

University of Calgary  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Religious Studies  
Fall 2005 Course Outline

05/08/22

## ADVANCED STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN ORIGINS THE GOSPEL OF MARK

RELS 483 L01

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Ayse Tuzlak  
CLASS MEETS: MW 15:00 – 16:15  
OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., in SS 1330

To make an appointment outside these times, please e-mail  
[ayse.tuzlak@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ayse.tuzlak@ucalgary.ca)

Lacking the developed ecclesiology of Matthew, the elegant rhetoric of Luke, and the philosophical sophistication of John, Mark has frequently been dismissed (both by ancient Christians and by modern historians) as the crudest and least illuminating of the gospels.

However, Mark's gospel has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity in recent years. Its position as the earliest gospel means that it may provide special insight into the very beginnings of Christian history. Furthermore, its breathless, urgent writing style is starting to be appreciated on its own terms.

During the first half of the course, students will engage in close and careful readings of the gospel itself, paying special attention to its rhetorical strategies and its theology. In the second half, we will trace the gospel's influence through history, both by way of the footprints it left upon two of the other canonical gospels (Matthew and Luke), and by the impact it has had on Christian readers through the centuries to follow.

### CORE COMPETENCIES

Students in this class will:

- learn to read ancient texts closely and analyze them carefully;
- become conversant with contemporary research in historical Jesus studies;
- familiarize themselves with the comparative tools that are used in philology and Biblical research;
- hone their skills at articulating their thoughts orally through class presentations and question-and-answer sessions;
- improve their ability to express themselves in writing.

Please remember that the attainment of any learning endeavour requires that students commit time and energy to that endeavour. **Attend lectures, read assigned materials, and complete all course work.**

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Francis J. Moloney, *Mark: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*  
David Rhoads, Joanna Dewie, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story*  
Robert Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction*  
Sean P. Kealy, *Mark's Gospel: A History of its Interpretation*

**N.B.:** *Mark as Story* contains a translation of Mark's gospel. However, you will also need a complete Bible in order to check Old Testament references and synoptic parallels. (I prefer the NRSV translation, but NIV is acceptable if that's all you have.) HarperCollins Study Bibles are available at the bookstore in case you do not already own one. Note that from time to time we will compare the Rhoads translation of Mark with the others, so you will be expected to have both books with you at all times.

## GRADING

Test on the Content of Mark:	20%	Sept. 26
Take-Home Assignment on the Synoptic Problem:	10%	Oct. 24
Test on Themes and Interpretations of Mark in History:	25%	Nov. 16
Oral Presentation:	10%	<i>see below</i>
Final Research Paper (15-20 pages):	25%	Dec. 19
Attendance and Participation:	10%	

At the end of the course, an overall letter grade will be assigned according to the following scheme.

A+	100 – 96	A	95 – 90	A-	89 – 85
B+	84 – 80	B	79 – 75	B-	74 – 70
C+	69 – 65	C	64 – 60	C-	59 – 55
D+	54 – 53	D	52 – 50	F	50 or less

I do not accept late assignments except in the case of *documented* medical or family emergencies. No extra credit work will be offered. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

**During the last two weeks of class, you will present a draft of your final project.** I know that oral presentations are scary, but the best place to learn to do them is in a supportive atmosphere with an interested and intelligent audience!

**Your final paper can have anything whatsoever to do with Mark.** You may do a traditional analysis of a theme or a story in the gospel, of course. Or you may choose to compare Mark with other literature (ancient or modern); to explore an aspect of the synoptic problem; to study Mark's appearances in music or visual art over the centuries; to do a semiotic, sociological, archaeological, or some other -otic or -ological analysis of Mark; or anything else that is academically rigorous and relevant to the course.

If you are an artist or a writer and would like to do a final project of a creative nature (a play, a graphic novel, a videotaped performance of the gospel, etc.), please see me. I am open-minded but I want to vet any unusual project BEFORE you begin it.

**Academic Honesty:**

*Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.*

**Academic Accommodation:**

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor **two weeks** before the scheduled date.

**Withdrawing from courses:**

Please note the information regarding withdrawals and fee refunds in the Academic Schedule of the current University Calendar.

**Recording of lectures:**

Recording any part of any lectures in any form must be first approved by the instructor in writing and is for individual private study only. See current Calendar, Tape recording of Lectures.

**Safewalk Programme:**

"You don't have to walk alone...." Call 220-5333 and a member of the Safewalk Team will walk you to your car, the LRT, or any destination on campus. Safewalk is available to all students, staff and faculty any time of the day or night. Look for the Campus Security Help Phones located throughout the University. Please don't hesitate to call!

**Gnosis:**

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [gnosis@ucalgary.ca](mailto:gnosis@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

# SCHEDULE:

## PART I: CONTENT

**September 12 – 14: Who wrote the gospel of Mark?**

*Readings:* Kealy, chapter 1  
Start reading Mark. We will be returning to it over and over again over the course of the term. **Be sure to look up every Old Testament reference**, which will be footnoted in any good study Bible. Do *not* look up gospel parallels yet; save that for the Synoptic Problem section in a few weeks.

**September 19 – 21: The Plot**

*Readings:* Moloney, chapters 3, 4, and 5

**September 26: TEST ON THE CONTENT OF MARK**

## PART II: THEMES

**September 28: Conflict**

*Readings:* Rhoads, chapter 4

**October 3 – 5: Character**

*Readings:* Rhoads, chapter 5, 6, and Conclusion

**October 10: (No classes. Happy Thanksgiving!)**

**October 12: Kingdom and Christ**

*Readings:* Moloney, chapter 6

**October 17 – 19: Community**

*Readings:* Moloney, chapter 7

## PART III: INFLUENCE

**October 24: Take-Home Assignment Due!**

*Follow the instructions on pp. 29-30 of the Stein book, and hand in your marked-up photocopies of exercises 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 at the **beginning of class**.*

**October 24 – 26: Mark's First Readers: Matthew and Luke**

*Readings:* Stein, chapters 1 and 2

**Oct. 31 – Nov. 2: Mark's Readers from the Middle Ages to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

*Readings:* Kealy, chapters 2 and 3

**November 7 – 9: Source Criticism**

*Readings:* Kealy, chapter 4  
Stein, chapter 6

**November 14 – 16: Form Criticism**

*Readings:* Kealy, chapter 5  
Stein, chapter 7

**November 16: TEST ON THEMES AND INTERPRETATIONS OF MARK IN HISTORY**

**November 21 – 23: Modern Biblical Mysteries: The “Secret” Gospel of Mark**

*Readings:* On Monday we will watch a documentary. On Wednesday we will discuss it.

**November 28 – 30: Presentations**

**December 5 – 7: Presentations**

**Final Paper Due in my mailbox on 19 DECEMBER by 12:00 NOON.**

**No exceptions. No extensions. No e-mailed copies. I mean it.**