Hermeneutics and Communications

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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.

Communications 803 explores the methodology and science and interpretation. It is a fusion of spiritual formation and the interpretations of world problems. Additionally there is a heavy emphasis on strategic reading skills. Hermeneutics is offered at the beginning of the Masters track. This placement is intentional. It arms the students early in their career as students to make the transition to scholars. This course, from my understanding, is included in every Masters tract. The idea of Hermeneutics and Communications is to teach students how to research and write as scholars. This arms the student with the skillset to analyze and synthesize information that is relevant to their purpose and their topic of interest.

This course has really stretched and challenged me as a learner. I think that one of the biggest obstacles for me is that I come from a pedagogy background. So much of that is rooted in right or wrong, and there is very little room for student input. Attending OGS is such a deviation from the education I have received prior. I think it is a beautiful opportunity to have my thoughts and interests considered in my education, but it does present an entire new level of critical analysis. Hermeneutics implores me to think about my purpose. How does my purpose line up with God? How does that present biblically? That stretched me because I have always separated my walk with God from work. American society is heavy on church and state. The reality is that can’t really exist if I am truly walking in my purpose with God. I think the class helped me to see that. It gave me permission to fuse my world, unapologetically.

The class stretched me as a scholar as well. Most of the reading was rather mundane and painful to get through. I would not have chosen most of the selected readings for the course on my own accord. I did find tremendous value in the readings surprisingly. At the risk of sounding redundant; I sincerely appreciated the readings that provided strategic ways to evaluate sources. Even more valuable were the sources that gave tangible concise steps for scholarly writing. I think I excel best when I have a firm grasp of what is expected of me. I need to understand the parameters. It is still an adjustment with the OGS approach to education because there is so much space for the learner. While I appreciate it, it certainly requires me to draw from within more, and to trust what is in me.

The two greatest things I learned in this course is how to analyze and retain information without having to read a text in its entirety. I have to be honest and admit that I read all of the required readings since hermeneutics is a completely new concept to me. I wanted to be sure I was fully grasping the nature of the course. It is ironic that in doing so, the takeaway was that was an unnecessary strategy. Now upon the completion of this course, I can effectively determine the merit of a source. I also understand how I can use that source to further my understanding and credibility in the field of social change.

Along those lines, I enjoyed the research I completed for the developmental readings about my topic of interest. My goal for social change is to develop a collegiate retention program for African American males. There is a huge gap between the initial enrollment and the graduation rate of that particular demographic. Jesus was a mouthpiece for the overlooked and dismissed. In my efforts to be Christlike I want to do the same for African American males who seek to further their education. I think there is a lack of awareness and understanding of their particular plight. Much like biblical times were people were categorized as either chosen or discarded. Christ had a divine way of humanizing that population. I seek to do the same. I want what can be dismissed as a myriad of negative attributes or another race problem, into a more human issue. In order to do that successfully the first step is to understand the issue from all angles. Despite my shared ethnicity, the resources I evaluated in my developmental readings shed light on aspects I had never considered such as the mental impact of unarmed killings by police. On the surface this may seem as if it has nothing to do with collegiate retention. But then I think about being black male in a new area afraid to call for help if needed, or afraid to leave campus for simple tasks like food out of fear of being killed by the very people employed to protect. How does one navigate that? What cross cultural professional developments do colleges offer to their staff to be aware and inclusive of this population? How as a society can we support the matriculation of this demographic? What other social aspects are black college males being presented with that directly impacts their success? Are the symptoms and processes different for other ethnicities and races? How can I implement equitable and inclusive practices? These are just a few of the questions that arose in my research that I will hopefully have the opportunity to address during my tenure at OGS.

Overall I think this course is applicable. I think it does have the proper placement in terms of being one of the first courses for the program. I do think that this particular class should not be done asynchronously. I am aware and grateful that special considerations and permissions were made for me. I do think I would have benefited more from the course if I had peers to learn and process with though.

The assignment response starts on the third page.

WORKS CITED