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NT 511 The Gospel of Mark

Garwood P. Anderson

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[This is the all-but-final version, save for minor corrections and modifications. The official syllabus will be available on Feb 9 and handed out the first night of class.]

**NT(IBS)511, MARK**  
Spring 2004  
Tuesdays, 6:15-9:00 PM

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1) **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
   a) **Catalog Description** (p. 113). As a basic course in Inductive Bible Studies, its primary purpose is to enable the student to begin developing an inductive approach to Bible study, especially in the areas of observation and interpretation. Parts of the Gospel of Mark are used to demonstrate and to practice a methodical approach that can be used in other biblical books. Some of the main themes of the Gospel are highlighted in the process. Prerequisite: NT500 or NT501—either completed or taken concurrently with this course. (May be taken by students in M.A. program not requiring Greek by special arrangement with the professor.)
   
   b) **Professor's Addendum.** The inductive method—more a sensibility than a “method” as such—will be learned by means of practice and repetition. The inductive approach is favored on at least three grounds: (1) By centering on the text in its canonical form (over against the events which lie behind the text or the circumstances of its production), the inductive approach is a concrete expression of a commitment to biblical authority. (2) By virtue of its *inductive* orientation to the text (over against a pre-determining deductive, dogmatic, or ideological orientations) this approach seeks to hear the diverse voices of biblical texts on their own terms. (3) By emphasizing the role of the reader as one who encounters and discovers the text in first-hand experience (rather than mediated through secondary resources and means), the approach has a pedagogical advantage: we learn more when we do the discovering.

2) **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
   a) **From Catalog** (p. 106). Having successfully completed this course, students should be able to:
      i) Demonstrate basic skills in observing the text, including aspect that pertain to the original language, with a view toward using these observations in the interpretation of the text;  
      ii) Demonstrate basic skills in interpreting the text by citing, describing, and drawing inferences from various types of evidence, including those that pertain to the original language;  
      iii) Demonstrate ability to discuss some of the major hermeneutical issues surrounding observation and interpretation;  
      iv) Demonstrate a preliminary and basic awareness of issues pertaining to the evaluation of passages for their contemporary possibilities for application and to the process of actually applying passages to specific contemporary situations; and  
      v) Demonstrate knowledge of the content of the book in its literary, theological, and historical contexts.
   
   b) **Professor's Addendum**
      i) **Knowledge and Skills.**

Garwood P. Anderson • NT(IBS)511 • Page 1 of 6
(1) To understand on a conceptual level what inductive Bible study is, both in itself and in contrast to other approaches—this includes both its value and strengths as well as its potential shortcomings and weaknesses.

(2) To learn to ask penetrating and fruitful interpretive questions and to grasp how the text is the first recourse for the answers.

(3) To be introduced to the appropriate use of secondary resources for the study of the biblical text within an inductive framework.

(4) To have a beginning appreciation of the distinctiveness of each of the biblical genres and the corresponding hermeneutical implications.

(5) To have a particular grasp of the characteristics of biblical narrative and a grasp of a narrative-critical method of interpretation.

(6) To become intensely familiar with the content of the Gospel of Mark.

ii) Values.

(1) To be empowered to engage the biblical text at a deep level and motivated to do so for a lifetime.

(2) To learn from the insights and perspectives of others, so that our engagement with the text is not merely individualistic but communal and synergistic.

(3) To be able to teach others to study the Bible profitably to a degree appropriate for their intellectual ability and spiritual maturity.

3) Course Materials and Textbooks:

a) Biblical Texts.

i) Provided. Students will be supplied with a common “manuscript” of Mark in the Revised Standard Version. Students will need to supply their own markers. I recommend at least eight colors and a pencil for annotations.

ii) Assumed.

(1) English Texts: For the purpose of comparison, access to at least two contemporary translation of the Bible based on a critical text, preferably the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the New American Bible (NAB), the New American Standard (NAS), or New International Version (NIV). Excluded are The Living Bible, New Living Translation, The Message, the King James, and New King James, which whatever their other merits, do not fit the close reading objectives of this class.

(2) Greek Texts: At least one of the following: A Greek-English interlinear NT such as Robert K. Brown, Philip Comfort, and J.D. Douglas, eds, The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1993) or, for more advanced or ambitious readers of Greek, The United Bible Society’s The Greek New Testament, 4th ed. or the Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th ed. Students may also wish to consider the Greek-English New Testament in which the full NA27 Greek text, including apparatus, is interfaced with the RSV translation.

iii) Recommended. If they have not done so already, students should seriously consider acquiring Bible Works 6.0. This program will be either required or extremely valuable for at least eight courses in the M.Div. degree to say nothing of its ongoing value for exegetical research and sermon preparation.

b) Course Texts


c) Recommended and “Approved” Commentaries

Note well: No commentaries are required among the course textbooks, and all of the above will be available on Reserve in the library. The Guelich and Evans volumes are available via Prolepsis in FirstClass but only to the extent that the limited user licenses are available at any particular time. Students who are not able to access the library regularly are advised to acquire two or more of these volumes for their personal library.

