



Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

NTL652 – The Gospel of Mark Module Fall 2010

Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available at http://support.nts.edu/index.php/Essential_Information. Additional technical support information can be found at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose and Master of Divinity Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS bookstore procedures
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *A Handbook for Inclusive Language*

Instructor Information

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Please do not call between 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

Catalog Description

This course is an “exegesis of representative passages of Mark so as to trace its account of the ministry of Jesus, and elucidate its message” (NTS catalogue).

Course Narrative & Rationale

For most of the history of the Church, interpreters paid less attention to the Gospel of Mark than to the other three gospels. The shortest, and in some ways, the simplest of the gospels, it was often viewed as a condensed version of Matthew. However, all that changed in the 19th century when scholars trying to reconstruct the historical life of Jesus began to argue that its simplicity indicated that it was less theologically developed and therefore more historically reliable. The contemporary scholarly tides have changed and, while Mark still receives an enormous amount of scholarly attention, many today recognize the difficulty of drawing a sharp distinction between “history” and “theology.” The results have been “good news” (i.e., gospel) for those for whom Mark is “scripture.”

We are beginning to see just how rich Mark’s theology actually is. It is the earliest Christology in narrative form presenting its audience with a profound depiction of the significance of Jesus. My hope and prayer is that this class will help you to better understand the way Mark does this and will equip you to preach and teach this book in ways that shape your own audience after the pattern of Mark’s central character, the cruciform Christ.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course you will have (R = Course requirement directed toward achieving objective):

1. Demonstrated a basic grasp of the content, literary features/movement, and theology of the Gospel of Mark (R1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9)
2. Demonstrated a rudimentary understanding of the historical, socio-rhetorical, and literary background against which Mark's gospel is best understood (R2, 3-7, 9).
3. Demonstrated an ability to utilize responsibly a passage or passages from Mark in an ecclesial setting, i.e., most probably teaching or preaching in a local church or para-church setting (R8).

Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies¹

- CN9 Ability to identify the genre & basic thrust of each New Testament book, in this case, Mark as a Gospel (R1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9)
- CN10 Ability to summarize the significant life events of Jesus & Paul (R1, 3-5, 6a, 7)
- CN11 Ability to identify the significant elements of the message of Jesus and Paul (R1, 3-5, 6a, 7)
- CN12 Ability to describe the impact of the historical background of the NT on the message of Jesus & Paul (R2-7, 9)
- CN14 Ability to identify and describe the major theological concepts of the NT (R3-7, 9)
- CN19 Ability to identify and explain the main characteristics of the nature of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Human Person, Sin, Salvation, the Christian Life, the Church and Sacraments, and Eschatology (R3-7, 9)
- CN20 Ability to reflect theologically on life and ministry (R6b, 8-9)
- CP1 Ability to communicate publicly through multiple methods (oral, written, media, etc.) with clarity and creativity for the sake of fostering meaning (R2-R9)
- CP2 Ability to write clearly and in a grammatically correct manner in the modes of discourse used in the ministry (R2, 3-5, 7, 9)
- CP3 Ability to speak coherently and cogently in the modes of discourse appropriate for the various ministry contexts (R6, R8)

Required Texts & Course Materials

Dowd, Sharyn. *Reading Mark*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000.

Green, Joel B. and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.

Hurtado, Larry. *Mark*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.

Juel, Donald H. *The Gospel of Mark*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.

Longenecker, Bruce. *The Lost Letters of Pergamum*. Grand Rapids, Baker, 2003. **(If you've already read this book and written a paper for me on it in one of my other classes, purchase the Theissen book below.)**

Theissen, Gerd. *The Shadow of the Galilean*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 2007. **Purchase this book only if you've already read the Longenecker book above and written a paper on it in one of my previous classes.**

Wright, N. T. *The Challenge of Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.

¹ COSAC is the Course of Study Advisory Committee. These are the required competencies for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene which this course addresses, albeit only partially in some instances.

