



## Exposition of Mark BIB 634

*The mission of MB Seminary is to educate and equip men and women to help lead the church in reaching Canada and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ.*

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Credit Hours: 3  
Prerequisites: None  
Course Term: January 29 - March 30, 2024  
Instruction: Teaching Intensive at Willingdon Church

- Feb 8-9 (7:00pm-9:00pm)
- Feb 10 (8:30am-2:30pm)

### **Description**

How does Mark reveal Jesus Christ in his gospel? How do we carefully investigate Jesus' life, mission and ministry as portrayed through the Gospel of Mark and place our findings into a contemporary context? What might be the implications for life and ministry today? In this course we seek to place the Gospel of Mark in its historical, cultural, and literary contexts. We examine closely the various portraits of Jesus that Mark highlights. The focus is on a careful literary and theological study of the book with the goal of understanding the text and applying it to the present context. This course's themes are informed by a Mennonite Brethren perspective in accordance with the Mennonite-Brethren Confession of Faith

### **Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify and describe the book's genre and its historical, social, political, and cultural contexts, as well as the content, themes, and theology of the gospel of Mark.
- Appreciate the value of the book for Christian discipleship.
- Integrate the importance of hermeneutical awareness and skill in interpreting the gospel genre generally and the Gospel of Mark specifically.
- Appreciate the importance of integrating biblical content and themes with contemporary questions and challenges.
- Demonstrate the skill to study the Bible inductively (observation, question articulation, critical reflection) as well as exegete, interpret, and apply the biblical text with hermeneutical sensitivity and skill.

- Demonstrate the ability and skill to compose a small group study aid or a short sermon presentation from the Gospel of Mark.

The most effective learning takes place as you carefully process information through higher-order thinking skills. Your performance and evaluation in this course will be based on demonstrating your engagement and learning, not by simply repeating back basic facts. In all that you do in this class, you should always remember to use higher-order thinking skills, as described below:

- Comprehension: demonstrates the ability to grasp meaning, explain, and restate ideas,
- Application: demonstrates the ability to use learned material in new situations,
- Analysis: demonstrates the ability to separate material into component parts and show relationships between the parts,
- Synthesis: demonstrates the ability to put together the separate ideas to form a new whole, to establish new relationships, and
- Evaluation: demonstrates the ability to judge the worth of material against stated criteria.

### **Required Texts**

- Black C. Clifton. *Mark's Gospel: History, Theology, Interpretation*. Eerdmans, 2023. (Pages 371-426).
- Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. B&H Group, 2009.
- Geddert, Timothy J. *Mark (BCBC)*. Herald Press, 2001. (Pages 416-431).
- Gombis, Timothy G. *The Story of God Bible Commentary: Mark*. Zondervan, 2021.
- Old and New Testaments (read Deuteronomy, 1-2 Kings, Isaiah, and Mark).
- Access to any theological library or a subscription to a digital library such as scribd.com

### **Schedule and Assignments**

Week	Due Date	Assignments	% of Grade	Cumulative
1	Jan 29	Course Pre-reading		
2	Feb 8-10	Course Intensive (See schedule below)		
2	Feb 10	Gospel of Mark Content Quiz	5%	5%
3	Feb 16	Reflection Paper #1	10%	15%
4	Feb 23	Discussion Group #1	2%	27%
5	Mar 1	Reflection Paper #2	10%	27%
6	Mar 8	Discussion Group #2 Research Paper	2% 30%	29% 59%
7	Mar 15	Reflection Paper #3	10%	69%

