

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Degree Completion Program
Springfield, Missouri

BNTD 641 EXPLORING AND PROCLAIMING THE MESSAGE OF MARK

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COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An analytical study of the Gospel of Mark in its historical and cultural contexts, with emphasis on narrative criticism and contemporary proclamation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Discuss biblical introduction issues pertaining to the book (authorship, date, audience, occasion, purpose, and structure).
2. Give a brief history of scholarly interpretation of this Gospel.
3. Discuss the book's leading themes, theological emphases, and intertextual dynamics.
4. Interpret Mark's Gospel through the lens of narrative analysis.
5. Articulate an evangelical approach to Mark, noting the role of "context."
6. Describe the role of secrecy in Mark and discuss the book's ending.
7. Effectively communicate the message of Mark.

TEXTBOOKS:

A standard text of the Bible.

Hurtado, Larry H. *Mark*. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.

Kelber, Werner H. *Mark's Story of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Bolt, Peter G. *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark's Gospel*. Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Harrington, Daniel J. *What Are They Saying About Mark?* New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004.

Recommended resources:

Gundry, R. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993. This commentary displays scholarly acumen, discusses the Greek text, and provides healthy dialogue with other scholars. The commentary is for advanced students.

*Lane, W. *The Gospel of Mark*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974. Lane's work, although somewhat dated, is still the most cited reference work for the Gospel of Mark. Of the resources listed here, this commentary is the best tool.

Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers. *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000. Malbon is a narrative critic, and *In the Company of Jesus* is a collection of her articles. Although those who are unfamiliar with narrative criticism may find her work difficult to negotiate, the book offers significant insights for those who are willing to work through the material.

Martin, Ralph. *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973. Martin is a thoughtful scholar and theologian. His book is set against the backdrop of scholarly debate when Source, Form, and Redaction criticisms were key methodologies. His work, then, provides not only an invigorating discussion of Mark but also an interactive synopsis of earlier debates.

Matera, Frank J. *What Are They Saying About Mark?* New York: Paulist Press, 1987. Matera provides a concise summary of scholarly debate on such issues as Composition, Christology, Setting, and Discipleship. The book is a good source for graduate students who need an introduction to some key issues.

*Witherington, B. III. *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. This noted scholar examines the Markan text in light of its social and rhetorical contexts. The commentary is an example of recent attempts to engage the text from different perspectives and methodologies. Some of his insights are especially helpful.

Supplemental sources: Bolt and Witherington provide additional bibliographical resources.

Student Evaluation

Grade percentages: A (93-100%) A- (90-92%) B+ (87-89%) B (83-86%) B- (80-82%) C+ (77-79%) C (73-76%) C- (70-72%) D+ (67-69%) D (63-66%) D- (60-62%) F (below 60%)

Grade percentages:

Participation	10%
Book Reports	20%
Annotated Bibliography	20%
Reflection Paper	10%
Interpretation Paper	40%

Participation: Discussion adds significantly to successful learning, especially in a graduate course. Therefore, come prepared and contribute. The amount of participation is not as important as other “quality” factors. Overall attentiveness to the line of discussion, relevance and insight demonstrated by comments and questions are noteworthy. On the first day, for example, be prepared to discuss any disagreements which you have with Kelber’s views or to talk about significant contributions that he makes to your understanding.

Book Reports:

Read Kelber’s *Mark’s Story of Jesus* and Harrington’s *What Are They Saying About Mark?* Write a separate report for each book. Complete the report for Kelber’s text **prior to October 5** and bring it to the first class session. The report for Bolt’s book **is due October 19**. Each report should be three to four pages in length. First, give a concise and accurate summary of the book (approximately one page). Then, indicate strong and weak points of the work (one or more pages). Finally, in about a page, answer the following question for the each book: What did I learn from reading this particular book?

Other Required Reading: Lane, pages 1-38, 444-544 (see above); Witherington, pages 1-62, 336-57, 411-42 (see above). These books are available in the library. While there are no written assignments for this material, the information is pertinent and should facilitate discussion.

Annotated Bibliography: Students study and assess six scholarly articles/essays. An annotation is a brief summary and an appraisal of the article/essay. The summary should include the purpose of the article and give an overview of the content. The evaluation portion describes strengths or weaknesses of the material. Each annotation should be single spaced and about one fourth of a page in length. Typically, annotators do not formulate annotations in complete sentences. For this assignment, however, please write in complete sentences. For additional help, see Turabian (sixth edition) page 174 and examples attached to the syllabus. Annotations are **due October 12**.

Dewey, Joanna. “The Literary Structure of the Controversy Stories in Mark 2:1—3:6.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973): 394-401. (EBSCO)

Dunn, J. D. G. “The Messianic Secret in Mark.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 21 (1970): 92-117.

Edwards, J. R. “Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives.” *Novum Testamentum* 31 (1989): 193-216.