Recommended Websites

<http://www.ntgateway.com/gospel-and-acts/gospel-of-mark/introduction-to-marks-gospel/>

This is the Mark section of the NT Gateway site. It is one of the best sites on the Web for generally reliable information on Mark and the rest of NT studies.

<http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/mark.htm>

A useful website with a collection of articles and essays on Mark arranged by pericope.

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/mark.html>

Another useful website with a variety of online resources on Mark.

Course Outline

See Course Calendar below.

Course Assignments & Requirements

Assigned Reading Due Throughout the Course

1. **Reading Mark.** (Note: This assignment has various due dates, some pre, some during, and some after the module.) You must read Mark through (preferably in one sitting but in no more than two sittings) at least seven times during this class, including twice in two different translations by Tuesday, July 20. Use one translation for each reading but do not use the same translation each time. Make sure you use at least four different translations for the seven readings. You may also count a hearing of the gospel (on CD or cassette tape) as a reading. See the other scheduled readings on the Course Calendar below. Each time a reading is due, you must post a statement in the Reading Mark Forum in Moodle by the due date/time saying that you have completed that reading. Each reading counts 10 points toward your final grade, making all seven readings count 70 points toward your final grade. **You cannot “make up” any of this reading. You can only get credit for what you actually read by the due date listed on the Course Calendar below. Since these are basically “give-away” points, this is an all or nothing assignment. You do not get credit for partial reading.**

****Note Carefully**** To save time, as you read Mark, you should keep a running master list of *critical* questions and insights of comprehensive or theological significance that arise from a careful reading of the text. These questions and comments should not only note the scriptural context of the concern, but what matter of importance is at stake. These questions will later become a part of requirement 7 described below.

Pre-Module Assignment

2. **Longenecker/Theissen Reflection Paper:** If you have not read Longenecker's, *The Lost Letters of Pergamum* and written a paper based on it for me in a prior class, make Longenecker the basis for the following assignment. If you have read Longenecker and written a paper based on it for me in a prior class, make Gerd Theissen's, *The Shadow of the Galilean* the basis for the following assignment.

Read Longenecker/Theissen. Then read the Gospel of Mark carefully (this will count as your third reading of Mark). Assume for now that Theissen's novel captures the socio-historical, cultural, and especially the political feel of Jesus' first century setting in Mark's story or assume that Longenecker's novel captures the socio-historical, cultural, and especially the political feel of the first century setting in which Mark's Gospel would have been first heard. Write a 750-1,000 word paper, typed, and double-spaced, answering the following question: How does understanding Jesus against this background change the way I read the Gospel of

Mark? Give **specific examples from the text of Mark** which sound different to you after having read Theissen or Longenecker and **explain why they now sound different**. You may earn up to 100 points for this assignment. You will submit your paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for “Longenecker/Theissen Paper.” On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. Your assignment must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM CT, Monday, July 26.

3. **Insights from Juel’s, *The Gospel of Mark***. After carefully reading Juel, briefly describe 25 insights you gained from the book that you consider to be significant. The book has 11 chapters. Make sure you draw at least 2 insights from each chapter (11 x 2 = 22) **noting the chapter and page number from which you are drawing the insight**. The remaining 3 may come from anywhere in the book. In your “insights,” you may choose to challenge/disagree with the author’s views. If you do so, make sure that you give a warrant/explanation for why you are disagreeing with his view. Statements like, “This doesn’t seem right to me” do not count as warrants/explanations. This assignment should be 1,000-1,250 words and will be evaluated on the basis of: (1) how well you appear to have understood and interacted with the biblical/theological issues raised by Juel; (2) your use of correct English; (3) your adherence to length requirements. You may earn up to 75 points for this assignment. You will submit your paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for “Insights.” On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. Your assignment must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM CT, Monday, August 9. An example of an “A” quality Insights Assignment will be available in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. It will be called “Model Insights Assignment.” My assistant may be grading this assignment.
4. **Essay Summary**. You will read an essay entitled “Mark 11:1-20: The Fig Tree, the Temple, and the Nature of the Gospels” and summarize it in no more than 250 words. It is available in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. Do **not** offer a critical assessment; only summarize the material. It will be evaluated on the basis of: (1) how well you appear to have understood the main thrust of the essay; (2) your use of correct English; (3) your adherence to length requirements. You may earn up to 20 points for this assignment. You will submit your paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for “Essay.” On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. Your assignment must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM CT, Monday, August 16. My assistant may be grading this assignment.

