

NT811, Exegesis of Mark
Spring 2003, Thurs., 10:00 A.M.–12:15 P.M., 2 credit hours
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<<http://faculty.bbc.edu/rdecker/nt811.htm>>

Course Syllabus

Please note! Students are responsible for everything in this syllabus, whether it is specifically mentioned in class or not. Please read all of it very carefully. If you have questions, please ask.

1. Description

Exegesis of selected portions of the Gospel of Mark. Emphasis will be placed on sight-reading of the text, as well as detailed exposition of selected portions of the Gospel. Particular attention will be paid to the narrative structure of the book. The historical and cultural background of the text and its theological contributions will also be studied.

2. Objectives

The student will increase his proficiency in translation and exegesis of the Greek New Testament, gain a greater understanding of Greek grammar, and understand the message of and critical issues related to the Gospel of Mark. In particular, the student will (be able to): explain the Synoptic Problem as it relates to Mark; interpret the text critical symbols in the NA²⁷ text and assess the value of the information they provide; understand the function of verbal aspect in narrative literature; evaluate narrative text for indicators of temporal deixis; and combine the fruit of various exegetical disciplines to produce an accurate and relevant sermon based on the Greek text.

3. Methods

This class will assume that the student is able to read his Greek testament and thus lectures and discussion will be based on it. Recourse to the English text will be allowed only when necessary to survey large sections of the Gospel. Content will focus on a variety of exegetical methods and issues. Following an explanation and illustration of each section, students will be assigned a project that applies the skills learned to a specific pericope. This project will then serve as the focus of the following class as each student leads the class discussion over the topic in his assigned passage.

4. Materials

4.1. Required textbooks

- Gundry, Robert H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- France, R. T. *The Gospel of Mark*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

4.2. Recommended textbooks

Commentaries

- Cranfield, C. E. B. *The Gospel According to Mark*. Cambridge Greek Testament. 2d ed. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1963.
- Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Mark*. Pillar NT Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Lane, William L. *The Gospel of Mark*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

Supplemental books

- Aland, Kurt. *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*. 13th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1985.
- Novum Testamentum Graece*. Edited by E. Nestle, K. Aland, et. al. 27th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.
- Porter, Stanley E. *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*. Biblical Languages: Greek, 2. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.

5. Requirements

5.1. Reading

- 400 pages each in Gundry and France (800 total)
- An additional 400 pgs. in any sources directly relevant to the assigned papers (commentaries, grammars, etc.).
- Read the entire gospel of Mark straight through (i.e., in one sitting) *four times* during the semester, *each time in a different English translation*. (See schedule for due dates.) As you read, keep a “reading diary” of your observations, reactions, exegetical questions, repeated themes, translation differences, etc. in chapter/verse order. You will want to keep your Greek testament at hand to check various things as you read. Don’t try to record everything, especially not on your first reading. Be selective. (It’s perhaps easiest to keep these organized if you enter them in a word processing document [or a database] into which you can insert additional comments on subsequent readings. An alternative is to make such notes on 3 × 5 cards—which you may file as such [and submit them in that format].) Plan time to do this in your schedule. How long it will take will vary with your reading speed, but it’s not a half-hour project. Read carefully and thoughtfully; no skimming. Since this course is deliberately formatted as an “exegetical issues” class, this assignment is intended to help you see the big picture of where your adopted pericope (see below) fits into Mark’s argument.

The above reading should all be reported at the last class period. Include full bibliographical information, date/pages read, and English translation read (where relevant). Also submit your reading diary at this time.

5.2. Writing & Related Projects

Unless noted otherwise all written papers/projects should conform to proper thesis form according to the current edition of Turabian's style guide. Only third person may be used; first (*I, we, etc.*) and second (*you*) person are to be avoided. The paper is to be printed in high quality. Footnotes, as opposed to end notes, are required for documentation. Greek or Hebrew text, if used, should be printed with an appropriate font, not handwritten or transliterated.¹ A sample paper that illustrates the form and style desired and a *Style Guide Supplement* is available from the professor on request.²

No set length is specified due to the varied nature of the assignments and the diversity of each passage. *Maximum* length that will be accepted for each assignment is 10 pages of double-spaced text (not counting front matter or bibliography). Each paper is to be copied for the entire class. (If the student desires, he may print a second, single-spaced version of the paper to reduce the cost of distribution, but the copy submitted for grading should be double-spaced.) An electronic copy is also to be submitted via disk or email attached file whenever possible. These will be posted on the course web site in pdf format. (The Synoptic assignment may need to be scanned; the prof can help with this if necessary.)

