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Omega Graduate School

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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**

This course of study, SR 968 Sociological Methodology, has been a course I have been looking forward to, given that is a course directly in my field of sociology. As a sociologist myself, with an undergraduate degree and a master’s degree in sociology, an adjunct sociology instructor and as a practicing applied sociologist, this course has been one of the highlights of the PhD program for me. In addition, I am a firm believer that the study of sociology is critical for all Christians, where it is the study of how the social world actually functions and not merely how it ‘ought’ to function from a Christian world view. Where Christians can gain a deeper understanding of people, societal systems and how those societal systems impact people. And in turn Christians can develop greater love for people, a love like God’s where, while yet sinners Christ died for us/them. I see sociology as a study of God’s social creation as well as the study of sin’s impact on the world and God’s great love for His creation in particular humankind. Given my beliefs about sociology, I hold that this course is one of the most important courses in OGS programs.

**Personal Growth**

As a Christian who is a sociologist, I have read and thought about the applying the Christian worldview to sociology, this course has provided me with some reinforcement of my holdings as well as provided me so new ideas in how to frame sociology from the Christian perspective. I have enjoyed the course of study in sociology from the Christian perspective, it has been a breath of fresh air. I have read some reading of sociology from the Christian perspective, and much of them are good. Some of them I think are missing the benefit of sociology and trying to conform society to a “Christian” society, where many if not most of the society are non-believers. I know this is the wrong approach, it has been tried throughout history with the “Christian” sword (not the word of God), but with actual swords and guns to force people to “follow” the “Christian way”. The contradictory of Christianity has been seen over and over again throughout history, when will we learn, when will we really follow Christ, instead of our manmade religion of “Christianity”.

**Reflective Entry**

In my current role as an applied sociologist in the healthcare analytics field, sociological theory has informed my understanding of the social aspects of healthcare dynamics, where there is a historical and social context in why people are sick, what we as a society treat medically and what is considered as sickness. Health has a historical, economic, political and societal context to it. In the healthcare industry there has been a push to measure and help address social determents of health of patients. However, the questions that are asked and measured are limited to a select few identifiers, that community resources could help with, but the larger social factors are not deal with, because it would take structural changes to have them impacted, such as workers receiving living wages, or environmental factors. We in the healthcare field have limited ability to help make people healthier, part of it has to do with patients’ actions and responsibility, but mostly the causes of poor health are structural and those politically and economic incentivized structures need to be negotiated in order for a society to become healthier. I hope to help push this negotiation in my sociological research and activism.

**Future Expectations**

As a master’s level sociologist, one of my main concerns of the OGS PhD program is that it is not sociological enough for my interests, I continue to struggle with this, however, I know that the very nature of sociology is interdisciplinary, and a main function of sociology is the social research methodology, from which OGS seems to be strong in. From what I have seen that most students that enroll in OGS are not particularly from a social science background, this could be from my naive experience I have had thus far, but this has brought me concern, whether I am in the right program for my interest. If a local university had a PhD program in sociology, I would have pursued that program. However, there is no local university with a PhD program in sociology, and I have evaluated other online or low residency programs and found that OGS was the most closely fit for me and my sociological interest. What has been great about OGS’s program is the flexibility focus area of the course, this has allowed me to focus on various aspects of sociology, so I could have a well-rounded sociology education.

Now for the Christian based part of OGS’s program, this has been impressed in many ways. One, that OGS develops Christian scholar practitioners to engage the world in such a way that they seek to make positive social changes in the world, Christians outside of the wall of the church following the call of Christ to love, love people in such a way that we cannot sit by and do nothing about the suffering of people in the world, OGS is developing Christians of action! This has been on my heart for so long and found that sociology aids in developing Christians of love and action, that is one of the reasons I feel called to be a Christian sociologist, to help bring to bear the burden of people outside the church, who feel hated by Christians, thus Christ. We as Christians need to repent of our sin of not loving people. These people outside the church ALL desperately want to be loved, and loved by God, we Christians are the conduit to bring Christ’s love to them, if get off our rears and our high horse and go and live out Christianity in action and love. Secondly, I love that OGS has students from all over the world, not only is that great in and of itself, but what it means that OGS gets all flavors and denominations of Christianity and fosters that open community of believers, which is also a model for us as world changers to incorporate different churches in our communities to enact the positive social change sought. And thirdly, as Christian sociologist, I get to not only learn from Christian professors, but also my fellow Christian students, and what they see as issues in the world that they want to help solve. What this does, it provides me with research topics for future sociological research, in which I could help to provide the research that is needed for Christians and social leaders to understand the dynamics of a given problem so they could help bring about positive social change. I will also actively participate in making positive social change, but as a sociologist one of our main functions is to study the social world; the first step to solve a problem is to understand the problem.

I see the study of sociology/social research is an opportunity to study God’s social creation and thus studying God. I do look forward in my progression of OGS PhD program and what OGS and God has for my development as a Christian sociologist. Though I have expressed concern whether I am in the right program for my interest, I have heard Dr. Ward say to students, in a meet up in regard to OGS’s education methodology is to ‘trust the process’, and that is what I intend to do.

**Conclusion**

I have found this course to be fitting for my professional, religious, and educational goals. It has been my favored classes thus far; it was so nice to be back in my chosen realm of sociology. I found my integration of Christian thoughts on environmental issues to be very fruitful, even though I barely scratched the surface of the sociological aspect of Christian’s attitudes on environmental issues, this has provided me with a good starting point. I hope as a Christian sociologist to bring more light about environmental dynamics to my fellow believers, so that we may be part of the solution to care for God’s creation, instead of part of the problem.

WORKS CITED