Sociological Methodology: Interpreting Changing Culture

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Professor

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#4. [120-Day Assignment: Course Learning Journal](https://www.ogsdial.org/system/Assignment_View.asp?ASSIGNMENT_ID=8138&COURSE_ID=2359)

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.

**Course Learning Journal**

**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 expectation of the Sociological Methodology class offered in the graduate program is for students to gain an understanding and develop competencies in Christian interdisciplinary social research. The intent of the course is also to educate students on how to address social problems in our area of expertise, abortion-related trauma, and instilling truth within the scientific community and beyond.

The relevance of the position within the curricular sequence is appropriate due to the content learned. The ability to study human social life, social groups, and societies is foundational coursework that readies students with the ability to analyze human behavior within a social context. Sociological Methodology also helps students conceptualize the broader social paradigms and how those relate to everyday life.

**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 course stretched me academically, especially while completing the 20-day and 60-day assignments. I particularly enjoyed growing in my knowledge while learning the four theories of society: 1) Functionalism (attempting to maintain equilibrium within society and make small changes only when needed to stabilize to survive), 2) Conflict Theory (looks at how society changes and adapts to opposing viewpoints), 3) Social constructionism theory (looks at what society is and what it collectively deems valuable), and 4) Symbolic interactionism (focuses on the meaning individuals give things). Through a Christian sociologist’s perspective, I can understand why and how society can see abortion as necessary due to fears of overpopulation upsetting the equilibrium for survival (functionalism) and what gets valued most – survival versus lack of sustainability (social constructionism theory).

The most challenging for me personally was studying feminist theory within a macro-level area of practice where gender equality between and man and woman was discussed. This area of study doesn’t resonate with my Christian worldview. Unfortunately, it is easy to understand how and why the feminist theory gained popularity in women’s desire to feel equally important as men. But feminists went too far, as I learned through my personal abortion experience at the young and impressionable age of 17. Little did I know that I fell sheepishly into the trap of believing in feministic rhetoric that ultimately led to many years of despair due to work achieved, abortion legalization within the feminist movement. In my search for truth, I realized God created men and women equally but with differing roles and strengths. Not unequal, just different and differently wired to be what He intended us to be.

One of the new insights obtained from this course is my lack of ability to separate emotionally from the course content being learned. The class assignments became incredibly challenging due to the unconscious and conscious emotional reactions that stirred within my whole being. At times throughout the semester, I would have to take a break because of the hyperarousal I was experiencing unconsciously. Years of recovering from the abortion trauma still negatively impacts my life.

**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?**

What a Christian macrosociologist views as a social problem, such as the evilness of abortion (taking an innocent human life of intrinsic worth), secular macrosociologist’s, on the other hand, interpret abortion as a woman’s right, empowering her with sexual and reproductive freedoms, the opportunity for economic vitality, to have career opportunities, and as healthcare. Additionally, a global focus on sustainability for our planet’s survival has garnered much attention over the years. Efforts to reduce man’s carbon footprint by reducing the number of people on the planet is a functionalistic approach to regaining equilibrium by not draining our natural resources necessary for human existence. Abortion, therefore, is promoted as good, and if we’re not watchful, the United States could become a totalitarian form of government. While Christians focus more on the individual (micro level of practice), secular, atheistic worldviews dominate at the macro level of society. The shifting over time has resulted in evil permeating all areas of society.

It will take the individual to act and respond for change to occur. Secular society focuses more on institutions that will last beyond one’s lifetime. Therefore, as society continues to evolve, abortion will continue to be justified regardless of the fetus’s humanness and what’s better for the individual, families, and their communities. Do we want a self-centered fear-driven society or a God-centered, love thy neighbor as thy self-driven culture?

Indeed, having the ability to contextualize macrosociology (taking a large-scale, big-picture perspective that affects a whole population, or at least a significant portion of it) and microsociology (taking a smaller-scale, individual sample perspective that looks at how individual interactions affect the larger patterns of society) is an essential element necessary to work in both areas effectively.

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

I have two concerns related to the graduate program’s future expectations. The first concern is the email I received regarding Dr. Cathie Hughes, who will be changing positions within the Omega Graduate School community after her three-month sabbatical. While I understand and am happy for her, and with no offense to the school, her active involvement with students will be missed. Dr. Hughes gave me the emotional support I needed to champion me forward. Without her transformational and servant leadership, I am concerned that I will not be able to meet OGS’s program expectations on a timely basis. I have struggled with completing coursework as well as courses since I began at OGS. On numerous occasions, Dr. Hughes encouraged me and gave me hope – that I could finish my assignments. I am concerned that there will leave a big hole that cannot be filled with just anyone in her absence.

My second concern is my inability to control hyperarousal (an unconscious trigger response because of the trauma I suffered from having an abortion) while completing my coursework. I struggle with avoidance issues because abortion is so dark and evil, and staying detached emotionally is difficult. Because the body stores trauma within the limbic system, I am considering neurofeedback as a treatment strategy with proven results. Otherwise, I may need to continue on a part-time basis.

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

As a Christian with a social work license and within the microsologist construct, the course has reminded me of the effectiveness I can have by educating fellow social workers on the need to assess and address all areas of well-being, including moral and spiritual issues. Women who suffer from MI-A are often haunted by the abortion decision they ultimately made, and a clinician must be experienced to address this kind of trauma. I hope the MI-A construct will be acknowledged and validated as a social problem at the macrosociology level that revolutionizes the abortion debate and ultimately creates the social change necessary for a flourishing society.

The course also met my educational goals allowing me to identify and conceptualize MI-A, providing for interdisciplinary social research, and drawing attention to the pitfalls of abortion. Recovery from MI-A will improve the overall social functioning of women, families, churches, and communities. As more people become aware of the potential trauma post-abortion, they will have the opportunity to make better choices for their future and their unborn babies.

Finally, the course effectively met my religious goal by providing the framework to address spiritual issues that can build a bridge into a secular society whereby the whole self can heal and lead a transformed life. As the concept of moral injury grows (micro) and if moral injury after abortion (MI-A) is ever acknowledged by the powerholders, such as the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association (Macro), then people everywhere can recognize abortion for what it is -- a social problem that is fixable.

Works Cited

Khan Academy. (n.d.). *Macrosociology vs. micro sociology.* [video]. <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/society-and-culture/social-structures/v/macrosociology-vs-microsociology>

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