d) **Selected Recommended Works on the Gospel of Mark**

4) **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS**

a) **Requirements**

i) The reading of course texts—four relatively short and/or not difficult books—constitutes 10% of the course grade. The assigned reading is largely supplemental to the lectures and class exercises, reinforcing the conceptual framework for what we are doing in class together. To receive credit for each book, students will write a *not to exceed one-page single-spaced reflection* for each. These are strategically sequenced throughout the course (see Course Schedule) and will be discussed in class on the weeks in which the reflections are due. Reflection papers will not be accepted after the due date.

ii) On March 3 students will return a take-home assignment/quiz in which they will be asked to recognize compositional structures and features from biblical texts (10%). Class lectures, handouts, and Thompson’s *Bible Study That Works* will all be available to students as resources to complete the assignment.

iii) The heart of the coursework will be the weekly assignments—80% of the course grade.

(1) With a few variations, these will be detailed segment surveys of passages from Mark’s gospel (see Course Schedule). The basic structure of the assignments will be largely the same. For
variations in the details see the assignment handout that will be given out the first night of class.

(2) The average weekly assignment will probably be 5-7 pages in length (though the length and nature of the passage and the formatting of assignment can make a significant difference). In the end, quality is more significant than quantity.

(3) Students will be assigned to “group A” or “group B.” The first three assignments will be done by all students. Beginning on 3/10 until the end of the semester, students will turn in assignments every other week. On their “off week” students should minimally survey the assigned text segment and mark their observations on the Mark MS.

b) **Expectations**

i) Attendance: This is a method and process oriented class. Students who miss class time will miss out on what is being taught and modeled and will be at a disadvantage in the performance of their assignments. After the first missed class, every subsequent absence will result in a half grade reduction in the final course grade. Students are responsible for making plans in advance in order to acquire the course content and materials for any class time that is missed.

ii) It is expected that to do an adequate job in the course, 7-9 hours will be spent on course work each week outside of class time, including course reading and the course assignments.

iii) Assignments and reading reflections are due at the end of class for the assigned week. Late assignments—that is assignments not handed in immediately at the end of class—will not be eligible for a grade higher than “F” (i.e., 70/100 pts.), although a lower grade is possible. Students should not expect exceptions to this policy, and the policy applies to students who are absent for class. If a student must be absent for class, they should send their assignment as an email attachment. The deadline remains the same as if class had been attended, 6:15 PM Tuesday.

iv) All work, with the possible exception of charts, should be word-processed, that is, rather than handwritten, in a standard 10-12 pt. font. Handwritten assignments will not be accepted, and handwriting on the assignment is assumed to be additions made in the course of class discussion for which students are not given credit.

5) **GRADING**

a) **Categories**

i) The reading accounts for 10% of the total grade, 2.5% per book reflection.

ii) IBS compositional structures quiz accounts for 10% of the course total.

iii) For each student there will be a total of eight IBS assignments totalling 80% of the course grade.

   (1) The first two assignments will each be worth 5% of the course grade, for a subtotal of 15%.

   (2) The next two assignments will each be worth 7.5% of the course grade, for a subtotal of 15%.

   (3) The next two assignments will each be worth 10% of the course grade, for a subtotal of 20%.

   (4) The final two assignments will be worth 15% of the grade for a subtotal of 30%.

b) **Rationale:**

Why the ascending weight on these assignments? Because the class is meant to be the cumulative acquisition of skills. Presumably you will keep improving, so your best work will hopefully be your final work. By then there will be little or no ambiguity in what is expected of you, and you will not be unduly penalized for early work that is less than satisfactory when you were still learning the method.

c) **Scale** (descriptions from ATS Catalog, 28)

94-100 = A “Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives”

92-94 = A-

90-92 = B+

86-90 = B “Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives”
84-86 = B-
82-84 = C+
77-82 = C “Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives”
75-77 = C-
73-75 = D+
70-73 = D “Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives”
<70 = F “Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives”
### COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>SURVEY SEGMENT/FOCUS PERICOPE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT WEIGHT %</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/10/04</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
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<td>Introduction to Inductive Bible Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/17/04</td>
<td>Overview of Mark (all students)</td>
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<td>Thompson, <em>Bible Study that Works</em></td>
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<td>2/24/04</td>
<td>1:1-45 (all students)</td>
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<td>3/3/04</td>
<td>2:1-3:6 (all students)</td>
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<td>Compositional Structures Take Home Quiz 10%</td>
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<td>4:35-6:6a (group B)</td>
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<td>3/24/04</td>
<td>6:6b-6:56 (group A)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>3/31/04</td>
<td>Reading Week: No Class</td>
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<td>4/6/04</td>
<td>7:1-8:21 (group B)</td>
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<td>Fee &amp; Stuart, <em>How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth</em></td>
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<td>8:22-10:52</td>
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<td>Powell, <em>What is Narrative Criticism?</em></td>
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<td>15%</td>
<td>Rhoads et al., <em>Mark as Story</em></td>
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<td>5/18/04</td>
<td>16:1-8[20] (group B)</td>
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