



A M B R O S E

NT 650 New Testament Book Study: Gospel of Mark

Professor: Robert S. Snow, PhD
T/Th 2:30 – 3:45 pm
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Office hours: T/Th 1:00 – 2:00 pm

1. Course Description

Originally, the Gospel of Mark was not read but rather heard by early Christians in the form of a dramatic re-telling. This influences how contemporary students of Mark should interpret his text. Additionally, Mark's audience would have had a keen understanding of the Old Testament which enables them to appreciate OT terms and themes which Mark applies to Jesus in a variety of creative ways. Aurality (Mark written for the listener) and intertextuality (Mark's use of the Old Testament) will function as the means by which the course examines the Gospel.

2. Course Objectives

- to acquire the skills necessary to read Mark as narrative
- to determine the various ways in which Mark uses the OT
- to apply Mark's theology to contemporary life

3. Required Texts

- a. Moloney, Francis J. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.
- b. Rhoads, David. *Reading Mark: Engaging the Gospel*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.
- c. Bible: NIV or NRSV

4. Course Requirements

- a. **Book review #1:** Write a critical review of *Reading Mark: Engaging the Gospel*. This review is to be no more than 1500 words. See Appendix 2 for the paper guidelines.
- b. **Book review # 2:** In consultation with the Professor, choose a monograph of your choice on some aspect of Mark's Gospel. See appendix 2 for the paper guidelines. The book must be 250 pages or more in length.
- c. **Short critical issues paper:** Write a 1500 word paper not only summarizing the scholarly debate on Mark 8:38-9:1 but also

weighing the strengths and weakness of the arguments. The issue scholars debate is to what event(s) might the coming of the Son of Man and the Kingdom of God be referring? You must discuss three possibilities and choose one that seems the most convincing to you. France, in his commentary, *The Gospel of Mark*, pp. 344-45, lists the various options proposed by scholars. Consult the commentaries listed in Appendix 3 for explanations and defenses of various proposals.

- d. **Exegesis paper:** Using the skills you've learned from the class, particularly those concerning narrative criticism and intertextuality, write a 3500-4000 word essay on a passage in Mark of your choosing (but in consultation with the professor). In this paper, you must also *interact* with five of the *assigned* commentaries on Mark and two journal articles. These commentaries will be placed on reserve. See Appendix 3 for the paper guidelines and the reserve list.
- e. **Final exam:** This exam will cover all readings and lectures from entire course.

5. Course Grade

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| a. Book reviews | 20% |
| b. Critical issues paper | 15% |
| c. Exegesis paper | 35% |
| d. Final exam | 30% |

6. Important Notes

- a. **Format for papers:** All papers need to be double-spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman. Number each page. Indicate word count as well on the title page. No assignments are to be emailed to the instructor. Hard copies only.
- b. **Extensions/Submissions:** Extensions are highly unusual occurrences contingent upon equally highly unusual circumstances (being too busy does not count!). I will enforce a late penalty of 8% per day including week-end days.

Appendix 1: Schedule of class topics, tests, and assignments

Date	Lesson Topic	Assignments/tests/readings due
9 Sept	Welcome and Introduction to the course	
14 Sept	Lecture 1: Historical world of Mark	Read pp. 1-15*
16 Sept	Lecture 2: Mark as aural narrative	Read "Mark as Aural Narrative" by Dewey
21 Sept	Video: A live performance of the Gospel	
23 Sept	Video: A live performance of the Gospel	
28 Sept	Lecture 3: Mark's story world	Read pp. 16-24
30 Sept	Lecture 4: Mark and his Scriptures	Read "The Use of the OT by the NT writers" by Hays and Green
5 Oct	Lecture 5: Prologue (1:1-13)	Read pp. 27-41
7 Oct	Lecture 6: The Kingdom is near (1:14-45)	Read pp. 45-60
12 Oct	Lecture 7: Resistance toward Jesus (2:1-3:6)	Read pp. 60-72
14 Oct	Lecture 7 con't	Book review # 1
19 Oct	Lecture 8: Jesus' true family (3:7-4:34; 6:1-6a)	Read pp. 73-97; 111-113
21 Oct	No class – community day	
26 Oct	Lecture 9: Jesus' mighty deeds (4:35-5:43)	Read pp. 97-111
28 Oct	Lecture 10: Jesus and the Twelve (6:6b-56)	Read pp. 115-136
2 Nov	Lecture 11: Redefined purity (7:1-8:9)	Read pp. 136-156
4 Nov	Lecture 12: Jesus and the Twelve con't (8:10-8:30)	Read pp. 156-168 Critical issues paper
9 Nov	Lecture 13: Part 1: The Way of the Son of Man (8:27-9:29)	Read pp. 171-186
11 Nov	Remembrance Day – no class	
16 Nov	Lecture 14: Part 2: The Way of the Son of Man (9:30-10:31)	Read pp. 186-203
18 Nov	Lecture 15: Part 3: The Way of the Son of Man (10:31-10:45)	Read pp. 203-214
23 Nov	Lecture 16: Judgement of the Temple (11:1-25)	Read pp. 215-228 Book review # 2
25 Nov	Lecture 17: Challenges from the religious leaders (11:27-12:44)	Read pp. 229-248
30 Nov	Lecture 18: Prediction of the Temple's destruction (13:1-37)	Read pp. 248-273
2 Dec	Lecture 19: The Passion: Jesus, the disciples, and the Temple leaders (14:1-72)	Read pp. 275-309
7 Dec	Lecture 20: Death of the Messiah (15:1-47)	Read pp. 309-336
9 Dec	Lecture 21: Epilogue (16:1-8)	Read pp. 339-359 Term paper