Due to the class format, all papers are due at the beginning of the class hour on the day specified in the syllabus. Late papers will *not* be accepted.

• Assigned Papers/Projects

On the first day of class each student will select one pericope in Mark which will become the focus of his work for the semester and the subject for each assignment noted below. On the day a paper is due, class will consist of each student's presentation of these papers followed by class discussion of each section. The passages will be approximately 15–20 verses in length (though some vary depending on the literary integrity of the selection). The following portions

¹ Greek text must use the Galilee font and Hebrew text is to use the BenEzra font. This is to facilitate conversion of the papers to pdf format for posting on the course web site (not all fonts can be embedded). These fonts are available as follows: <<http://faculty.bbc.edu/rdecker/galilee.htm>> and <<http://faculty.bbc.edu/aingalls/resource.htm>>. Breathing marks must be included in Greek text; accents may be omitted. Permission may be requested to transliterate an *occasional* Hebrew word if necessary. Hebrew vowels should generally be included but Masoretic accents may be omitted.

²The sample is quite brief (only about 4 pages, 850 words), but illustrates the basics of form and style adequately. (It is not intended as a sample of the *content* of an exegetical or grammatical paper.) Please do not cite the content of this paper as an authority. If you are interested in the topic, read the larger article from which this brief section has been adapted: Rodney J. Decker, "Polity and the Elder Issue," *GTJ* 9 (1988): 257–77.

are suggested: 4:1–20, 21–33; 5:1–20, 21–43; 6:1–13; 6:14–29; 6:30–44; 6:45–56; 7:1–23, 24–37; 8:1–21; 8:22–9:1; 9:2–13, 14–32, 33–50. [Underlined pericopes reserved]

5.2.1. Synoptic Comparison

- Photocopy your pericope from *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* (ed. Kurt Aland, 13th ed., Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1985). Earlier or alternate editions may also be used. (Alternately, reproduce a similar layout using appropriate software [word processor, a graphics program, etc.]; if you do so, the next step may also be done on the computer.)
- Select a *minimum of 10 consecutive verses* in your pericope (you can do the entire passage if you like—I would “smile” on that!) which have parallels in at least one other gospel (preferably in two) and highlight the similarities as follows.
Highlight in *pink* the *exact equivalents* to Mark in Matthew, Luke, and John (where there are synoptic parallels; not all passages have parallels in more than one other gospel). Use a continuous highlight unless there are minor differences in word *order*, in which case use word-by-word highlighting.
Highlight in *orange* words and groups of words that are similar and represent only *slight grammatical changes* (person, case, tense, mood, voice, or number).
Highlight in *yellow* *synonymous words or phrases* that convey the same meaning as the parallels.
- Note that this is to be original work. There *are* books and web sites that do this for you, but you may not use them for this project. You will learn far more if you go through the manual process of figuring this out for yourself. You can see some samples from previous years’ classes on the course web site.
- Reproduce this page for your classmates *in color*. (This will require color coding each copy by hand unless you want to pay for color photocopies [available in the bookstore], which are acceptable so long as the text and coding is legible. If you do it on the computer and have a color printer, you may also print multiple copies.)
- Write a summary of the synoptic problem as *evidenced in your pericope* and suggest a tentative conclusion based on this (limited) evidence.