8	Mar 22	Discussion Group #3	2%	71%
9	Mar 29	Creative Ministry Project	29%	100%

Course Intensive (Willingdon Church)	
Thursday, Feb 8, 2024	7:00pm-9:00pm
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal and Professional experience the Gospel of Mark</li> <li>• Backgrounds to the Gospel of Mark</li> </ul>
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorship, Date, Audience, Purpose</li> </ul>
Friday, Feb 9, 2024	7:00-9:00 pm
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Teacher</li> </ul>
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Prophet (part 1)</li> </ul>
Saturday, Feb 10, 2021	8:30am- 2:30pm
Session 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Prophet (part 2)</li> <li>• Jesus as Messiah (part 1)</li> </ul>
Session 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as Messiah (part 2)</li> <li>• Jesus as (rejected) King (part 1)</li> </ul>
Session 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus as (rejected) King (part 2)</li> <li>• Mark for today's context</li> </ul>

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

**Content Quiz (5%):** It is critical for students to have a working knowledge of the content of the Gospel of Mark to best benefit from the course lectures as well as their assignments. To this end, students will write a content quiz based on a close and careful reading of Mark. The quiz will be written at the beginning of class on **Saturday, February 10, 2023 @ 8:30 am.**

**Reflection Papers and Discussion Groups:** There are three sets of Reflection Papers and Discussion Groups, with grading based on two components for each Paper/Group set. During three weeks of the course (Weeks 2, 4 and 6), you will write a three-page reflection paper in response to the instructional content and the required readings. Your reflection paper should answer the questions assigned to each of the three weeks (see below). The week after your reflection paper is due, you will meet in church-based discussion groups to discuss your responses to the questions and to explore other related topics. The maximum length for each reflection paper is three pages.

1. **Reflection Papers** (3 reflection papers x 10% = 30%): The following are the questions you should address in your three reflection papers (there are three questions for each week, so aim for one page per question):

- **Week 2** (due Feb 16) - review Blomberg's chapter on Political Backgrounds, the Gospel of Mark chapters 11-15, and Gombis' commentary on Mark 11-15.

1. Demonstrate how a knowledge of the political backgrounds of the New Testament aids in a stronger and more accurate interpretation of the Gospel of Mark.
2. In your opinion, which passages in Mark are in vital need of an understanding of the political background to effectively understand the context?
3. How does one go about incorporating this material into a sermon or church teaching context that makes it accessible, interesting, and applicable?

- **Week 4** (due Mar 1) – review Blomberg's chapter on Religious Backgrounds, the Gospel of Mark chapters 2-7 and Gombis' commentary on Mark 2-7.

1. Demonstrate how a knowledge of the religious backgrounds of the New Testament aids in a stronger and more accurate interpretation of the Gospel of Mark.
2. In your opinion, which passages in Mark are in vital need of an understanding of the religious background to effectively understand the context?
3. How does one go about incorporating this material into a sermon or church teaching context that makes it accessible, interesting, and applicable?

- **Week 6** (due Mar 15) - review Blomberg's chapter on the Socio-Economic Backgrounds, the Gospel of Mark chapters 6-10 and Gombis' commentary on Mark 6-10.

1. Demonstrate how a knowledge of the socio-economic backgrounds of the New Testament aids in a stronger and more accurate interpretation of the Gospel of Mark.
2. In your opinion, which passages in Mark are in vital need of an understanding of the socio-economic background to effectively understand the context?
3. How does one go about incorporating this material into a sermon or church teaching context that makes it accessible, interesting, and applicable?

2. **Discussion Groups** (3 discussion groups x 2% = 6% of final grade): During Weeks 3, 5 and 7, you will meet in a church-based or virtual discussion group to discuss the questions you addressed in your reflection paper, explore other related topics, and contextualize ideas to your ministry setting. A designated leader from the church will facilitate the church-based discussion groups. The assessment of participation in discussion groups involves attendance and actual participation in the group sessions (both are worth 50% of the discussion group mark). The discussion group leaders will use the following rubric to assess each group member’s participation:

Excellent participation	47-50/50	The group member consistently engaged in group conversations. The person did an excellent job listening to other group members and consistently added meaningful content to the conversations.
Great participation	43-46/50	The group member often engaged in group conversations. The person was somewhat attentive to the group conversation and would add relevant content periodically.
Good participation	40-43/50	The group member sometimes engaged in group conversations. The person was somewhat attentive to the group conversation and would add relevant content occasionally.
Fair participation	35-39/50	The group member did not often engage in group conversations. The person seemed out of touch with the group conversation and would rarely add relevant content.
Poor participation	<35/50	The group member rarely, if ever, engaged in group conversations. The person seemed distant and uninterested in the group discussion and even other group members.

