SR-968 Sociological Methodology

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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.

**Introduction:**

The course intended to expand my knowledge of the “soft science” of sociology by bringing three main theoretical foundational camps into focus. According to my understanding, the three main strategy concepts camps regarding sociology are functionalism, conflict/critical theory, and symbolic interactionism, all of which play a pivotal role in the development and management/maintenance of our academic theoretical societal norms. I believe all people can pinpoint their classification, and I firmly believe most people occupy some of all three. In short, although someone may be a conflict theorist, he also may occasionally display the actions of a functionalist. In terms of the sequence of the courses and how they are presented in the overall schematics, I can see why this course is offered at this time. However, when embarking on a journey as such, the position of the course means a lot and little. In short, if I had taken this course before, it would have been just as engaging, challenging, and rewarding. Going through this process is like putting a puzzle together without seeing the complete picture on the cover of the box, which requires trust, openness, and curiosity. The name of the game is to embrace and trust the process.

**Personal Growth:**

Personal, professional, and spiritual growth is a choice. For many of us, growing is a part of our DNA; the challenge for me is keeping it in balance, which requires strategic time management. In drilling down on my personal/professional growth in response to the question asked in the lesson plan, I will note the following:

By belonging to a national organization, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), there are a variety of training and professional growth opportunities, one of which pertains to time management. Several years ago, while attending a BGCA professional development conference, I went to a session on time management, where I learned a few methods to squeeze the best out of my day. Going to the sessions, followed by reading a few books (or more) on time management, has made a profound difference in how I approach my day and keep it meaningful, productive, and balanced. I get up early and spend time with the Lord by daily bible reading and prayer. I take a one-hour “wellness walk” followed by skimming my work emails before doing homework and going to the office. My 3-hour regimen before attending the office provides the framework for a balanced, productive day. Bringing it into focus, the course has lit a new fire within my desire to understand sociology better. I purchased “Hidden Threads,” which I read daily. Furthermore, I am doing extensive research and reading about sociology's three main theoretical foundations and how they are a lens that perhaps shapes people's worldviews and how a person’s worldview may impact their sociological association, whether it be that of functionalist, conflict/critical theorist, a symbolic actionist or a variation of all three. The study of human behavior is intriguing, and the study of human group behavior is fascinating. For example, on page five of a publication called “Hidden Threads,” it reads. “People have always tried to understand what isgoing on about them. Even Adam and Eve, living in the simplest and most satisfying world, tried to know more.

The fact that they also tried to control that world for their benefit reflects the flaw of human sinfulness found in social theory as well. But it is this restless desire to know the truth about the world – to discover social reality, so to speak – which provides the initial and most fundamental impetus for social theory”.

As mentioned earlier from Hidden Threads, the quote speaks to various facets associated with human behavior, including that due to our sinful, fallen nature, we desire more control, more prestige, more power, more understanding, more, more, more! Secondly, the quote also indicates that living in a simple and most satisfying world is not enough for humankind. In a nutshell, our desire to know the truth (according to our limited understanding) about the world will always compel us to study sociology, hopefully with the clear understanding that human behavior is messy and inconsistent. Lastly, according to my interpretation/understanding. Social theory, which, in short, speaks to the ideas, arguments, and explanatory speculations on the forming of society and how things develop and possibly dissolve over time, will always act as a light that attracts people to reach for a better understanding of who we are and what we really stand for.

**Reflective Entry:**

In conducting research and writing essays, I often approach the task from a workplace perspective because I would like to develop a framework to help my organization provide better services to the underserved youth (and families) who solicit us for support. In doing so, I firmly believe there is a need to know how I view things so that they are less likely to skew my perception of what’s going on in my work environment. That being said, during this study, I took another look at how society and the culture I grew up in specifically shaped my worldview. Before learning about the worldview of a functionalist, conflict/critical theorist, and symbolic interactionist, I would have considered myself a staunch (functionalist) conservative. Now I realize that I resemble some of all three and that perhaps that will change in the future, along with my updated worldview. Although my foundation on Christ will not falter, my perspective on society and the need for resocialization has changed.

**Conclusion:**

This course was significant in that it sent me on a journey to seek sociological knowledge. I plan to do a deeper dive in the summer, reading various books, articles, and other materials pertaining to sociology. The lecture that I listened to several times was inspiring and very informative. I, too, spent time with Archbishop Desmond Tutu when he came out to an event here in my community. I have a nice picture I took with him that I used to have on my shelf for years, and I will probably attempt to locate it this summer. Mr. Tutu was a great man who exhibited great values. In speaking about values, during the course, I also realized that values are not static because life is not static. Furthermore, values help create a behavior roadmap for people to follow. Still, people can decide if they follow norms or directives of generally accepted societal values, such as the golden rule. Again, the course was excellent (especially the recorded lecture) because it got me jazzed to learn more about sociology. The course was also educationally stretching, so to speak, in the sense that maximizing the learning opportunities embedded in the lesson plan required adequate time and energy. In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the course, it checked all the boxes.

WORKS CITED