5.2.2. Textual Criticism

- Select *five contiguous verses* in your pericope and explain in detail each variant listed in NA²⁷ listing the full phrase as it appears in the text and in each of the variants and noting the grammatical and/or translation difference of each. (You do *not* have to provide a “siglum-by-siglum” “translation” of the apparatus for every NA²⁷ variant.)
- In your entire pericope, for variants *also* discussed in UBS⁴, explain the variant in greater detail including an explanation of each “siglum” listed in NA²⁷ and your evaluation of the evidence and your tentative conclusion. (If your pericope has no entry in UBS⁴, consult *both* editions of Metzger’s *Textual Commentary*. If you still find no listings [unlikely!], select what you consider to be the two most significant variants for this more detailed discussion.)

5.2.3. Discourse Function of Verbal Aspect

- Study the discourse function of the verb forms in your pericope in light of Stanley Porter's theory of verbal aspect (*Idioms of the Greek NT*, 2d ed., Sheffield: JSOT, 1994, 20–25 [esp. §1.1.2] and 301–03 [esp. §21.2.1]).
- Chart the aspectual “flow” in your passage and suggest how you think that Porter would explain the contribution of verbal aspect. Evaluate the theory as it relates to your passage.

5.2.4. Significant Grammar

Summarize the significant grammar found in your pericope and discuss its impact on both the interpretation and translation of the text. Compare your conclusions with several exegetical commentaries and several standard translations (including the NET Bible:

<<http://www.netbible.com/netbible/>>) that illustrate different answers to grammatical issues.

5.2.5. Homiletic Implementation

Put all the pieces together and prepare a sermon in good homiletical form that accurately communicates the original meaning of the passage in a relevant manner. The paper should consist of two parts: the sermon proper in full manuscript form, and a supplemental “commentary” section in which you explain *how and why* you structured the sermon as you did based on specific exegetical matters (e.g., how did you exegetically determine the theme?). You may use first and/or second person in both sections of this paper. You may need to adjust the textual boundaries to construct a good sermon—yours may be too long or too short to do it expository justice. If you do make such adjustments, include the reasons for your decision in your commentary section. (“I didn’t want to do the whole thing” is *not* legitimate!)

5.3. Quizzes and Exams: There will be no quizzes or exams.

5.4. Attendance

Classes will be governed by the (very generous) attendance policy as delineated in the Student Handbook. Each *student* (not the professor) is responsible to mark his attendance on the attendance clipboard each class period.

5.5. Grading

• Reading: textbooks	25
• Reading: collateral	10
• Reading: Mark & diary	40
• Paper 1 (Syn. Prob.)	75
• Paper 2 (Txt. Crit.)	50
• Paper 3 (Gram.)	100
• Paper 4 (Aspect)	100
• Paper 5 (Hom.)	<u>150</u>
Total points possible:	550

The final grade is calculated by adding the total points earned and dividing by the total points possible to arrive at a percentage grade. One point on any assignment is worth as much as one point on any other item. Grades that average to a decimal figure of .5 or above will be rounded to the next higher grade when the final semester grade is calculated. The grade scale for this class follows the current Seminary academic catalog.

6. Misc. Notes

“Crutches”: The use of **interlinear texts** (printed or computerized) are *not allowed* for any class-related purposes during the semester whether in class or out. **Analytical lexicons, or parsing guides** (Han, Reinecker, or computer parsing programs, etc.) *are strongly discouraged*. Regular lexicons and grammars may (and should!) be used for parsing help.

As “last resort”—“desperation resources,” analytical lexicons or parsing guides may be used under the following conditions: you have spent a minimum of 20 minutes trying to parse the specific form and have consulted at least: a first year grammar, Newman’s *Dictionary*, and *BAGD*.

If you ever hope to make Greek a useable tool, you need to force yourself to learn to identify most forms without recourse to the crutches. Yes, when you get into the pastorate or on the mission field you will be able to use these “ponies” any time you desire. But if you have to look up everything, you will quickly discover that the hours of effort you invested in learning Greek will soon fade and it will become a greater bother than a help to use Greek as the valuable, indeed, indispensable exegetical tool that it is. Determination to be the best-equipped servant possible in ministering the Word of God to others allows no shortcuts or cheap substitutes.

