I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Mark’s Gospel is deceptively familiar. It is the first narrative composition of Jesus’s life and teaching. It is iconic, sacred, and highly influential in the history of Western Christendom. Yet, as a stand-alone story, Mark is enigmatic, theologically underplayed, and rife with literary irony. In this course, we will read and interpret Mark with a view to its language, themes, style, composition, theology, and impact. Students are expected to come to seminar-formatted class prepared to offer in-depth analysis of Mark’s Gospel using advanced exegetical tools and resources. Each class will include group discussions about Mark as we read through this Gospel together.

II. TEXTBOOKS:

Required Reading:

Each student will be assigned a different primary textbook in the form of a critical commentary. We will discuss and assign these commentaries in class on day one. The student can expect these commentaries to range from $15 to $100.

Possibilities include:
III. RATIONALE:
This course should assist students in their learning via specific Core Competencies of the M.Div. degree. Through their study of Mark in this course, students should demonstrate an understanding of the Bible’s foundational role in the formation of Christian identity. As a result of their careful engagement with Mark and with each other, they should show an awareness of their own spiritual development characterized by mature self-acceptance and self-direction. Moreover, as a result of their reflection on and integration of the text into possible contexts for ministry, students should demonstrate competence in the skills and perspectives necessary for leadership in the formation of disciples.

IV. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:
In order to meet these general objectives stated above, students will demonstrate the following specific competencies. At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Read Mark in Greek using online language tools and exegetical commentaries.
2. Identify and explain the unique literary features of Mark’s Gospel.
3. Describe the historical and social contexts of Mark’s composition and explain how these contexts help us to better understand the key themes and problems revealed in a close reading of Mark.
4. Identify and utilize scholarly resources for higher biblical criticism including commentaries, concordances, theological dictionaries, as well as any other potential resources mentioned in class.
5. Compose an exegetical essay related to a passage from Mark. These written assignments will demonstrate the student’s engagement with the biblical text, their facility in higher biblical criticism, and their ability to communicate the results of their study effectively.

V. TEACHING STRATEGIES:
All required contact hours for this course are in the physical classroom. The main work of the course will consist of (1) prior-to-class readings, (2) in-class discussions, and (3) an exegetical paper and presentation.

VI. CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND READINGS:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>date</th>
<th>touchstones</th>
<th>due</th>
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<tr>
<td>2/25</td>
<td>introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>commentaries to be purchased - Mark’s plot(s)</td>
<td>Le Donne essay to be read</td>
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<td>3/11</td>
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VII: SEMINARY STANDARDS:
A. Inclusive language
United Theological Seminary has an official policy regarding the use of Inclusive Language. The policy may be found in the Seminary Catalog and further explained in the Student Handbook. If you have specific questions, please see the instructor.

B. Academic Integrity
Student integrity regarding all work assigned in this class is a basic expectation of the Seminary community. A detailed policy regarding what constitutes a violation of academic integrity can be found in the Student Handbook.

C. Online Confidentiality
One of the highlights of the classroom experience is that students can draw from the experiences shared during class discussions and in written work. However, it is imperative that students do not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. In addition, students are expected to honor the privacy and confidentiality of their classmates by not disclosing classroom conversations with those outside of the classroom.

VIII: USING ONLINE RESOURCES
Help guides are available in the student computer lab and in the Student Handbook.

Please note that United Theological Seminary policy requires that all email correspondence with the instructor by any student enrolled for credit in a class must utilize the student’s UTS email account. Any correspondence that the instructor sends will utilize the United email system. Therefore, it is very important that each student check his or her United email account at least two or three times each week.

IX. ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:
Your grade will be determined based on the following calculation:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exegetical Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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A. Class Participation (50% of overall grade)
   1. **Attendance**: You are expected to attend every class.

   2. **Discussion**: You are expected to contribute to class regularly by giving thoughtful and respectful comments that evidence your engagement with the course material. The professor will facilitate discussions on a weekly basis and will grant discussion points (4 max per class) to students who show evidence of reading/media comprehension. The professor will take away discussion points (3 max per class) if the student is called upon to contribute to a discussion but answers unsatisfactorily. Points are given and taken away at the professor’s discretion.

B. Class Presentations (10% of overall grade)
   1. The student is expected to present an abstract (a summative paragraph) complete with thesis statement to the class orally. You are expected to have consulted several New Testament commentaries and and/or other scholarly publications concerning your passage. Moreover you are expected to demonstrate your knowledge of this material in a succinct and intelligent way.

   2. The student will prepare a 20-minute (approx 8 pages typed) exegetical research paper. This can be read to the class. Bring a hard copy for every student.

