Faith-Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary Studies

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Professor

Dr. Ward

**Assignment #3 – Essay**

1. Write a 5-page paper based on the following:
2. From the **Course Resources** tab in Dial for SR 805, download (a) interdisciplinary Faith-Learning Research Worksheet, and (b) Tips for answering questions for each of he seven steps of the interdisciplinary learning process.
3. Review (a), and (b) **Complete the worksheet** including the top section, providing submission date, your name, educational background, social profession, and other pertinent information (e.g., I have worked/been involved with/influenced by…)
4. Answer the questions for the seven steps of the OGS interdisciplinary Faith-Learning Research Worksheet.
5. Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition for in-text citations and for Work Cited. Include page numbers.
6. Include a separate **Works Cited** page, formatted according to APA style, 7th edition.
7. Submit through **DIAL** to the professor.

Faith-learning integration (making sure God is an essential part of the discussion) and interdisciplinary research will be essential in helping me develop a framework/methodology to address poverty and inequality, first in my community, followed by the United States (Jensen, 2023, p.68). Eventually, my “moonshot” will be to put a dent in the eradication of worldwide poverty.

My disadvantaged/underserved community in Southern California requires an overhaul, as defined formally by my community’s performance of worse than 25 % on a California Environment Screen Score that considers several indicators of pollution burdens and population characteristics (Fernandez et al. 2021, Introduction).

Staying in that same vein, according to information shared on the City-date.com website, in 2022, over 20% of one of every five residents of the Coachella Valley (my community) have income below the poverty level (City-data.com). In my community, it is hard to fathom; one out of every five people is struggling to make ends meet, and one out of every five people could be dealing with inadequate housing and food security. People living in poverty are something I witness firsthand daily as we (my organization) consistently give out food, clothing, and other life-needed essentials. Poverty could be addressed if we, the Christian community, banded together and addressed the issue concertedly.

Critics say Christianity’s influence on society is decaying rapidly, and American society is experiencing a moral decline (Stivers, 2023 Preface). The world needs a spiritual revival, and the United States would be a great place to start.

In an article by Osuagwu, the author states, **“**It is noteworthy that American liberal democratic values spring from a culture primarily influenced by protestant virtues.

Protestant Christianity provides individuals with a moral compass for civic virtues central to forming republicanism. Many in the Founding generation believed that religion was necessary to preserve the virtues of good governance for a decent and orderly society” (Osuagwu, 2023, p. 10). Moreover, before we can do our part in changing the world (through a Christian worldview) to make it better for all, we need to learn the most effective methods and strategies (Shaw, 2020). This requires obtaining a quality theological, ethic-based education. Secular education and theologically based studies need to complement each other, unifying both worlds and putting them into practice in a manner that makes sense. Therefore, yielding the desired results is a recipe for long-term success. The time for action is now. We are in a constant state of crisis and, therefore, require intervention. Again, all indicators suggest that Christianity’s influence on society is decaying rapidly. The world needs a spiritual revival, which Khudayberdievich denotes that a spiritual revival as a reconnection to values as an organic, natural process of the growth of national consciousness, a return to the spiritual origins of the people and its roots (Khudayberdievich, 2022, p. 164). As stated, the world needs a spiritual revival; again, the United States would be a great place to start! In doing so, we can work towards reinserting Christian values that will undoubtedly positively impact eradicating poverty and other inequalities.

Former President Roosevelt hit the nail on the head with the following statement. Franklin D. Roosevelt, as President of the United States, once said, “I doubt if there is any problem, social, political or economic, that would not melt away before the fire of a spiritual awakening” (Osuagwu, 2023, p.3).

By advancing equity across the Federal Government, we can create opportunities to improve historically underserved communities, which benefits everyone (room B 2020, p.2).

Bringing it into focus, my life’s work has been geared towards leveling the playing field for those who reside in underdeveloped, significantly underserved communities (helping those considered lower class climb the ladder to capture the American dream of becoming middle class), as well as those who have been victims of historically systematic, racially motivated systems of oppression (Jefferson & Perez, 2023, p. 5).