Would you go to a medical doctor for treatment who took the easy way through med school and never learned to read x-rays or EKGs? Would you submit to by-pass surgery by a surgeon who had to get out the anatomy book to find the heart? Why, then, should you expect people to trust your handling of the Word of God if you cannot read it as God wrote it? The difference is eternal.

Taping: Class sessions may not be tape recorded.

Instructor’s books: Please do not ask to borrow books in the instructor’s personal library. The library is available for that purpose. If it is critically important and the library does not have a copy, order your own copy at the bookstore or avail yourself of interlibrary loan.

Resources: Please consult the prof’s web site for class related resources, including an extensive collection of web resources related to Greek and NT studies and materials specifically for this course:

<http://faculty.bbc.edu.rdecker/rd_rsrc.htm>

<<http://faculty.bbc.edu.rdecker/class.htm>>

<<http://faculty.bbc.edu.rdecker/nt811.htm>>

Audit policy: Students requesting to register for a class on an audit basis must first obtain my approval. I would *prefer* that you jot me a note (e-mail is fine) stating what class you would

like to audit and your reasons for auditing rather than taking it for credit. Attendance requirements are the same for audit and credit students. The following course requirements apply to audit students: all reading, one written project (student's choice), all translation.

Contacting the prof.: E-mail is preferred (because then I have a record of your request) and you're most likely to get a prompt reply. Otherwise, I usually plan to be in my study all day (room 123; ext. 9397; direct: 585-9397). You may, if necessary call me at home (587-3297) or stop by the house in the evening (307 Layton Rd.: about 1/4 mile up the hill from rt. 6 on the left; 3-story, gray house). Unless it is a real emergency,³ I'd rather you not do either after 9 P.M. (esp. on days that I have a 6:30 A.M. class the next morning).

7. Tentative Class Schedule

Class dates

1/23	Intro.: to course, to Mark, and to the Synoptic Problem	
1/30	Synoptic problem	Reading/Mark #1 due
2/6	Paper 1 due (Synoptic study)	
2/13	Intro. to NA ²⁷ ; textual criticism of Mark	<i>Should have your entire passage translated no later than today; earlier if at all possible.</i>
2/17-28	<i>Miss. conf., modules, & Ph.D. courses</i>	
3/6	Paper 2 due (text critical study); ending of Mark (prof)	Reading/Mark #2 due
3/13	Reading and grammar	
3/20	Paper 3 due (grammar) [intro. to verbal aspect if time permits]	
3/24-28	<i>Spring break</i>	
4/3	Discourse functions of aspect in Mark; historical present in Mark	Reading/Mark #3 due
4/10	Temporal deixis in Mark; Aspect/discourse cont'd.	
4/17	Paper 4 due (aspect/discourse)	
4/24	Reading and grammar	Reading/Mark #4 due
5/1	Paper 5 due (homiletics)	<i>Reading report due</i>

³Emergency does not include parsing Greek verbs!

8. Select Bibliography

Recommended commentaries [usually exegetical and based on the Greek text] are marked.* Periodical literature is not included here. The best listings of those resources is to be found in the WBC vols. (s.v. Guelich and Evans) and in Neiryneck; see also the ATLA database (online through the Seminary library).

- Anderson, Hugh. *The Gospel of Mark*. New Century Bible. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Barbieri, Louis. *Mark*. Moody Gospel Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995.
- Barnes, Albert. *Matthew and Mark*. In *Notes on the New Testament*. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–85. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983. 9:328–400.
- Best, Ernest. *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in the Gospel According to Mark*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986.
- Bratcher, Robert G., and Eugene A. Nida. *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Mark*. London: United Bible Societies, 1961.
- Broadhead, Edwin K. *Teaching with Authority: Miracles and Christology in the Gospel of Mark*. JSNTSup, 74. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.
- Brooks, James A. *Mark*. New American Commentary, 23. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1991.*
- Bruce, Alexander Balmain. *The Synoptic Gospels*. In *The Expositor's Greek Testament*. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980. 1:341–457.
- Burdick, Donald W. *Mark*. In *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*. Chicago: Moody, 1962. 987–1026.
- Clarke, W. N. *Mark*. In *An American Commentary on the New Testament*. Ed. Alvah Hovey. Valley Forge: Judson, 1881. 2:5–261.
- Cole, Alan. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. Tyndale New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961.
- Cook, F. C. *Matthew to Luke*. In *The Bible Commentary*, 7:199–308. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1871–1881. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.
- Cook, John G. *The Structure and Persuasive Power of Mark: A Linguistic Approach*. SBL Semeia Studies. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.
- Cranfield, C. E. B. *The Gospel According to Mark*. The Cambridge Greek Testament. 2d ed. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1963.*
- Decker, Rodney J. *Temporal Deixis of the Greek Verb in the Gospel of Mark with Reference to Verbal Aspect*. Studies in Biblical Greek, 10. New York/Bern: Peter Lang, 2001.
- Doudna, John C. *The Greek of the Gospel of Mark*. SBL Monograph Series, 12. Philadelphia: SBL, 1961.

