SR968- Sociological Methodology: Interpreting Changing Cultures

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Professor

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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.

**Learning Journal**

The course allowed me to further expand my thinking around my area of passion. It has been an intense eight (8) weeks with new learning, exposure and defining moments. I really enjoyed doing this course this sub term, given my background and foundation in sociology with a MPhil/PhD Sociology (ABD). It was a great reminder of some key principles in sociological theory and methodology and introduction to new and insightful perspectives. This course set out to use sociological worldviews and Christian interdisciplinary perspectives to address social problems. The course focused on sociological and theological analysis for relevant research. This is expressed through the core essential elements: sociological framework for cultural analysis, faith-integrated sociological analysis, Interdisciplinary approach to social analysis and methods for Christian social change.

This course is quite relevant to the programme and aligns with the overall programme as it uses traditional and contemporary sociological methodology and Christian sociology to address constructive social change. The programme thus far has introduced courses that will improve transformational leadership and transformative practice, introduces religion and society integration and interdisciplinary approaches to solving social problems and bringing about change. The course is aligned to this approach and seeks to introduce sociological theory and methodology in order to do the same. The course is fitting at this time given that in addressing social change, a critical understanding and analysis of society, social structures, systems, inequality, norms, values and culture is imperative.

Throughout the sub term, I was stretched to read in order to expand my thinking beyond the taken for granted assumptions of Christian scholarship, beyond prior experience and my bible classes at church; comparing sociological and Christian worldviews, discerning the critical worldview of authors as I read and make connection to cultural context and how it connects to the modern and postmodern world. The course has stretched my thinking and sociological imagination into areas within Christian sociology which was not known prior to enrolling in the course. Additionally, based on my areas of research interest, the course has allowed me to delve deeper into sociology of work and industrial sociology in dissecting the nuances of the work life balance discourse. In relation to theology of work, there has been greater unpacking and analysis. In particular, the course expanded my understanding and insight into Christian social teaching and liberation theology. These are totally new to me and will serve to enhance research, critical analysis and scholarship in my area of interest; work life balance and the impact on individuals and families. There are some areas within Christian sociology that I have not yet mastered, understandably so given that they are new to me, but there is noticeable growth around these perspectives. The Heddendorf and Vos *Hidden threads: A Christian critique of sociological theory* text was helpful in my expansion of Christian sociological theory and scholarship. This book was a good reminder of some leading traditional and classical scholars and forefathers of sociology such as Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Hebert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Hebert Mead among others. The text also explored postmodern theories which are useful in the analysis of contemporary social problems. The summary provided was helpful and will continue to be useful throughout the programme.

The evolutionary (change evolves naturally) and revolutionary (change is drastic and disruptive) approaches to social change was an important part of the course that will continue to be useful perspectives throughout the programme and throughout my life and career as a social worker and social work educator and leader. This aspect of the course is relevant to my practice. It reminds me of the importance of social justice and advocacy practice within social work which can sometimes be disruptive but is important for constructive social change and work with society’s most vulnerable, underserved and sometimes downtrodden clientele. The course also presented key sociological foundations: functionalism, conflict/critical theory and symbolic interactionism. As a social worker, symbolic interactionism is aligned to our core practice that emphasizes the lived experiences of clients and their interactions with their environment that shape the meanings of their expression and behaviours.

There are some questions that arise based on the new learning from the course: How does social work begin to reimagine social change that can be revolutionary in order to gain and maintain constructive social change? and What is the basis for integration of key concepts of sociology that align with social work practice and change?

This course taught me how to think critically about Integration of religion and society as we seek after God’s purpose for our lives. It has deepened the theological and sociological connection and divide through an understanding of Christian sociology in order to further cement our calling as Christian scholars. It has been a critical part of my Christian sociology learning. It has expanded my thinking around work life balance into deep sociological thought around systems of inequality, social structures, impact of and on organizations and social policy. The course was effective in meeting my professional, religious and educational goals through the increase in knowledge of sociological methodology and Christian sociology and how it relates to my area of social reform to change the world in my lifetime. The growth process throughout the sub term has been real and is ongoing. I look forward to the andragogical rigor of the courses that I will take in the next term. I am eternally grateful for all the new learning and knowledge resources which I will continue to build on.