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Omega Graduate School

Professor Name

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120-Day - Course Learning Journal
The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working in each course and is an integration of the essential elements of the course within your professional field of interest. The objective of the course journal is to produce a degree of acculturation, integrating new ideas into your existing knowledge of each course. This is also an opportunity to communicate with your professor consistent with the Tutorial Methodology to express insights gained as a result of the course of study. Submit the course learning journal via DIAL. The course learning journal should be 5-7 pages in length, and should include the following sections:

1. Introduction – Describe the expectations of the graduate program and the
campus residency component for that course. Summarize the intent of the course, how it fits into the graduate program as a whole, and the relevance of its position in the curricular sequence.

2. Personal Growth - Describe your personal growth–how the course stretched or challenged you– as well as your progress in mastery of course content and skills during the week and through subsequent readings – what new insights or skills you gained.

3. Reflective Entry - Add a reflective entry that describes the contextualization (or adaptation and relevant application) of new learning into your professional field. What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional field as a result of your study?

4. Future Expectations - Continue the journal by addressing questions and concerns you now have relating to the graduate program expectations.

5. Conclusion – Synthesize the three body sections above, evaluating the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional, religious, and educational goals.

Introduction

The following are the expected outcomes of the programme as outlined by the Omega Graduate School:

1. “Apply Christian worldview, social science, and critical thinking skills to discern social trends, issues, and problems in their professional fields (whether in family, church, or community) that can potentially be transformed by the positive influence of religious truths, values, and principles.
2. Analyze trends, issues, and problems that need the transforming impact of Christianity applying a Christian worldview, social science, and/or critical thinking skills to clarify the nature and significance of questions at stake.
3. Identify historical precedents of Christianity’s positive and negative social impacts for guidance in the sociologically integration of religion and society in order to advance constructive changes in a needy, contemporary world.
4. Apply information management skills to a variety of sources (eyewitness, textual, or electronic) in order to research inquiries.
5. Use advanced learning skills in reading and writing to accurately interpret and critically evaluate research sources.
6. Integrate biblical truths with knowledge from relevant disciplines to develop a Christian worldview of a subject, academic discipline, or societal issue.
7. Develop a transformed self-concept through identifying, healing, and replacing dysfunctional self-beliefs liberated by biblical truths and interdisciplinary insights.
8. Advance leadership ability through a transformed self-concept by linking awareness of Christian vocation with providential preparation to become a social change agent in an existing family, church, or community influence sphere.
9. Contextualize Christian interdisciplinary research insights with persuasive communication methods for positive impact on those in personal and professional spheres of influence.
10. Develop global awareness and cross-cultural skills through interdisciplinary insights and methods from Christian missiology related to analyzing and interacting with different cultures, religious traditions, and ideologies.
11. Assess a social trend, issue, or problem from a biblical moral perspective and identify appropriate ethical individual or social responses.
12. Analyze a legal trend, issue, or problem from a Christian worldview perspective in order to respond appropriately as a Christian citizen.
13. Produce constructive changes in family, church, or community through applying transformational biblical leadership principles to counteract non-Christian leadership principles that ruin the world.
14. Demonstrate understanding of organizational dynamics and personnel dynamics in organizations in order to contribute constructively to improving a professional sphere of influence.
15. Transform people's problems in groups or organizations through applying personality assessment, conflict resolution, or coaching/mentoring skills.
16. Improve the orthopraxis of truth discovered through Christian interdisciplinary research to change the world in its ethical and social dimensions.
17. Assess applications of Christian interdisciplinary research in order to reveal obstacles to personal or social orthopraxis.
18. Develop a solution to a practical problem in society by applying leadership, social science, and Christian worldview perspectives in creative and constructive ways.”

 In short, the expectations of the program are to create scholar practitioners with research skills to integrate religion into social change and address social problems using Christian worldview and principles interdisciplinary and cross cultural study for addressing society’s challenges. It is anticipated that the programme provides “a safe place to think” and critically examine challenges and advocate for meaningful change in the world. The residency provided synchronous sessions with lecturers/facilitators, to help to guide the process of thinking on the particular subject area and to help to orientate the themes of topics of the curriculum. The residency component of this course was eye-opening and saw interesting new learning around faith based learning and integration of orthodoxy, orthopraxy and the world of social leadership and change. During the week-long residency we were introduced to essential elements of the course, that is, faith reflection for Christian scholarship, orthodoxy (right belief/doctrine) orthopraxy (right practice) and orthopathy (passion for God) in the life of the Christian scholar practitioner. All this was new to me as I have never studied at a faith based institution or studied theology and my level of orthodox thinking was at the lay level.