Module Assignments

5. **Article Summary**. You will read the following article: “The ‘New Creation,’ the Crucified and Risen Christ, and the Temple: A Pauline Audience for Mark,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 1 (2007): 171-91. After reading it, you will summarize it in no more than 300 words. It is available in the library’s journal holdings. Do **not** offer a critical assessment; only summarize the material. It will be evaluated on the basis of: (1) how well you appear to have understood the main thrust of the article; (2) your use of correct English; (3) your adherence to length requirements. You may earn up to 25 points for this assignment. You will submit your paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for “Article.” On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file**. Your assignment must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM CT, Wednesday, September 1. My assistant may be grading this assignment.

6. **Fishbowl Discussions.** You will actively participate in two “fishbowl” discussions. The “fishbowl” will consist of a class discussion/critical analysis of the book or essays assigned for that day. **I will not simply give these points away because you show up in class that day.** You must make regular contributions during this discussion period in a way that demonstrates an understanding of, **and a critical engagement with**, the assigned book or essays. A document that provides focus questions for each of these fishbowls will be available in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. It is called “Focus Questions for Green & Baker and Wright.”
- a. You may earn up to 50 points by actively participating in a “fishbowl” discussion of Wright’s, *The Challenge of Jesus*. It will be held on Wednesday, August 25. Depending on how many students are in the class, I may split the class in parts with parts of the class discussing sections of the book. If this happens, you will not know which part of the reading you will be assigned to discuss. **In any case, you are responsible for all of the assigned reading.** Hence, you should carefully read the whole book and take notes on it (in some form or fashion). In any case, we will attempt to limit the total class time we spend on the book to no more than 60-90 minutes.
 - b. You may earn up to 50 points by actively participating in a “fishbowl” discussion of Green and Baker’s, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*. It will be held on Monday, August 30. Depending on how many students are in the class, I may split the class in parts with parts of the class discussing sections of the book. If this happens, you will not know which part of the reading you will be assigned to discuss. **In any case, you are responsible for all of the assigned reading.** Hence, you should carefully read the whole book and take notes on it (in some form or fashion). In any case, we will attempt to limit the total class time we spend on the book to no more than 60-90 minutes.

Post-Module Assignments

7. **Critical Reading Responses (CRR) to the Gospel of Mark, Dowd, and Hurtado.** You will prepare two critical reading responses of **1,500-2,500 words** each in which you critically engage a section of Mark (1:1-8:21 for CRR1 and 8:22-16:8/20 for CRR2) and the textbook reading associated with it. You will be penalized for having significantly more or less words than the lower and upper limits. For the specific content and due dates of these CRR’s, see the Course Calendar below.

These responses should have three sections: (1) *Critical* questions and insights of comprehensive or theological significance that arise from a careful reading of Mark itself **prior to** reading the selections from the textbooks. These questions and comments should not only note the scriptural context of the concern, but what matter of importance is at stake. These questions should be an **edited version** of your running master list of *critical* questions and insights that you generated during your prior readings of Mark. **Note carefully: you must have at least one critical question on each chapter in the section of Mark you are engaging.** (2) *Critical* questions and observations that your reading of Dowd and Hurtado raises in your mind about the biblical text and/or vice-versa, critical questions and observations that reading the biblical text raises in your mind about your reading of Dowd and Hurtado. (3) A comparative section noting any significant disagreements or inconsistencies between Dowd and Hurtado **as to how they address specific critical issues.** An example of an “A” quality CRR will be available in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. It will be called “Model CRR.”