In America, if we allow poverty and inequality to be viewed through a nonpolitical, non-threatening Christian lens, we can systematically eradicate poverty in a reasonable period. We cannot get on the same page because of our two most prominent political parties' perspectives on what caused the problem in the first place. Conservative critics point to the high volume of street crime, the erosion of civility, and the loss of respect for authority; Liberal critics look at the lack of compassion for the poor, increased greed and selfishness, and the extinction of a concern for the common good (Stivers, 2023, Preface).

In revisiting the need to level the playing field. Regimes, which are defined as complex sets of rules and norms created and established, are an integral part of why poverty among blacks is hugely higher than among those who are white. One norm that’s embedded in the fabric of American history is the misuse of black people and using them as slaves in particular. Due to the residue of being a slave, blacks were denied an education, voting rights, fundamental human rights, and the list goes on and on.

Being that a black slave was considered less-than-human, it was all but impossible for blacks to acquire land and or any other means (material things) that would contribute to them being wealthy at that moment in time and or put them on a path to obtain generational wealth.

Slavery did not compensate Black people for their labor, thus impeding the income generation and intergenerational wealth transmission needed to combat poverty (Baker, 2020. P.9)

Even poor white people could own land and purchase businesses that could lead to current and long-term financial stability. By contrast, blacks could not own anything, not even themselves; they were the property of their slave owners.

Another prominent oppression system in place that impeded the progress of blacks was the Jim Crow law, which my ancestors from Missouri, who lived under this law, often remind me of. Under the Jim Crow Laws, blacks were legally discriminated against.

In twenty-one states, the Jim Crow laws endorsed racial segregation through legislation making economic, educational, and social segregation between people of color and Whites legal (Hswen et al., 2020, p.1).

Jim Crow was a form of legalized oppression (racism) designed to allow institutions such as banks to mistreat blacks by making it harder for blacks to acquire loans, which had a ripple effect on how/if they could own businesses, land, etc. Jim Crow laws also denied blacks access to the best education and the best means of acquiring income, which in turn impacted all the things that were affiliated with obtaining a solid education and/or earning a decent salary.

The 21 states and the District of Columbia included Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri,

New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming still feel the impact of that heinous law (Hswen et al., 2020. P. 3).

Slavery and Jim Crow were different past manifestations of the U.S. racial regime at various times. They served as institutional state mechanisms of inequality. However, states vary in how much they exhibit these institutional state mechanisms, which could affect their legacy and racial inequality in poverty (Baker, 2020, p. 17).

Systems of inequality exist worldwide, and for obvious reasons, I am sensitive to those that are in place to impede the progress of all minorities, especially black people in America. That being said, by utilizing interdisciplinary research (to combine the best research methods) and faith-integrated learning to lead with a moral compass. I aim to develop a methodology to address worldwide disparities affecting all underserved people.

Poverty is a worldwide disease that impacts us all. According to World Bank estimates for 2018, there are more than 736 million poor people worldwide (Mehmood, 2023). It will take a well-thought-out/well-planned approach to address it. Furthermore, a group of caring people with a Christian-based value system that believes everyone should be treated with respect and dignity must be involved. Also, in getting back to planning, the best research will need to be a part of the equation, which will call for taking a 360-degree look at the problem and coming up with the best solutions to address it. Finally, when taking on projects of this magnitude (eradicating poverty and inequality), resources such as money and many other governmental (and non-governmental) influences and influencers must work in partnership to adequately address it.

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**Step 1: OBSERVATION RAISING THE NEED FOR INQUIRY**

**What is the subject/problem that prompts the need to integrate faith and learning and do Christian interdisciplinary research?**

The subject/problem that I would like to shed light on is “poverty and inequality.”

1. **Why is the topic of interest to you, given your profession or personal history?**

The subject interests me for two reasons. First, my parents always struggled to make ends meet, and according to their conversations, inequality played a significant role in that situation. Second, my life’s work has been in probation and youth development, addressing the needs of underserved youth and their families.

1. **Why is there a need to research this subject/problem?**

Researching this subject/problem will help me develop a method for adequately identifying it, followed by a strategy for addressing it.

**C. What various disciplines or perspectives need to be brought to bear to adequately address this subject/problem?**

The various perspectives that need to be brought to bear to address the problem adequately are vast, but I will highlight a few. The primary perspective is looking at this through the lens of a humanitarian/Christian. All people should work together to make sure mankind as a whole can live in a safe, flourishing, and loving environment. Secondly, things should be viewed through the perspective lens of those who have been deprived or systematically oppressed for long periods of time. Lastly, the problem should be examined subjectively through the lens of those who are blind to and/or willing participants to be the oppressors.