C. Exegetical Research Essay (40% of overall grade)
   Primary expectations for this essay will be discussed in class. Other particulars include:

   1. Document Format and Language.
      a. All papers are to be submitted as Word or RTF files and emailed to acledonne@united.com.

      b. You are to use 12 pt Times New Roman font and 1 inch margins on all sides of the page. All papers should be double-spaced. Be sure to include your first and last name on your document.

      c. **Transliterated words** should be italicized (e.g., the Greek words for “Christ” is Christos). If you use **biblical language fonts**, please use SBL Greek and SBL Hebrew fonts (or unicode). These can be downloaded free of charge at http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/biblicalfonts.aspx.

      d. You are to use inclusive language in all writing, including your posts, for this course. Gender-inclusive language is a requirement at United. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me. Examples of gender-inclusive language include: “humankind” or “humanity” not “mankind”; “person” not “man” or “woman”; “she or he” or “one” not “he.”
e. **Avoid contractions** in your professional writing (e.g., I’m, can’t, don’t, etc.). Also **do not use** words such as “obviously” or “clearly,” since if these things were so “obvious” there would be no need for you to write about them!

f. **Proofread** and **revise** your work! No one writes a perfect essay the first time. Essays that contain many errors are distracting and communicate a lack of care and/or effort.

g. Scholarly Sources and Citation Format.
   1. The biblical text is the primary text of this course. You are, however, expected to employ various **up-to-date scholarly** sources in your writings (published in the last 10 years is best). Scholarly sources **include** the resources like those listed at the end of this syllabus or cited at the end of chapters in AGT. They **do not include** popular works (e.g., the *Access Bible*, books by authors such as Charles Swindoll), most websites (e.g., Wikipedia, About.com, blogs), or commentaries by Christian figures from the distant past (e.g., John Calvin, John Barclay, Matthew Henry). While these commentaries may help you note the history of interpretation of a given passage, they do not replace recent, scholarly contributions. Your ability to identify, interact with, and constructively employ these resources for your congregations will make you a more effective interpreter of Scripture.

   2. Citations are to follow the **Chicago Manual of Style** (a.k.a. Turabian; the standard format for United) or the **SBL Handbook of Style**. **Biblical passages** may be noted parenthetically, for example: Jesus cries, “It is finished!” (John 19:30, NRSV). Be consistent with your style throughout.

2. **Due dates.**
   a. Assignments are to be submitted by the **due dates listed in the syllabus**.

   b. Students will be **penalized** for late work by one letter grade for each day they are late. Papers will **not be accepted** more than three days after the due date.

   c. If you have **extenuating circumstances** (i.e., family emergency, extended illness), notify me as soon as possible (beforehand, if possible) to make arrangements.

3. **Plagiarism.**
   a. **Plagiarism is a very serious offence and is taken as such at United.** The Student Handbook contains clear definitions of and a process of evaluation for papers that are suspected of plagiarism.

   b. If you plagiarize in this class, you will **automatically earn a 0** on the entire portion of the assignment and **be subject to possible dismissal from this course**. This means, if you plagiarize on an exegesis exercise, you will earn a 0 for your
entire exegesis exercises grade, etc. Record of the offense will also be documented in your student file.

c. To make sure everyone is on the same page, here is a basic definition. Plagiarism is the representation of another’s work as your own; it is stealing. This practice extends from the extreme of purchasing a term paper online and submitting it as one’s own, to failing to mark with quotation marks someone else’s words or phrases, to claiming an idea or approach as original when it is the product of another’s research, or even to paraphrasing the work of another without properly citing the source (even if you include that source in your Works Cited page). Take care to note when you are consulting others and give them the credit they are due!

X. STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS:
It is very important for students to submit a course evaluation toward the end of the semester. Instructors do not see the student evaluations at all until after the instructors have submitted the students’ final official grades. Students should feel free to evaluate the course without any negative ramifications.

XI. REFERENCES:
A. Commentary Series.
Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
Anchor Bible Commentaries (a.k.a. Anchor Yale Bible)
Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
Black’s New Testament Commentaries
Feminist Companion
Hermeneia (requires biblical languages)
Interpretation
New Cambridge Bible Commentary
New International Commentary on the New Testament
New Interpreter’s Bible (a recent edition)
New Testament Readings
Paideia
Reading the New Testament
Sacra Pagina
Westminster Bible Companion
Word Biblical Commentary

B. Scholarly Journals for New Testament Exegesis
This list is just to give you an idea of what is out there. While the best NT journals are included in this list, there are many others that have good articles as well. However, you need to exercise your ability as a skillful reader to determine if the article you are reading is exegetical or primarily interpretative (pastoral, theological). For this class, you want to emphasize exegesis in order to help your pastoral and theological reflections later on.
Australian Biblical Review
Biblica
Biblical Interpretation
Catholic Biblical Quarterly
Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses
Harvard Theological Review
Horizons in Biblical Theology
Hebrew Annual Review
Interpretation
Jewish Studies Quarterly
Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods
Journal for the Study of the New Testament
Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
Journal of Biblical Literature
Journal of Early Christian Studies
Journal of Jewish Studies
Neotestamentica
New Testament Studies
Novum Testamentum
Perspectives in Religious Studies
Revue biblique
Revue de Qumran
Semeia

F. Online Resources.
David Watson’s Homepage: http://www.davidwatson.utsweb.net
Early Christian Writings: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/
Jerome Neyrey’s Articles (social-scientific criticism) http://www.nd.edu/~jneyrey1/articles.html.
The N. T. Wright Page: http://www.ntwrightpage.com/
Perseus Digital Library: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/
Project Guttenberg: http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/loccs/pa
Yale Eikon Image Database: http://research.yale.edu:8084/divdl/eikon/
Wallace on James: https://bible.org/seriespage/james-introduction-outline-and-argument