You will submit your CRR’s in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for the particular CRR you are submitting (e.g., CRR1 or CRR2). On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click

Upload this file. CRR1 must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM CT on Friday, September 17 and CRR2 by 11:55 PM CT on Friday, October 1. You may earn up to 75 points for each CRR making them worth a total of 150 points. My assistant may be grading your CRRs.

8. **“In Ministry” Assignment.** After the module class meetings (i.e., after September 2), you will teach or preach from a passage in Mark. You could do this in a local church setting (e.g., preaching, teaching a Sunday School class, a Bible study, etc.) or a para-church setting (e.g., preaching at the Kansas City Rescue Mission, leading a Bible study at the KC Urban Youth Center, etc.). Whatever setting you choose, you must ask someone (preferably a pastor, a person in charge, someone with theological training who is not currently an NTS student, or a professional type person) to fill out an evaluation form and sign it. The evaluation form will be available in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. **I must approve the person you plan to ask ahead of time.** I will use that person’s evaluation of your presentation as well as your written sermon, notes, lesson plan, etc. to evaluate this assignment. You may earn up to 60 points for it. It must be completed with the evaluation and your written materials in my mailbox at NTS by **no later than Thursday, October 14 at 4:30 PM CT.**
9. **Take-home Essay/Research Paper.** You may choose to either write a take-home essay on a question that will be distributed the last day of class (3,000-5,000 words) or a research paper on some aspect of the interpretation of Mark (4,500-6,000 words). You may earn up to 400 points for this essay/research paper. You will submit your Essay/Paper in Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments click the appropriate link for “Essay/Paper.” On the screen that appears click the **Browse** button, select your file, click **Open**, and then click **Upload this file.** Your essay/paper must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 11:55 PM CT on Friday, October 15.

The take-home essay will be a question (or questions) related to the interpretation of Mark and the ministry implications of the material we’ve covered in class and in the reading. Hence, to answer it, you will creatively draw on your class notes, all your course reading, and on your own theological reflections in the context of a ministry situation.

Unless you will have access to the NTS library or another equivalent theological library, you should **not** choose to write the research paper. As a research paper, it clearly **requires additional research over and above your class resources.** If you do choose to write the research paper, **I must approve whatever topic you choose by Thursday, September 2 by the time class is over.** If I haven’t approved a research topic for you by that time, I will assume you are writing the take home essay.

As general guidelines for the research paper, follow the instructions given by Joel Green in the document, “Some Comments on Research Papers.” It is located in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area. **I will assume you have read and followed Green’s directions when I grade your paper.** Note carefully: You should begin your research paper with a thesis statement that explicitly states the thesis you intend to argue and return to that thesis statement in your conclusion. While the paper should generally follow Turabian style, you may consult the *SBL Handbook of Style* for proper form for footnotes, abbreviations, etc. You may also use the document entitled “Ripples and Luke 24HBT.doc” located in Moodle in the Course Resources topic areas as a general guide as to how this paper should look in terms of footnotes and style.

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

	pre-module hours	module hours	post-module hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions		37	
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	0		0
Reading	21.5	18.5	18.5
Writing	8	1	32
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	0	0	8
Exams & Quizzes	0	0	0
TOTAL	29.5	56.5	58.5

Method for Submitting Assignments

Written assignments are to be submitted in Moodle following the directions set out in the Course Assignments and Requirements section above. The one exception is the “In-Ministry” Assignment which should be mailed to my office using the following address: Andy Johnson, Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1700 East Meyer Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64132.

