributes the overall objectives. The syllabus and accompanying explanation are due according to the Course Schedule below.

RESEARCH PAPER (40%)

In consultation with both the professor and their doctoral supervisor, DPT students will define an area of intersection that involves both the Gospel of Mark and the student's own practice-led research. A research paper will then be written in which the student explores this area of intersection and thereby advances scholarly understanding of his or her practice. For PhD students, this paper can pursue any line of inquiry that is relevant to Mark and that is potentially publishable as a piece of New Testament scholarship. Research papers must be approximately 8,000 words in length. They are due according to the Course Schedule below.

GRADING SUMMARY

NT 5XM5

Reflection Papers	15%
Annotated Bibliography	20%
Mark for Non-Dummies	25%
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>40%</u>
Total	100%

NT 6XM6

Reflection Papers	15%
Survey Paper	30%
Course Syllabus	15%
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>40%</u>
Total	100%

TEXTBOOKS

Students are required to possess the following:

An English translation of the New Testament.

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Class Meeting Topics	Reading Due (before class)	Assignments Due (Friday @ 11:59pm)
Jan 8–14	Introduction to the Course Introduction to Biblical Research Introduction to the Gospels		Initial Reflection
Jan 15–21	Mark's Socio-Historical & Theological Setting Mark's (Non-)Ideal Audience	1:1–8:21 + A2L Materials	
Jan 22–28	Scriptures & Traditions Jesus as a Teacher of the Law Conflict Stories The Pharisees		
Jan 29–Feb 4	Apocalyptic Unveiling Parables The Role of Surprise		

Feb 5–11	Evil & Oppression Exorcism & Liberation The “Reign” of God		Annotated Bibliography
Feb 12–18	Purity Healing Gentiles		
Feb 19–25	Reading Week (No Class)		Mark for Non- Dummies
Feb 26–Mar 3	Blindness & Confusion Disciples & Discipleship Failure & Forgiveness	8:22–16:8 + A2L Materials	
Mar 4–10	The Transfiguration Mark’s Christology “Secret” Identity		
Mar 11–17	The Temple Establishment An Inevitable Collision The Temple’s Destruction Mark & “Judaism”		
Mar 18–24	The Passion Predictions The Passion The Mystery of Suffering		
Mar 25–31	The Resurrection Predictions Mark’s Future Hope		Research Paper
Apr 1–7	Summary and Implications	Shorter & Longer Endings (16:9ff)	Concluding Reflection

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blackwell, Ben C., John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston, eds. *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.

Bryan, Christopher. *A Preface to Mark: Notes on the Gospel in Its Literary and Cultural Settings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Mark: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007.

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Cranfield, C. E. B. *The Gospel According to Saint Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*. Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.

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- Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1:1-8:26*. Word Biblical Commentary 34A. Dallas: Word, 1989.
- Harrington, Daniel J. *What Are They Saying about Mark?* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2005.
- Harrington, Wilfrid J. *Reading Mark for the First Time*. New York: Paulist Press, 2013.
- Hooker, Morna D. *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. London: Black and Peabody, 1991.
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- Juel, Donald H. *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
- Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers. *Hearing Mark: A Listener's Guide*. Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002.
- Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1–8*. Anchor Bible 27. New York: Doubleday, 1999.
- Markuse, Gabi, and Paul Middleton. *Salvation in the Gospel of Mark: The Death of Jesus and the Path of Discipleship*. Eugene: Pickwick, 2018.
- Moloney, Francis J. *Mark: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006.
- Painter, John. *Mark's Gospel*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Pennington, Jonathan T. *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Rhoads, David M., Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. 3rd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012.
- Stein, Robert H. *Mark*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Taylor, Vincent. *The Gospel According to St Mark*. London: Macmillan, 1952.
- Telford, William R. *The Interpretation of Mark*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995.
- . *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark*. New Testament Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Voelz, James W. *Mark 1:1–8:26*. Saint Louis: Concordia, 2013.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an

academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. For more information, please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty at:

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

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) for plagiarism detection and the student's continuation in the course represents his or her consent to the use of this service.

A useful guide to avoiding plagiarism is the Harvard Guide to Using Sources:

<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>

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://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

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, for example, the following: NRSV (2021), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

This syllabus is for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.