Course Description:

This course is designed to build upon the tools and methods for exegesis learned in NT 502, using the Gospel of Mark as a case study. Specifically, we give attention to four aims. First, we aim to learn the content of Mark as well as issues and skills related to its interpretation. We focus on the Gospel in its literary and historical context. Narrative criticism is the main, but not sole, exegetical method for the course (we use a synthesis of historical-critical tools to interpret the text). The essential question for the course is: To what extent is a literary reading of the Gospel of Mark helpful in determining Mark’s theological intention? We approach Mark as a unified narrative and rhetorical composition, with a unified literary-theological goal. Through analysis of the Gospel’s argument and themes over the course of the semester, we seek to understand Mark’s presentation of Jesus.

Second, we develop the skill of using the Synopsis as a tool for synoptic Gospel studies, particularly for gaining an understanding of Mark’s distinctive version. Third, we address hermeneutical issues and consider how Mark’s narrative functions normatively for individuals and the Church. Fourth, we aim to cultivate exegetical thinking. Although the application of exegetical steps or methods to a text is foundational, students have not actually interpreted a text until they connect the parts of their research to illuminate the whole text in a meaningful way. A reader begins with an investigation of the parts of a text, by researching its form and function, grammar and vocabulary, and social and historical background. Displaying this research without connecting those parts, however, is not an interpretation but a data report. Interpretation requires a creative act of the imagination. The musician is not virtuosic until she combines tempo, rhythm, dynamics and intonation with a personal engagement of the piece she plays. Thus, in this course, we give attention to engaging Mark and synthesizing the results of exegetical methods in order to produce a sound and meaningful interpretation.

Course Objectives:

In this course students will do the following:

• translate and analyze the Greek text of the Gospel of Mark (articles 1-2 of the GCTS mission statement).

• demonstrate competency in the use of a Synopsis for studying Mark (articles 1-2 of the GCTS mission statement).
synthesize the results of their exegetical work on Mark into a sound and meaningful interpretation (articles 1-2 of the GCTS mission statement).

• articulate the theological message of Mark’s Gospel (articles 1-2 of the GCTS mission statement).

• articulate ways that their lives, theologies and ministries are informed by the message of Mark’s Gospel (articles 5-6 of the GCTS mission statement).

• resolve significant hermeneutical issues involved in reading an ancient text in a modern world, and explain the ways Mark’s Gospel functions normatively for individuals and the Church (articles 1-2, 3, 6 of the seminary’s mission statement).

Required Textbooks:


Required Readings:


Recommended Reading:


Commentaries on Mark (* = highly recommended):

Boring, Eugene M. *Mark: A Commentary*

*Collins, Adela Yarbro, *Mark* (Hermeneia)

*Cranfield, C., *The Gospel According to St. Mark*

Dowd, Sharyn, *Reading Mark: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel*

France, R. T. *Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGCNT)

(*)Gundry, Robert *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*

*Hooker, Morna *The Gospel According to Mark*

Juel, Donald *The Gospel of Mark*

*Lane, William, *Mark* (NICNT)*

Malina, Bruce and Rohrbaugh, Richard, *A Social Science Commentary on the Gospels*

*Marcus, Joel *Mark 1-8* (AB)*

Moloney, Francis *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*

Witherington, Ben *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*

Course Requirements:

1. Each student is required to take the Greek competency quiz on the first day of class and obtain a passing grade. Remedial work is possible if a student fails the quiz, and a second quiz must be taken and passed before Sep 25 in order for that student to continue the course. In addition, each student must demonstrate competence in Greek in all relevant parts of the course (i.e., translations and analyses, exegesis paper, and final exam) in order to receive a passing grade.

2. Each student is required to complete all reading, study questions, translations and analyses as indicated on the syllabus. Class readings, translations, and analyses will be drawn on during class, and the instructor will assume knowledge of this material.

3. Each student is expected to be present in class. Unexcused tardiness or absence from class may be reflected in the final grade for the course.

4. All written assignments must be turned in at the end of the class for which they are due.

5. All work must be submitted on time. Late assignments will receive a 10% drop in grade. All work for the course must be submitted in order to receive a passing grade.
Course Evaluation:

1. Translations and analysis — 10% of final grade
   Students will prepare a translation and analysis of the key text for each class according to guidelines provided by the instructor.

2. Readings and study questions — 15% of final grade
   Students will prepare written responses to questions based on the assigned readings and key texts for each class. Each set of study questions should be answered in 1 typed, single-spaced page.

3. Exegesis Paper — 50% of final grade
   Students will prepare a 10-12 page, double-spaced paper on a text from Mark of their own choosing. Students must submit their choices of texts for approval by September 29. The paper is due by 5pm on November 20. Email submissions or submissions through CAMS are accepted.