- Earle, Ralph. *Mark*. In *The Biblical Expositor*. Edited by Carl F. H. Henry, 857–888. Philadelphia: Holman, 1960.
- Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Mark*. Pillar NT Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.*
- Elliott, J. K. *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark: An Edition of C. H. Turner's 'Notes on Markan Usage' Together with Other Comparable Studies*. NovTestSupp, 71. Leiden/New York: Brill, 1993.
- Evans, Craig. *Mark 8:27–16:20*. Word Biblical Commentary, 34B. Nashville: Nelson, 2001. [For vol. 34A, see Guelick.]
- France, R. T. *The Gospel of Mark*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.*
- Garland, David E. *Mark*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Grassmick, John D. *Mark*. In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Edited by John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, 2:95–197. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983.*
- Guelick, Robert A. *Mark 1–8:26*. Word Biblical Commentary, 34A. Dallas: Word, 1989. [For vol. 34B, see Evans.]
- Gundry, Robert H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.*
- Hengel, Martin. *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*. Translated by J. Bowden. London: SCM, 1985.
- Hiebert, D. Edmond. *Mark: A Portrait of the Servant*. Chicago: Moody, 1974.
- Hooker, Morna D. *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. Black's NT Commentary. London: A. C. Black, 1991. Reprint. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, n.d.
- Hort, A. F. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. In *Expository and Exegetical Studies*. Cambridge: University Press, n.d. Reprint, Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1980.
- Hurtado, Larry W. *Mark*. New International Biblical Commentary. 2d ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989.
- Lane, William L. *The Gospel of Mark*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.*
- Lange, John Peter. *Mark and Luke*. In *Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*. Translated and edited by Philip Schaff, 16:1–167. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960.
- Maloney, Elliott C. *Semitic Interference in Marcan Syntax*. SBL diss. series 51. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981.
- Marcus, Joel. *Mark 1–8*. Anchor Bible, 27. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
- Marxsen, Willi. *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel*. Transl. J. Boyce, et al. Nashville: Abingdon, 1969.
- Meyer, H. A. W. *Gospels of Mark and Luke*. In *Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament*. Edited by M. B. Riddle, 2:1–213. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883. Reprint, Winona Lake: Alpha, 1979.

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- Orton, David E., ed. *The Composition of Mark's Gospel: Selected Studies from Novum Testamentum*. Readers in Biblical Studies, 3. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Plummer, Alfred. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. Cambridge Greek Testament, 1914. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982.*
- Rhoads, David, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. 2d ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999.
- Robertson, A. T. *Making Good in the Ministry*. Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1918. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976.
- Schweizer, Eduard. *The Good News According to Mark*. Transl. D. Madvig. Atlanta: John Knox, 1970.
- Swete, Henry Barclay. *The Gospel According to St Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction Notes and Indices*. 3d ed. London: Macmillan, 1927.
- Swift, C. E. Graham. *Mark*. In *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*. Edited by D. Guthrie & J. A. Motyer, 851–886. London: IVP, 1970. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.
- Taylor, Vincent. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. New York, 1966. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.*
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- Wessel, Walter W. *Mark*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, 8:601–793. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Witherington, Ben III. *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.