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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**

Statistics for Social Research I is an intentional tutorial giving purpose to statistics. In college, statistics were required but I have not been able to utilize what I have learned within my personal vocation. Many scoff at the idea of getting a Ph.D. strictly due to the statistical requirement. Years ago, when I decided to pursue a Ph.D., I was well aware I would have to revisit the practice of statistics. While statistics may not come easy for me as it does others, I was excited for the challenge. As I embark on this journey at Omega Graduate School, I am still excited about the challenge but anxious none the less. One reason a Ph.D. puts a learner above the rest is because of the challenge the statistical requirement brings to the program. It would not be satisfactory for me to pursue only a doctorate degree and not engage in the full process of becoming a true scholar. When one takes a statistics course in college, they figure they will never use it unless they are going into a certain field where that knowledge is pertinent.

What I do realize is that the statistics taught on OGS are geared toward and tailored toward the student’s personal research. All of the students have to learn basic statistical concepts, vocabulary and methods but the knowledge gained, and methods chosen will be geared towards the student’s goals. Statistics is definitely worth the effort and time. One of the goals of the class is to gain an understanding of the role of statistics in social research. Usually, students in academia can appreciate the role of statistics in the medical field, actuary science, or education but social research is just as important as other disciplines. It will be one task during my tenure to learn various social theories and concepts as well as get to know many of the social science researchers that have contributed towards making our society better. It is another task to learn how to display data and learn how data is collected.

This learning enhances the student’s perspective and gives the student more of an appreciation of how seminal and current researchers progressed in their field. Another purpose of the class is developing a hypothesis and gain knowledge on how to test that hypothesis. This also gives the student an appreciation of how different theories developed over the years and how advances were made in the field. The required preparatory videos are in my opinion, essential to succeeding in the class. As one cohort mentioned, none of us had taken statistics since college, so the videos are an opportunity to refresh one’s knowledge on the basics of the subject. Khan’s Academy provided some really good tutorial videos.

One other objective of the class was to learn how to identify independent and dependent variables. This helps the student (myself) gain a respect of how various elements of society work together and correlate with various theories that have been tested in the past.

**Personal Growth**

For myself, the statistical element stretches my mathematical abilities. By watching the videos, listening to the professor and discussing the statistical concepts and terms out loud, the knowledge gained in college has been brought to the surface. The main I remember from college was the measurements of central tendency and information beyond that was hidden in the recesses of my mind until the course. The assignments were unique and initially I was uncertain how to complete them since they were not typical essay style. The assignments required me to reflect back on what I learned as well as gather an even deeper understanding of statistics by reading actual examples and solving actual problems. It was even a little fun to learn about confidence levels, correlations coefficients as well as develop a category of variables within the affordable housing field.

One area of growth that is salient is the skill gained when interpreting data. Before entering OGS, I have always had an appreciation of books. The genre of books I prefer are intellectual books and Christian growth books. Since college, I have not been in the habit of reading articles. If I have read an article, I have skipped over most of the graphs and charts that display the data and results gathered from various surveys and statistical findings. The charts and graphs are usually quite intimidating. One benefit of the 60-day and 100-day assignments was the requirement to pick out articles, in my area of research, and read through the table and charts.

Because of the knowledge gained of correlation coefficients strengths and weaknesses, confidence and significant levels, proportion values and margin of error. It took a great amount of discipline and read through statistical articles, interpreting the data and discovering whether the hypothesis tested was validated or not. Because of the basic skills learned, I feel more comfortable reading a statistical article which used either qualitative or quantitative methods. It will be less challenging to read articles on housing trends or results from longitudinal studies that have assessed behaviors and habits of persons living in low-income housing. It will be crucial to understand how various polies and experiments have benefited this population.

**Reflective Entry**

There are notedly two purposes to having an in-depth knowledge of statistics.

One is to gather statistical information for one’s persona research project and test one’s hypothesis and thesis. At the doctorate level, I would be able to study social science courses, ethics and theological courses. As a Ph.D. student, I have to opportunity to improve or advance my field in a unique way. My research interest is to study the habits, attitudes and behaviours of low-income residents in Washington, D.C. Incorporating statistics into my learning and eventually conducting my own statistical study of this population allows me to not only study current theories on the ethics, morals and attitudes of the population I am interested in but also highlight unknown trends and behaviors within the subset. Eventually the goal would be to improve the low-income housing field, offer suggestions on policy and offer hands-on services to families that live in affordable or low-income housing based on the needs assessed in my research. This is only possible by understanding statistics and gathering and analyzing data of low-income families. It is an exciting and challenging venture.

To gain the skills needed to interpret data surrounding and discuss various issues within one’s field. Now that I think about it, if one is knowledgeable about the various trends and changes in their field and how these trends and changes affect the solvency of the companies they work for, this knowledge will give a person a leg up when it comes to a promotion. The knowledge gained on how to interpret data will also give someone a seat at the table with executives and board members.

Upon reflection, I believe that an introductory college course on statistics is beneficial for all students. articles in newspapers and magazines may be statistical but how many of us glaze over the numerical data presented in these articles. The numeral data presented illuminates the hypothesis proven or the current trend in any given phenomena which may affect most of society. Knowledge is power and the more knowledge we have when reading the information put out by pundits, scholars and journalists, the more informed we will be and the more we can debate what we are reading.

**Future Expectations**

It is an expectation of mine to further internalize the concepts, terms and vocabulary learned in Statistics I. It is also an expectation that we will look at more statistical articles, be they qualitative or quantitative, and read and interpret them together as a class. It is a good idea for the students to pick out articles in their field, send them to the teacher and then read them as a group in one of the sessions as well as interpret them while the teacher listens in. This could be done in a breakout or a general session. This way the teacher can steer us in the right direction if we are confused. At this point, I am still unclear as to whether a quantitative method or a qualitative method will be appropriate for my research. This will hopefully be decided by Core five, with the help of my tutor and statistics professor. Although I am more comfortable with the qualitative method and believe it will be more beneficial to gather data using interviews, surveys and focus groups, I don’t want to shy away from the quantitative method just because it is more difficult .

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I found the class invigorating, and difficult. Professor Nti made sure that we were engaged and participated in the class by reading out loud and expressing our understanding of the lessons discussed. The class was small enough so that we each had attention from the facilitator as well as our classmates and each student was supportive of the other. Unfortunately, it was only myself for the class meetups after the core residency, but I was afforded personal time with the professor. It is understood that the next level of statistics will be even more challenging, so my plan is to invest in a book that will carry me throughout the program. During this class, I checked out books from the library or listened to videos. Although it is difficult for me, I will forge on and utilize every resource available in order to meet the challenge.