3. **Research Paper** (30%): The student will compose a 15-18 page paper on any of the options provided below. At a minimum, the paper will consist of:

- The appropriate identification of the passage (where the passage starts/stops, its placement within the book, its placement within the gospel of Mark, etc.), giving specific reasons for each of your conclusions (5 points),
- An analysis of the literary style and characteristics of the passage (citing specific references) (5 points),
- A detailed and thoughtful application of the appropriate interpretive approach suggested during the course (12 points),
- A concluding section on the modern relevance and application of the passage (7points), and
- Specific references from at least five sources, in addition to the Required Texts (1 point)
- All conclusions and opinions must be supported and documented with relevant and appropriate evidence and/or examples.

Options for the research paper:

- Mark as a dramatic (enacted) gospel (thematic)
- Jesus as prophet like Moses (thematic)
- Jesus as prophet like Elijah and Elisha (thematic)

- The reliability and authenticity of Mark 16.9-20 (textual)
- The Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit in Mark 3.20-30 (exegetical)
- Salt as a metaphor for discipleship in Mark 9.40-50 (exegetical)
- The meaning of “this generation” in Mark 13.30 (exegetical)
- The role of women in the gospel of Mark (thematic)
- Mark as an early church discipleship manual (thematic).

4. **Creative Ministry Curriculum Project (29%):** Using the Research Paper as the foundation, you are to create either a four-week small group study guide or a classroom curriculum or a 15-20 minute sermon based on the Research Paper passage. The study guide / curriculum / sermon must reflect the content and principles discussed in this course, and it is to include a section on life and ministry application for the participants/audience. You are to work through the study guide / curriculum / sermon with a small group of at least four people (one meeting/sermon).

- A thorough and detailed four-week study guide / curriculum (19 points), and
- A 1,500 word summary of your small group / classroom experience (10 points).
  
- OR a 15-20 minute video recording of the sermon (19 points), and
- A 1,500 word summary of your preaching experience (10 points).

### Course Evaluation

Near the conclusion of this course, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation. Because feedback is very important to us, the course evaluation is a required part of the course and is tied to the submission of your last assignment. The course evaluation will be integrated into the Populi classroom in Week 8.

### Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.

A-	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skillful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision or references and resources not taken fully into account or examples are basic or not completely convincing or barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

## Assignment Grade Appeals

Students can appeal their grade to the course instructor by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. Deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has receipt of grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made directly to Dr. Brian Cooper, Director of Student Development, [briancooper@mbseminary.ca](mailto:briancooper@mbseminary.ca).

**Web Support-Student Portal** — <https://mbseminary.populiweb.com>

All students at MBS will receive a MBS-Populi username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application. If you have any difficulty with your password or your login credentials, please contact Keith Reed, Director of Ministry Support, ([keithreed@mbseminary.ca](mailto:keithreed@mbseminary.ca)).

## Course Intensive/Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to your church host and contact.

## Paper Formatting

Students are required to adhere to the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format for all papers. Please consult the following [Purdue Owl](#) website for information or:

Turabian, Kate, L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

## Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire MB Seminary community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at MBS.

## Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the MB Seminary Director of Student Development ([briancooper@mbseminary.ca](mailto:briancooper@mbseminary.ca)) of that fact **before the beginning of a course** so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. To repeat: To ensure that instructors know to accommodate a student who has a learning access issue, the student must inform the Director of Student Development of a disability before the beginning of the class. After that is too late.