The objective/intent of the course is to “develop an integrated Christian worldview through increased skill in interpreting and integrating scripture Christian tradition and reason to appropriately evaluate one’s personal experience” (Elmes-Matthew, 2023 p. 1).

In summary, the course intends to help students develop Christian critical thought using scripture theological thinking and examination of Christian tradition to understand personal experiences.

This programme fits within the programme as a whole as it provides the groundwork for theological critical thinking to develop in order to integrate the Christian worldview into sociological thinking which will be introduced later in other courses of the programme.

Personal Growth

This course has helped me to open my theological ‘eye’ to be able to examine orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthopathy. It has begun to prepare me to integrate Christian/religious worldview when examining sociological problems. Having never done any theological study before now, this course has been a great opportunity for theological growth. The learning was steep with the introduction of Christian thought such as hamartiology, angelology, soteriology and others and levels of orthodox thinking and approaches to faith thinking and reflection. In particular, the 60 day developmental reading exposed me to Christian feminist thought. As an academic and feminist and womanist scholar, I was not aware of Christian feminist thought and how critical reflection along with examination of biblical principles and traditions shape the ideology of womanhood, intersectionality around men and women and marginal groups and other feminist themes.

The course challenged me to critically examine my beliefs and practices as a Christian scholar and stretched my thinking about how Christian orthodox thinking can be applied to everyday problems. It also challenges me to utilize theological analysis and religious/Christian reflection beyond reciting scriptures. It has caused me to critique, examine and analyse Christian tradition in particular my growth experience with my Seventh Day Adventist faith tradition and reflection through introspective practice. This is progress in my faith journey. Growing up as a Seventh Day Adventist Christian, I learnt the principles and doctrine upon which my faith is built and though I have questioned and examined my faith tradition before, I have never done so using academic Christian thought and theological epistemology. It was a refreshing experience. I appreciate the new learning on merging theological and sociological critical thought. I have gained a lot of insight through this course about biblical and theological inquiry and secondary and primary sources of authority, operational theology and operational beliefs and professed beliefs.

Reflective Entry

This new learning though it does not align with my professional work at my secular university, it does however align with my professional field of social work and social work education. Social work is a “do-gooder” profession that started with the work of Christian missionaries. The profession continues to align with good Christian principles, biblical teachings and worldviews. The core values of social work are service to others, each person has worth and dignity, social justice, importance of building human relationships, being competent and having integrity. Because of this alignment I have not been able to reflect on concerns that have arisen about my professional field as a result of my study. However, I will continue to reflect on this experience with the course and seek to examine how the learning can improve my profession and practice.

Future Expectations

Based on my assessment thus far, I am still thinking about how to align religious and Christian scholarship with my chosen area of research focus. Work life balance has always been addressed from a secular, cultural approach and this is new to me. Also, given my interest in ethnographic study and problem solving, this alignment will be important. I am not overly concerned as I know God will light the way for the project to take shape at the right time for world changing impact. In general, I am questioning my approach to this graduate study and have been reflecting on my previous scholarship, writing and analysis.

The expectations of this programme are vast, and being a Christian world changer is important and I pray for insight into how my work will become more impactful as a result of my participation in this programme.

Conclusion

This programme is aligned with my passion for the youth and my work as a social worker/social work educator. Problem solving and change is the cornerstone of good social work at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. Additionally, as a Christian being able to apply my Christian worldview to problem solving and life changing learning is important to me. The programme is therefore aligned with who I am and how I practice. Therefore the programme is proving effective in meeting my professional, religious and educational goals. I look forward to greater learning as the programme progresses.

**WORKS CITED**

Elmes-Matthew, A (2023). PHI 943-12 Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis curriculum. Programme Outcome

Omega Graduate School. Academic Catalog 2021-2022. https://ogs.edu/degrees/doctor-of-social-leadership-dsl/