Form and Style Expectations

Should you choose to write a research paper, it should generally follow Turabian style. However, you may consult the *SBL Handbook of Style* for proper form for footnotes, abbreviations, etc. and/or use the document entitled “Ripples and Luke 24HBT.doc” located in Moodle in the Course Resources topic areas as a general guide as to how this paper should look in terms of footnotes and style. **There are no style requirements for the other written assignments.**

Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

Policy Regarding Attendance and Late Work

You are expected to attend class regularly and participate in the daily discussions. Attendance will be taken daily. An absence will only be excused in accordance with the guidelines established in the NTS catalogue. Unless I have noted above that I will not accept a written assignment late, I will assign a letter grade penalty to all written assignments turned in after the time they are due. When an assignment is more than one week late, I will assign a two letter grade penalty to it. **I will not accept an assignment that is more than two weeks late.**

Course Grading

A Word about Grading: Evaluation in this kind of course, by its very nature, involves an element of subjectivity. It involves someone who is an expert in the field making a judgment on the kind of work you produce. That is a part of what you are paying for in this class. The primary factors I take into account in assessing “good solid graduate work,” the sort of work to which I assign a “B” are (1) ability to demonstrate a breadth and depth of understanding of the material engaged; (2) ability to engage this material in a critical way; (3) ability to exhibit how the material is related to a larger theological and ecclesial context. If you demonstrate a consistent ability to do these things in all

your coursework, you can expect to receive a B. If you demonstrate consistent ability to do them **incisively and with excellence**, you can expect to receive an A. If you demonstrate an ability to do these things **often, but not consistently**, you can expect to receive a C. (Hence, I assume that a C means “average,” or “satisfactory” work. It does **not** mean “bad” or “unsatisfactory.”) If you **seldom** demonstrate an ability to do these things, you can expect to receive a D.

The final grade will be computed using the following point scale. There are 1,000 possible points.

70 Points	Reading Mark
100 Points	Longenecker/Theissen Reflection Paper
75 Points	Insights from Juel
45 Points	Essay/Article Summaries
100 Points	Fishbowl Discussion of Green and Baker and Wright
150 Points	Critical Reading Responses
60 Points	In-Ministry Assignment
400 Points	Final Exam

The following point scale will determine letter grades:

A	1,000-900
B	899-800
C	799-700
D	699-600
F	599-0

Documented Learning Disabilities

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies which have been beneficial for the student in the past.

Course Calendar

CRR= Critical Reading Response to Scripture and Commentaries

Date	Class Topic	Assignment Due
07/20		2 Readings of Mark in 2 different translations
07/26		1 Reading of Mark Longenecker/Theissen Reflection Paper
08/02		1 Reading of Mark
08/09		1 Reading of Mark Insights from Juel
08/16		1 Reading of Mark Essay Summary 1: "Mark 11:1-20: The Fig Tree, the Temple, and the Nature of the Gospels" (available in Moodle in the Course Resources topic area).
08/23	Intro/Approach/Mark 1:1-45	
08/24	Mark 2:1-3:35	1 Reading of Mark
08/25	Mark 4:1-5:43	Fishbowl 1 (Wright)
08/26	Mark 6:1-8:21	
08/27	Mark 8:22-10:31	
08/30	Mark 10:32-11:32	Fishbowl 2 (Green & Baker)
08/31	Mark 12:1-13:37	
09/01	Mark 14:1-15:24	Article Summary 2: "The 'New Creation,' the Crucified and Risen Christ, and the Temple: A Pauline Audience for Mark," <i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i> 1 (2007): 171-91.
09/02	Mark 15:25-16:8 (or 16:20?)	Must have topic approved for research paper by end of class (if you choose to do it)
09/17		CRR 1 (Mark 1:1-8:21; Dowd, 1-82; Hurtado, 1-132)
10/01		CRR 2 (Mark 8:22-16:8/20; Dowd, 83-171; Hurtado, 133-290)
10/14		In-Ministry Assignment due at 4:30 PM CT
10/15		Take-Home Essay/Research Paper