*Unless otherwise indicated, all readings refer to Francis Moloney's book, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*.

Appendix 2: Guidelines for book review

The purpose of a book review is twofold:

- a. to summarize the contents of the book, including a discussion of how the author has organized his/her material. Also, the reviewer needs to indicate the author's purpose for writing and any parameters or limitations of the work.
- b. to critically evaluate the book's strengths and weakness. This is the most important part of the review and should be given more attention (approximately two thirds of the review) than the summary. The reviewer seeks to determine how well the author has fulfilled his/her purpose in writing? How has the organization of the book either helped or hindered meeting this purpose? Where are the arguments weak and why, or vice versa, where are they strong and why? If writing for a particular audience, has s/he accomplished this goal, in your opinion?

Some helpful questions to ask yourself when writing the review:

- am I aware of author's aims and perspectives?
- have I adequately described the content and structure?
- have I focused on significant issues (i.e., not minor ones)?
- have I critically evaluated the book's strengths?
- have I critically evaluated the book's weaknesses?
- is my review organized clearly?
- are my statements accurate?
- is the review free of spelling and grammatical errors?
- have I left this assignment until the very last minute?

Appendix 3: Exegesis paper guidelines

Purpose:

The purpose of this paper is to study a narrative from Mark's Gospel employing narrative criticism and paying keen attention to intertextuality with the OT.

Paper components:

a. Introduction (150 words):

This section briefly summarizes the argument of your paper. It tells readers what the paper is about and the method you've employed for examining the text.

b. Literary context considerations (500 words):

Describe how the preceding and following verses relate to your passage; how does the literary context help you understand the text?

c. Literary analysis (2000-2500 words):

Here you need to engage the text itself consulting the relevant aspects of narrative criticism. I will place the book *Mark as Story* on reserve on which I based that lecture (Lecture 3).

One point about secondary literature: try to delay consulting the commentaries until you've come to a good understanding of the passage for yourself. To that end, attempt to interact with the scholarly literature, weighing the strength of arguments, etc, instead of merely citing the thoughts of others (although you will

do this at times as well). Through your literary analysis, you should gain a pretty good understanding of the passage – the point of the paper. I'm not really interested in what Richard France or Adela Collins thinks of the meaning of the passage but what YOU think.

d. Thematic contribution to Mark's Gospel (500):

What role does your text play in the story world of Mark? What contribution does it make to the themes of Mark?

e. Conclusion (150 words):

Summarize the results of your paper.

Technical info

Follow the “**Style Guide**” for footnotes and bibliography. This can be found at <http://www.ambrose.edu/library>. Remember that you can also use footnote space to interact more with the secondary literature if you wish or to cite additional biblical references, and so on. This will not count against the word limit. However, the most relevant material needs to go in the body of the paper.

Citing a commentary in the **bibliography**:

Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1–8:26*. Word Biblical Commentary 34A. Dallas: Word, 1989.

Citing a commentary in **footnotes**:

Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26* (WBC 34A; Dallas: Word, 1989), 5. Subsequent references: Guelich, 5. (no need to cite the title of a commentary in subsequent references as the titles are usually the same for commentaries on the same biblical book)

Citing a journal article in the **bibliography**:

Beasley-Murray, George. “The Interpretation of Daniel 7.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983): 44–58.

Citing a journal article in **footnotes**:

George Beasley-Murray, “The Interpretation of Daniel 7,” *CBQ* 45 (1983): 44–58. Subsequent references: Murray, “Interpretation,” 45.

NB: Although you won't gain marks for having the correct formatting for footnotes and bibliography, **you will lose marks for incorrect formatting.**

Reserve commentaries:

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

Evans, Craig A. *Mark 8:27–16:20*. Word Biblical Commentary 34B. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001.

France, Richard. *The Gospel of Mark*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2002.

Guelich, Robert A. *Mark 1–8:26*. Word Biblical Commentary 34A. Dallas: Word Books, 1989.

Gundry, Robert H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1993.

Hooker, Morna D. *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. Black's New Testament Commentaries 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991.

Hurtado, Larry W. *Mark*. New International Biblical Commentary 2. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Lane, William. *The Gospel According to Mark*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.