**d**. **How might faith-integration interdisciplinary research yield better answers than either exclusively religious or exclusively academic research might provide?**

Faith-integration interdisciplinary research would yield better answers than exclusive religious or exclusive academic research might provide because it would include more sources that can help the researcher build a stronger case that will speak to a broader audience. The key would be to have a balanced strategy in approaching the research methodology with the understanding that this problem will require people from all walks of life, those who are religious and those who are not, to work together and find a solution that will work for the masses. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research is the current approach to gathering the best information to address current problems.

**Step 2**: **LITERATURE REVIEW. HERMENEUTICAL INQUIRY OF NATURAL/SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES/HISTORICAL TRADITIONS**

**What are the different perspectives on the subject/problem from the relevant contemporary natural or social disciplines and cultural trends and ideas?**

The different perspectives of the problem seemed to be viewed differently through a political party affiliation lens without taking a hard, honest, objective look at things from a historical perspective.

1. **How has the subject/problem developed relevant contemporary natural or social science disciplines?**

The problem has had an ongoing influence on American history, sociology, political science, and economics, to say the least. As it pertains to American history and sociology, in brief, there has been research to substantiate that people of color didn’t have access to the same opportunities that Caucasian people had. Which in turn catapulted one class while depressing another. In speaking to political science, there seem to be two narratives. One narrative suggests that the people of color are lazy, unmotivated, and are simply looking for a handout. On the other side of the coin, the narrative implies that a group of people have been depressed due to policies, systems, and other societal norms, and to course correct, there should be a tool/strategic/method to help level the playing field… they should be given a hand up.

1. **How has the subject/problem developed in cultural trends/history?**

The problem has been addressed throughout history, and although some practices have been implemented, such as social security and the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care), poverty is prominent in the United States. Furthermore, if poverty is insurmountable in the wealthiest country in the world, one can imagine the worldwide impact of poverty.

**C. What disciplines have developed which have addressed the subject/problem?**

Many disciplines have been developed to help address poverty in America. One is the well-fare program, another is social security, and the third, I will shine some light on what’s on the list of many, is free and reduced lunch at school.

**Step 3: FAITH-LEARNING INTEGRATION INQUIRY WITH CHRISTIAN AND SCIENTIFIC SOURCES**

How does scripture speak to this issue? Realize that the Bible will not directly address many problems resulting from modernity or technological advances, but scripture may provide a parallel or precedent with a similar issue or subject, or the topic may be addressed through extrapolation.

1. **Are there developments in biblical thought about the issue from the Old Testament?**

Yes, there are several biblical thoughts about the issue in the Old Testament, including Leviticus 23:22 and several places in the book of Proverbs, including but not limited to Proverbs 10:4, 13:18, 14:31, and 19:15. The books of Deuteronomy and Exodus also reference the poor (poverty) in the Old Testament.

1. **Are there any changes in biblical thought about the issue from the Old to the New Testament? Are there any developments in biblical thought about the issue in the New Testament?**

That question could be answered yes or no, depending on one's perspective. Based on Matthew 26:11, my answer would be no.

1. **Are there any developments in Christian thought and history about the issue since biblical times.**

There aren’t new developments, but there is a constant reminder that we need to work together to support each other. Deuteronomy 10:14-18, 14:28-29. Jeremiah 22:1-3, 1 Timothy 5:3-8, Acts 6:1-4.

1. **If the subject/problem is not directly addressed in the Bible, what principle can be extrapolated from a clear biblical teaching which helps to frame the subject/problem with a Christian worldview?**

The problem is addressed in the Bible; however, there is room for Christians to rally around the word of God and put it to work in a concerted effort to help people learn to help themselves.

1. **Which contemporary natural or social science addresses the problem issue?**

Although one could argue that several social sciences address the issue, I will list two prominent ones: Political Science and Economics.

1. **How do religious and scientific perspectives interact or integrate in providing a more comprehensive account of the subject/problem?**

There is a common thread that combines sociology and religion together: people. The perspectives interact because the problem involves people working together to share wealth.

