Faith Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary

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Professor

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Assignment #4 – Course Learning Journal

The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working in each course. The Learning Journal integrates 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 insights gained as a result of the course. The course learning journal should be 3-5 pages in length and should include the following sections:

1. Introduction –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– and 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 in your professional field. What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional field as a result of your study?

4. Conclusion – Evaluate the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional, religious, and educational goals.

This course of Faith Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary is fundamental to the OGS doctoral program, where it provides students with a philosophical and practical background of integrating faith in learning and research along with an understanding of the interdisciplinary approach to learning and social research. OGS’s Ph.D. program of Social Research, Integration of Religion and Society is inherently designed to develop social researchers that incorporate faith throughout the social research process, which allows the researcher to approach social problems (topics of research) with a comprehensive analysis, appreciation, and understanding of the social problems because we take the opportunity to look beyond the symptoms of the social problem into the root causes of the social problem with the recognition of the created social order and humankind fallen state. This course goes to the heart of this in-depth approach to social research and provides a framework and capacity for students to develop this unique approach. The incorporation of faith into social research could be explicit (using religious texts as references and referring to religious concepts within the research) or implicit (not referring to religious concepts, but the researchers themselves are informed and motivated by their faith within their research field). The interdisciplinary aspect presented in this course is, the incorporation of a given field along with the religious or faith resources, as well as the incorporation of multiple fields of study in researching a social problem, such as sociology (within itself is interdisciplinary), economics, education, and environmental. Utilizing an interdisciplinary approach will provide a more holistic understanding of the social problems of interest. What we as social researchers are doing is studying God’s social creation, and thus is a form of studying or learning more about God and His love for His social creation. In addition, this course on Faith Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary also provides the orientation that social research informed by faith naturally takes on an action focus of social research, where social research is geared toward enacting a positive social change in the world relating to the social problem being studied.

This course has provided me with personal growth in the following areas; it has reinforced the need for faith integration within the social sciences to help address the root issues of social problems as well as bringing the use of social sciences into the faith community to help the church understand more about the social dynamics effecting non-believer and believers alike so that the church may not be a hindrance to itself or the work Christ on the world. Throughout history and I would argue more today, many Christians have been a hindrance to people coming to the truth and love of Christ, with their self-righteous yoke that they bind on non-believers and their lack of understanding of the humanness of others as well as themselves. We as Christians often look upon non-believers as dreadful sinners consumed by lust, greed, and pride, and neglect to see the beautiful creation God has made. I believe that this is the case because we as Christians often seclude ourselves within the walls of the church and our Christian bubble, so we lose touch with our fellow human beings and see them as something to be avoided. Though we as Christians have fellowship with our fellow believers, we should live and exist within the larger social world interacting and sharing the human experience with non-believers, otherwise, how are we to be a witness to the fallen world, how are we to connect with them and have compassion for them within the context they exist within? Opening the eyes and hearts of Christians to the larger social world I think is critical for us as Christian social researchers, to use the gifts God has provided us to help strengthen the church in supporting Christ’s mission for the role of His body.

This course has really helped me to start to develop my role as a Christian sociologist, not only given the content of the course that provided me with the framework of faith integration but also the focus I took within this course in learning more about past and present Christian sociologist and their work. In addition, in looking at the sociology that is being done around Christianity, whether by Christian sociologists or secular sociologists. This helped me understand where I could position myself in supporting the Christian identity within the larger sociology field and help the field itself make the distinction of groups of Christian thought, where for example, not all American Christians are right-wing Tumpist, and grouping Christians under one umbrella is a misrepresentation of American Christianity. So, I foresee one of my roles as a sociologist is to help make these distinctions within the field of sociology. I also foresee my role as a Christian sociologist to bring forth sociological research and insight to the larger population, beyond just an academic audience, to the general public and in particular to the church in order to help bring about sociological thinking to the church and general public to aid them with insights to take action upon to help bring about positive social change. This course has helped me start to develop myself into the Christian sociologist I hope to become.

This course has been well developed and provided the student with great resources to help them meet their professional, religious, and educational goals. For me the journal article of

Interdisciplinary Faith- Learning Integration for Social Change has been insightful and formative in the process of integrating faith within a secular profession. In addition, the Faith-Learning Integration Worksheet has been instrumental in beginning to frame my Christian sociologist profession which structures my educational plan and development. It has also provided me with a deeper understanding of how my faith informs my Christian sociology as well as an understanding of how my Christian sociology informs my faith, I can see how this reflexivity will help me become a better Christian and a better sociologist, not only for my sake but for the sake of being used by God to be a participant of helping to make positive social change.

WORKS CITED

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