

120-Day Assignment

History of the Integration of Religion and Society

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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.

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.

The expectations of the graduate program and the campus residency component for the courses have been updated to meet the needs of professional adult learners. Dr. Joshua Reichard indicated the most recent residency changes to include a weekend session beginning on Friday evening and through Saturday (Reichard, J., n.d.). The assignment would be given on the Monday before the weekend residency for students to be prepared to discuss the essential elements. The primary purpose of the residency is to build community and learn from the professors and each other. The residency also provides time for the Omega Graduate School (OGS) community to unite in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ in dedicating our research and studies to Him. Having the Library of Congress residency is another requirement that will enhance the OGS experience and help OGS students to become expert researchers. I am someone who has led humanitarian and mission teams around the world. The global residency at Oxford University is also an experience that will deepen the intellectual knowledge of OGS students and broaden our world perspective and research in connection with Oxford University. The Oxford University trip is an essential part of our OGS experience as a student in this amazing American Center for Religion/Society Studies.

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.

The content of this course has stretched me in my view of history and in my knowledge about the Kingdom of God. What we believe about history, in general, may not be accurate unless

we can see it from God's perspective. For Christians, this is even more critical. Today, Christians' perspectives about history may not be a part of their day-to-day thinking, yet it could be affecting every aspect of how they governed their lives. For instance, the concept of history being linear versus cyclical is not commonly on people's minds, even those believers who read the word daily. It was enlightening to learn the Bible's teaching of a 'linear' view of history versus "cyclical." In understanding this, the term 'chronos' helps us to understand the chronological biblical events leading to Jesus' return. The Bible is clear from the Old Testament to the New Testament, "In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth" (Genesis 1:1). Jesus said in John 1:1-3, (1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being (2020). Not only does Jesus reveal in the Bible that He is the beginning and the end, but that He is coming quickly. (Revelation 22:12; 4:14-18; Revelation 16:15; Matthew 24:42-44; 2 Peter 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:2. NASB, 2020).

I have gained and am still gaining insights that have changed my life and increased my knowledge. Both of my classes this semester have increased my confidence and skills in content, researching, and writing. It has been rewarding to be a part of a community of scholars who love Jesus and want to change the world through Jesus as I do. It is also rewarding to have professors who understand the gravity of the work that they are doing and who are encouraging and equipping Christian leaders and scholars to change the world.

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?

Throughout my research, the Lord is helping to crystalize the ministry that has gripped my heart. The Christian community has not embraced our public schools and is often seen as an adversary. The constant assaults and legislative attacks on the teaching profession have caused even experienced teachers to abandon their classrooms, thus creating a teacher shortage. Colleges and universities have seen a sharp drop in the number of applications to teacher preparation institutions. Several political leaders blamed public school teachers as they tried to gain support to privatize education. This has contributed to decreasing the number of students entering education programs to be a teacher (Ravitch, D., 2020). I believe there has never been a greater opportunity for Christians to serve our young people. Because there is such a need for teachers, Muslims, and other religions are trying to fill the void to gain influence. The public school system is a field ready to harvest. As a part of their mission's ministry, many churches could consider adopting a public school to show the love of Jesus by helping and supporting Christian teachers and students. What I have seen in my thirty years of experience is due to the lack of presence and support of the church in having a presence in our schools, and the constant lambasting by Christian leaders, we are losing Christian teachers, and students who feel deserted and unsupported; thus, dropping away from the church.

It is time for Christian leaders to rethink mission strategies in reaching the world for Christ. God is showing me that believers who hold careers and jobs in all professions across the world are truly His ambassadors with people who shy away from Christ. In rethinking missions, my particular interest is in supporting those involved in secular educational institutions. Students, families, and staff in these secular institutions who do not go to church, only see "the church" at school through the lives of Christians. What if church leaders supported educators in their church by quietly going to pray with them and any others who may want to come before school? What if

churches would quietly sponsor or serve staff lunches or do other kind gestures for the staff?

Public school workers, especially teachers, work outside of school and on weekends preparing for lessons and grading papers. Often, they do not feel supported or appreciated. Perhaps if there were more ministries focused solely on providing support and appreciation, more teachers would find hope and come to know Jesus, and students would find hope in their youth and dedicate their lives to serving the Lord.

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

In terms of program questions and concerns, the new changes announced by Dr. Reichard starting in the fall are God-sent (Reichard, J., n.d.). These changes addressed questions and concerns before I even knew I had them. I am so grateful to God for the recent changes. My goal is to graduate. The old residency requirements seriously interfered with my work schedule, so the change is perfect. Being a school base administrator is different from working in an office without students, and missing a week or two during the school year was a challenge. The latest changes with assignments, the start and end dates of the semesters, and the eight-week terms will make the workload more durable with working full-time.

Changes are happening within OGS as I am moving through the program. The Holy Spirit is truly directing my path. This scholarly research deepens my understanding of how the enemy has gained such a strong foothold in educational institutions and the minds of people at large. This research helps me to better equip myself and others. I believe that God has called me and other Christ-Followers into public and secular schools, colleges, and universities for such a time as this. We may not win the battle, but Jesus prayed for us in John 17. The victory belongs to Christ (Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelations 21:1-8). Our job is to have an influence on the lives of

those around us by snatching both fellow educators and students straight from the enemy's grip.

It is our responsibility to equip ourselves for the battle and allow His Holy Spirit to do work in the mind and hearts of those He has set before us. The Bible tells us three things in John 1:1-4, first, that Jesus made us all, second, that nothing happens apart from Him, and third, that Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. (NASB, 2020). Jesus is our hope. As I continue in my studies, I am praying for God's continual guidance to equip me to serve Him.

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

My journey in pursuing my doctorate is as academic as it is spiritual. Reading about the various views of history in this course (Ward, D. & Moser, D, 2022), particularly the biblical view of history, was an encouragement in so many ways. First, it has been an encouragement to have a community with other scholars who love Jesus and believe in His Word. Secondly, it has been an encouragement to experience joining in the work of God on earth with fellow scholars and leaders who are enthusiastic about the work that God has called them to do. This course studying the integration of religion and society has been a blessing to my life as I continue to follow Jesus in my career and in my ministry.

Work Cited

Reichard, J., (n.d.). Announcement of OGS Academic Changes. Omega Graduate School.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZRN5w9ix5Q>.

New American Standard Bible (NASB), 2020. *Lockman Foundation*. (Original work published in 1960).

Ravitch, D. (2020). *Slaying Goliath: The passionate resistance to privatization and the fight to save America's public schools*. Vintage.

Ward, David C. & Moser, David (2022). History of the integration of religion and society. PHI 815. Class Syllabus.