**Appendix 4B: Interdisciplinary Research Worksheet**

**Date**: 3.14.2024

**Name of Scholar-Practitioner**: Quinton Egson

**Education Background:** D. Div., M.A. Christian Leadership, B.TH, Advance Diploma of Ministry and Theology

**Social Profession**: President & CEO – Boys & Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley

**Other Pertinent Information**: n/a

**Step 4 SYNTHESIZED INTERDISCIPLINARY FORMULATION (WITH SOCIAL RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS)**

**How would you synthesize what you have learned to this point into a statement that describes the problem you want to address? One or two sentences should be adequate to describe the problem you would use interdisciplinary social science research to address (i.e., you would need to collect and analyze accurate world data to test how you address the problem). What is the subject/problem that prompts the need to do Christian interdisciplinary research?**

I want to research poverty in underserved communities and why some believe it is biblical.

**CONVERTING TO A FORMAL SOCIAL RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS:**

**My Research Problem:**

I am the President/CEO of a nonprofit agency that provides services for underserved youth. Many of the children live in poverty and or qualify for free lunch at their local schools. Living in poverty is a mindset I’m working on changing with them. Part of the challenge is that some of the kids' parents believe that it’s biblical to go without material needs, including what many would consider minimal accommodations.

**My Research Hypothesis:**

If the underserved youth living in my community change their impoverished mindset, they can break the ongoing generational poverty cycle.

**Significance**: **What difference would the research make to change the world?**

Once the framework is refined in my community, it can be duplicated in others, closing the poverty gap of thousands, if not millions, of underserved communities.

**Step 5: Critical (APOLOGETIC) AND CONTEXTUAL COMMUNICATION**

**What critical reasons (apologetic) can you give for why your interdisciplinary Christian perspective should be accepted?**

1. **How will you answer the contrary perspectives to your view?**

One way to answer foreseeable contrary perspectives to my view is to develop a well-written, concise case statement suggesting that, in the long run, my strategy will lead to a more robust economy.

1. **Are there any objections or criticisms from variant views that should be anticipated and preempted?**

I believe question B is answered in question A. Furthermore, a particular class of people and/or political persuasion may be skeptical of the idea but will probably embrace it if they don’t feel they need to finance it.

1. **What cultural conditions might cause resistance or misunderstanding of an approach to the subject/problem which sociologically integrates religion and society?**

The cultural condition that might impede the expeditious implementation of the program could be the work that has to be done strategically toward changing the mindset of those who believe that living in poverty is biblical.

1. **What social conditions need to be changed in order to sociologically integrate religion and society with regard to the subject/problem?**

The social conditions are in place to integrate society and address the problem; a missing link is a reformer championing the initiative.

1. **What can you do to make your proposal more persuasive to “change your world’?**

I can build a solid case statement based on research and recruit the right people to help echo and amplify the message.

**Step 6: ETHICAL & SOCIAL ORTHOPRAXIS (i.e. LEADERSHIP ACTIONS)**

**What practical implications does your interdisciplinary Christian perspective have for**

**your orthopraxis or leadership for world change?**

1. **What application for your orthopraxis/leadership needs to be made to your personal or family life?**

Being a devout Christian leader and having worked in the ministry for such a long time, there is little need for any adjustment in my approach. How will things remain the same, although the task will be different?

1. **What application for your orthopraxis/leadership needs to be made to your church life?**

Most of the people I will be working with are Catholic, and I am not. Therefore, I will need to better understand their way of thinking to help them change it towards believing that living in poverty is not biblical.

1. **What application for your orthopraxis/leadership needs to be made to your work and community life?**

That is a great question. The application for Christian Leadership should be made in my work life inapplicable; however, as it pertains to my community life, I will need to be able to make sure that it’s separate from my professional life.

**Step 7: REFLECTIVE EVALUATION**

1. **How well did the research satisfy the original need for inquiry? Were there aspects of the problem left unanswered in the research design?**

There is tons of pertinent information that can help me develop a framework to address the problem. Also, when conducting research, much more can be done to answer every question.

1. **Did the findings spawn new ideas that must be taken through the interdisciplinary process**?

Yes, the findings led to a need to dig a little deeper.

1. **Did the attempts or orthopraxis surface any gaps between your position in Step 4 and the adequacy of its ethical and/or social orthopraxis/leadership? Why?**

No, not at this point, but as I dig deeper, I realize that my position might change.

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