TS 690 – JESUS AND MIRACLE
Winter 2017, Mondays 9:00-11:50
Conrad Grebel University College, Rm 2201

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Office hours by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The miracles of Jesus have long exercised the passions of observers—family, friends and foes alike. Scholarship has also had an uneasy relationship with the memory of Jesus’ miracles. But the miracle stories will not go away. To the contrary, they infuse the memory of Jesus with a spirit of power and prerogative which attracts as much as it perplexes.

This course is designed to facilitate a close encounter with these texts as scriptural memory of Jesus. Attention will be paid especially to the miracle tradition in the Gospel of Mark. To this end we will consider Mark’s miracle stories in their literary context(s), engage critically the questions of scholarship and aspire to readings which are at once methodologically self-conscious and creatively life affirming.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course will:
• facilitate a close (textually attentive, methodologically self-conscious) reading of the miracle stories in the Gospel of Mark
• introduce and practice different methods for interpreting these texts
• attend to what scholars are saying about Jesus and the Gospel of Mark through the lens of the miracle stories
• wrestle with the hermeneutical challenges involved in reading, teaching and preaching Mark’s miracle stories for today

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
1. Regular participation 10%
2. Article Review & Presentation 10%
3. Commentary Analysis 10%
4. Position Paper One 10%
5. Position Paper Two 20%
6. Position Paper Three 40%
1. REGULAR AND INFORMED PARTICIPATION (10%) is important. Students are expected to come to class prepared to engage actively in class discussion. At the graduate level, attendance in all classes is expected. If you must be absent, please let the instructor know in advance. In the event of multiple absences, additional work may be required.

Adequate preparation for each class presumes three elements:

(a) You will need to select one commentary on Mark to accompany your reading of the miracles. Readings from your chosen commentary will not be assigned explicitly. But it is expected that you will be consulting your commentary regularly in step with the readings (see below, Commentary Analysis). Choosing one commentary as conversation partner is intended to help you to locate your own approach (by emulation or by contrast) and should inform your contributions to class discussion throughout the semester.

(b) Several significant articles and/or chapters have been assigned in preparation for each class. These have been selected to encourage reflection on the subject of the Position Papers (namely, the function of the miracle stories in the Gospel of Mark) and to demonstrate different methods for interpreting the miracle stories in Mark.

(c) Most importantly, informed participation presumes you have read the assigned portion of Mark’s Gospel, preferably in more than one translation of the New Testament, with an eye to Mark’s larger context.

[You are welcome to use a translation of your choice. But you are very strongly encouraged to have more than one translation available for consultation. All translation includes interpretation but some translations are more historically and contextually accountable than others. Be aware, in this regard, that paraphrases (for ex., the Message, the Living Translation, etc.) are just that. The New Testament Gateway (www.ntgateway.com) is especially useful for comparing translations, but it is expected that students will bring Bibles to class.]

2. ARTICLE REVIEW & PRESENTATION (10%):
Each student will choose one substantial article or chapter (marked in bold in the syllabus) to review. Reviews will consist of a summary of the argument of the article/chapter AND a critical reaction. Reviewers will be asked to present very briefly (5-10 min) on the day for which the reading has been assigned (5%) and to submit a written review of 2 pages (5%). DUE DATES AS PER THE CLASS OUTLINE.

3. COMMENTARY ANALYSIS (10%):
As per above, each student will choose one commentary on the Gospel of Mark as a conversation partner during the semester. Although specific readings will not be assigned from the commentary, each student will be responsible to submit a short (2-4 page) analysis of the way in which the chosen commentary deals with the miracle stories, DUE ON MARCH 27. Not a review of the commentary per se, this assignment asks the student (i) to identify as succinctly as possible, and then (ii) to assess critically, how the chosen commentary approaches the miracle stories: What sorts of questions does the commentator privilege? What is her or his interest in reading Mark’s miracle stories? What goes unsaid, or unexamined? Would you recommend the approach taken? Be sure to include textual examples to substantiate your argument.

TS 690: Jesus and Miracle Syllabus 2/7
4. POSITION PAPER ONE (10%):
The first position paper (2 pgs), DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS JANUARY 30, asks you to state briefly what you understand to be the function of the miracle stories in the Gospel of Mark with particular reference to the miracle stories in Mark’s first chapter: **In your opinion, what is the function of the miracle stories in Mark? How do the miracle stories of Mark 1 support your answer?** Be sure that you support your claims by referring to at least three particular texts and give reasons for your understanding of these texts when they are crucial for your argument.