4. Final Exam — 25% of final grade
   Students will sit for a final exam during which they will write a response to the essential question for the course, giving substantial textual evidence and arguments in support of their answer: *To what extent is a literary reading of the Gospel of Mark helpful in determining Mark’s theological intention?* Guidelines for the final exam will be given in class and posted on CAMS.

Final semester letter grades will be assigned as follows:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>90</td>
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All work for the course will be graded according to the policies outlining performance expectations in the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Catalog. In this class, grades are based on the student's actual performance in a course judged against the criteria for grading stated in the course syllabus. The following letter grades and the accompanying description are used:

- **A** Reserved for outstanding work of exceptionally high quality that reflects a creative appropriation of course material and practices.
- **B** Work that meets all of the stated course requirements and reflects a firm grasp of course material and practices.
- **C** Work that shows a basic grasp of the course materials and practices.
- **D** Work that shows serious deficiencies but meets the minimal requirements of the course.
- **F** Work that fails to meet the minimal requirements of the course. No credit is given.

A “minus” or “plus” indicates work that falls just short of the stated descriptions.
Course Outline

Introduction to the course
History of Interpretation: How should we read Mark and why does it matter?

9/15 Greek competency quiz
   no assignment due

9/17 Key Text — Mark 3:22-30
   - Study questions

Mark 1:1-15

9/22
   due: - Translation and analysis: 1:1-15
   - Study questions

9/24
   due: - Reading: Watts, 53-121; required commentaries
   - Study questions

9/29 NO CLASS (get ahead on translations and readings!)

Mark 1:16-3:35

10/1 Key text — 1:16-45
   due: - Translation and analysis: 1:21-27
   - Reading: commentaries
   - Study questions

10/6 Key text — 2:1-3:6
   due: - Translation and analysis: 2:1-12
   - Reading: commentaries
   - Study questions
10/8  Key Texts — 3:7-35

due:  - Translation and analysis: 3:22-30
       - Reading: commentaries; Shively, “Apocalyptic Imagination in the
         Gospel of Mark: the Literary and Theological Role of Mark 3:22-
         30,” 50-96.
       - Study questions

10/13 & 15  READING WEEK – no classes

Mark 4:1-6:29

10/20 Key Text — 4:1-20

due:  - Translation and analysis: 4:10-20
       - Reading: commentaries; Watts, 183-220.
       - Study questions

10/22 Key text — 5:1-43

due:  - Translation and analysis: 5:1-13
       - Reading: commentaries
       - Study questions

10/27 Key text — 6:1-29

due:  - Translation and analysis: 6:1-13
       - Reading: commentaries
       - Study questions

Mark 6:30-8:21

10/29

due:  - Translation and analysis: 7:1-13
       - Reading: commentaries
       - Study questions

Mark 8:22-10:52

11/3  Key text — 8:22-9:29

due:  - Translation and analysis: 8:31-9:1
       - Reading: commentaries; Tannehill, “The Gospel of Mark as
         Narrative Christology,” 57-76.
       - Study questions
11/5  Key text — 9:30-10:31

due:  - Translation and analysis: 10:17-31
      - Reading: commentaries
      - Study questions

11/10 & 12  READING WEEK – no classes

11/17 Key text — 10:32-52

due:  - Translation and analysis: 10:35-45
      - Reading: commentaries; Watts, 257-90
      - Study questions

Mark 11-12

11/19 Key text — 11:1-33

due:  - Translation and analysis: 11:11-25
      - Reading: commentaries; Watts, 295-339
      - Study questions

11/24 Key text — 12:1-44

due:  - Translation and analysis: 12:1-12
      - Reading: commentaries; Watts, 339-349
      - Study questions

11/26 THANKSGIVING DAY – no class

Mark 13

12/1  Key text — 13:1-37

due:  - Translation and analysis: 13:9-13, 24-27, 32-37
      - Reading: commentaries; Shively, “Apocalyptic Imagination in the Gospel of Mark,” 227-74
      - Study questions
Mark 14:1-16:8

12/3  Key text — 14:1-52

due:  - Translation and analysis: 14:32-42
       - Study questions

12/8  Key text — 14:53-15:39

due:  - Translation and analysis: 14:53-65
       - Reading: commentaries
       - Study questions

12/10 Key text — 15:40-16:8 (and alternate endings)

due:  - Translation and analysis: 16:1-8
       - Reading: commentaries; Shively, “Apocalyptic Imagination in the Gospel of Mark,” 307-18
       - Study questions

Final Exam during exam week (Dec. 16-18) - TBA