Henderson, Suzanne. “‘Concerning the Loaves:’ Comprehending Incomprehension in Mark 6:45-52.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 83 (2001): 3-26. (EBSCO)

Rhoads, David. “Social Criticism: Crossing Boundaries.” In *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, 135-161. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

Reflection Paper:

Read Bolt’s *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark’s Gospel*. Respond to this theological treatise in about three or four pages. Please complete the assignment by **November 2**. Describe your

reflections and engagement with the material. The instructor is not looking for a summary, but I want to know that you have thought about the material, even wrestled with it. Describe your thoughts, questions, and insights. Please include connections you discover between Mark's gospel, *The Cross from a Distance*, and your preaching or teaching ministry.

Interpretation Paper: The interpretation paper is integral to one's learning experience. Each student will write an interpretation paper that reflects the fruit of her of his insight and investigation. Consult with the instructor regarding an approved passage or topic. The instructor encourages students to select a topic or passage that is of significant interest to the student. Possible topics are listed below, but they are only ideas. Submit papers that are twelve to fifteen pages in length plus bibliography. Use twelve sources which may include Hurtado, Kelber, or any of the assigned reading. Do not use more than five Internet sources. Students must use Turabian (sixth edition). Number pages except for the first page. Do two things with your opening paragraph: Be creative and supply the paper's thesis. The paper is due **November 9th**. Students should send their papers electronically to the e-mail address at the top of this syllabus. See "Written Assignments" below and "Learning to Write" on the instructor's Evangel bio-page.

Potential topics: Discipleship in Mark, Secrecy, Proclaiming Mark's message in the local church, Mark's emphasis on the cross, A specific passage, Minor characters in Mark's gospel, Irony in Mark, etc.

Written Assignments: Proofread your work. The instructor expects graduate-level work. Students should comply with conventional English spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Read carefully "Learning to Write."

Adhere to the following format requirements:

- Times New Roman font, 12-point
- 1" margins
- Double-spaced
- Cover page required

Attendance: AGTS requires your attendance for the classroom sessions. Make every effort to attend all of the classes.

Course Outline

Unit One	Discussion: Responding to Kelber and the Biblical Text
Unit Two	Interpretation and Method
Unit Three	Biblical Introduction
Unit Four	Reading Mark
Unit Five	Special Issues: Mark and Buddhist Thought, Secrecy in Mark (Revisited), Discipleship, and the Book's Ending

Examples of Annotations

Satterthwaite, Philip. "No King in Israel: Narrative Criticism and Judges 17-21." *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993): 75-88.

Satterthwaite uses narrative criticism to evaluate Judges 17-21. He shows how literary techniques such as repetition, narration and dialogue, narrative order, characterization, style, and analogies serve the author's objective in Judges 17-21: Israel needs a king; "not any king will do, but only a king who will set to rights wrongs such as these" (88). Satterthwaite's interpretation of Judges 17-21 makes a strong case that pre-monarchic Israel needs righteous leadership to restore goodness and order. Those who take a counter view, such as Dumbrell, must adequately account for the literary design of the text. Satterthwaite organizes his material in a logical and easy to follow manner, and he supplies pertinent examples from the biblical text. (*adapted from Angela. S.)

Satterthwaite, Philip. "No King in Israel: Narrative Criticism and Judges 17-21." *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993): 75-88.

The objective of this article is to show that narrative criticism can be applied to Judges 17-21. Satterthwaite illustrates techniques used by other Old Testament critics: patterns, repetition, narration and dialogue, narrative order and proportions, characterization, style, and comment by analogy. He concludes that narrative criticism helps the interpreter forge an effective, coherent interpretation of Judges 17-21. He also determines that this passage takes a negative view of pre-monarchic Israel and supports the need for a righteous king. Satterthwaite effectively makes his case. (*adapted from Sarah A.)

Satterthwaite, Philip. "No King in Israel: Narrative Criticism and Judges 17-21." *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993): 75-88.

Satterthwaite applies narrative criticism to Judges 17-21, a passage of scripture that has not generally been esteemed for its literary skill. He explains how techniques such as patterns, repetition, narration, dialogue, characterization, and analogy are used by the author of Judges to show that God disapproves of the actions of the Israelites. Satterthwaite also uses the techniques to discount the belief that the chapters are at many points composite. Instead, he shows how chapters 17 through 21 can be given a unitary explanation. Satterthwaite presents a valid argument for evaluating Judges 17-21 through literary criticism. His explanation of analogies in the chapters is especially thought provoking, as he shows how events in the chapters are not only analogous to other events in the chapters, but also analogous to events preceding and following the period of the Judges. By pointing out the techniques, Satterthwaite helps readers gain more of an appreciation for the literary beauty of Judges 17-21. (*adapted from Deborah F.)

SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by Gary Martindale June 13, 2006.