**Course Learning Journal**

PHI 923-32 – Contextualization for Social Change

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**Introduction**

For this Course Learning Journal I am asked to 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 intent of this particular course was to *contextualize the communication of Christian interdisciplinary research insights in an appropriately clear written or verbal manner to be understood by significant target audiences.*

**Personal Growth**

My perception is that the course fits into the DSL program as a provider of applied research, in order to make students better researchers from an interdisciplinary perspective. I am unsure as to why this course is placed within the course sequence for the DSL program; thus, I simply trust that it has its place in the program sequence because each course adds skills in thinking and reflection that build upon previous courses.

 This course stretched me in many ways––especially with regard to the integration of faith and research literature in the field of sociology. When researching literature that contributed to my contextual interests, I was comfortable. However, when it came to integrating faith into a secular context I felt challenged to “fit” that in. I do believe that I rose to that challenge and was able to successfully integrate some faith principles into my arguments and contextualization.

**Reflective Entry**

While this course was primarily research-based, I was able to contextualize some of its content in my volunteer position with the Hospital Foundation. Through assigned developmental readings, I began to recognize the need for a broader sociological platform within my organization. And while my work is outwardly secular in nature, inwardly I was able to connect community-facing service to personal ministerial service. Earlier in my program I discovered a way to view my volunteer service as a form of ministry. With the incorporation of that perspective, the content of this course holds greater relevancy to my life context.

As for concerns, the only concern is that I cannot overtly express any form of spiritual ideas or thoughts in my work. However, as stated above, I gain inward strength and purpose.

**Conclusion**

Although my work remains outwardly secular in nature, inwardly I was able to connect service to a higher power with community service. Once that realization occurred, the content of this course gained relevancy to my life. While I’ve struggled with some of the deeply religious content of my courses, I nonetheless feel enriched by this added dimension of learning – especially as it informs my newly discovered sense of purpose by viewing my work as purposeful ministry in my community.

This course provided theoretical enrichment, helping me to better evaluate literature from a wide variety of theological and sociological disciplines and discover where they integrate, strengthen, and support my professional goals in order to make me a more effective leader and eventual world changer.