5. POSITION PAPER TWO (20%):
The second position paper (4-6 pgs), DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS MARCH 6, asks you to reexamine your preunderstanding of the role of the miracle stories in Mk (as per your first Position Paper) given the miracle stories in especially Mark 2-5: **In four to six pages, give detailed evidence of the ways in which the miracle stories in Mark 2-5 corroborate AND complicate your understanding of the function of miracle stories in the Gospel of Mark.** It may be helpful to restate your preunderstanding (from the first Position Paper, on the basis of Mk 1) in an initial paragraph in order to make the comparison with Mk 2-5 explicit. In either case, make an effort to refer explicitly and in detail to texts in Mk 2-5 that both support (corroborate) and challenge (complicate) your understanding and make sure to explain as best you can how and to what extent the latter stretch your view of what the miracle stories do for Mark.

6. POSITION PAPER THREE (40%):
The final written assignment (8-10 pgs), DUE ON APRIL 10, ONE WEEK AFTER OUR LAST CLASS, is to be written on a miracle story of your choice from the Gospel of Mark. Be sure to reflect in your work the interaction of biblical text, chosen commentary and assigned reading which has characterized class discussion; be clear, however, that you are not required to do any additional reading beyond what is indicated in the syllabus. The intent of this assignment is to make space for the development of your own voice as a reader of the miracle tradition.

At a minimum, the following questions should be addressed explicitly in your exegesis:

1. What interests you about this text? Which textual details direct your reading? Which do you have difficulty accounting for?
2. What do these details tell you about the function of the text in Mark’s narrative? What does the miracle story ‘do’ for Mark?
3. What ‘difference’ does your reading make? How do you read this account as Word of God?

All papers should be typewritten, double-spaced, 1” margins, 12-point typeface. Please refer to the attached Guidelines to Written Assignments regarding matters of style. When in doubt, see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (based on the Chicago Manual of Style). A “Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide” is available online at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
POLICIES:

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:
Students are required to complete the assignments by the due dates indicated and hand them in at the beginning of class. Exceptions will be made only in the case of illness or other emergency. Please speak with the instructor as soon as possible in such a circumstance.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g. plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

GRIEVANCE:
A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.

APPEALS:
A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 – Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 – Student Appeals, www.Adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm.

NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
The Office for persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

All papers should be typewritten, double-spaced, 1" margins, 12-point typeface. Please refer to the 20010-11 Emmanuel Student Handbook and consult the attached Guidelines to Written Assignments regarding matters of style. When in doubt, see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*). A “Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide” is available online at: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.
OUTLINE (AND REQUIRED READINGS)

Monday, Jan 9: Introductions / Jesus, Mark and Miracle
In addition to reading the Gospel of Mark, preferably in one sitting, select two of:

Jack Kingsbuy, Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 31-61.

Monday, Jan 16: Mk 1:21-45 / A New Teaching

*Supplementary Reading: Preaching Mark

Monday, Jan 23 – NO CLASS

Monday, Jan 30: Mk 2:1-12, 3:1-6 / Blasphemy

*Supplementary Reading: Mark in Context

POSITION PAPER ONE DUE
Monday, Feb 6: Mk 3:7-12, 19b-30 / Beside Himself

*Supplementary Reading: Mark in Context

Monday, Feb 13: Mk 4:35-41; 6:45-56 / On Water

Monday, Feb 20 – NO CLASS

Monday, Feb 27: Mk 5:1-20 / On the Other Side I

* Supplementary Reading: Preaching Mark

Monday, March 6: Mk 5:21-43; 7:24-37 / On the Other Side II

*Supplementary Reading: Preaching Mark

POSITION PAPER TWO DUE

TS 690: Jesus and Miracle Syllabus 6/7
Monday, March 13: Mk 6:30-44; 8:1-10 / In the Wilderness


Monday, March 20: Mk 8:22-26; 10:46-52 / On the Way


Monday, March 27: Conclusions I / Mark and Miracle


COMMENTARY ANALYSIS DUE

Monday, April 3: Conclusions II / Jesus and Miracle

Select two of:


Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 105-128 OR


POSITION PAPER THREE DUE ONE WEEK AFTER LAST CLASS, APRIL 10