COM 803-12 Hermeneutics and Communication

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Omega Graduate School

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Professor

 Dr. Strecker

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.

 **Course Learning Journal**

**Introduction**

The *Hermeneutics and Communication* course is an essential foundation of Omega Graduate School’s (OGS) curriculum, providing both a theoretical framework and practical application of hermeneutics across religious, academic, and social contexts. As one of the initial courses in the program, students are equipped with interpretive skills necessary for engaging critically with texts in multiple disciplines. Hermeneutics, defined as the science of interpretation, is designed to enhance students’ ability to apply a Christian worldview, interpret complex social issues, and engage in interdisciplinary research.

This course fits into the Doctor of Social Leadership program by integrating social sciences and faith-based hermeneutics, allowing for the analysis of societal trends through the lens of religious truths. Including topics such as biblical hermeneutics, scholarly reading techniques, and interpretive methods in social research, the course supports a greater objective of developing ethical, informed researchers who can influence both their secular professional fields and faith communities. This is invaluable for leaders who operate in environments where secular knowledge and spiritual values collide. By placing the course early in the curriculum, students are prepared with foundational insight that they will continue to build upon throughout their OGS journey.

**Personal Growth**

The course has profoundly impacted my personal and intellectual perspectives, particularly in my approach to reading and interpretation. I am now well introduced to the idea that reading is not simply a passive activity but an art that requires deliberate engagement with the text. Sire (1998) emphasizes the importance of recognizing the context behind every text, a principle that had mostly influenced how I approached biblical scripture but now also scholarly literature​. I had also previously focused on developing speed and efficiency in reading, particularly when I am under pressure. Now, I also prioritize depth, ensuring that I fully understand the underlying worldview and assumptions behind any text before applying it to decision-making processes. This will help me to engage more thoughtfully with complex material, whether spiritual or academic.

The course pushed me to reflect deeper on the dual nature of my professional identity, balancing the demands of leadership in secular settings with the ethical imperatives rooted in my faith. Particularly as read in Zimmermann’s *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*, I see that interpretation is not just about understanding texts, but about understanding people, contexts, and ethical dilemmas.​ (Zimmeman, 2015) This concept is stretching my thinking, especially in navigating the areas where empirical evidence and faith-based ethics may conflict. Now more than ever, I recognize that ethical leadership requires an approach that incorporates both reason and revelation.

In mastering the course content, I saw significant improvements in my scholarly writing, particularly in adhering to APA 7th edition standards and developing a more formal academic voice. Learning to make logical scholarly cases as taught through the course readings, has redefined my understanding in how to present arguments more concisely, coherently, and persuasively. This will directly impact my professional communication; where clear, logical writing is crucial all relevant professional contexts​.

**Reflective Entry**

As I completed the suggested readings, I found that hermeneutics, is far from being a purely academic pursuit; it is very intertwined with the more practical realities of leadership. When analyzing sources like Pyrczak and Tcherni-Buzzeo’s *Evaluating Research in Academic Journals* (2019), it is shown that hermeneutics also equips leaders with tools for interpreting ethical principles in ways that are relevant to more specific organizational and cultural contexts. Often, leadership demands immediate responses to complex situations, and the temptation can be to rely on predefined rules or guidelines without considering the social or ethical implications. Proper hermeneutics, however, pushes me to go beyond surface-level interpretations, urging me to consider not only what is right according to policy but what is also ethical within a specific context. This approach to interpretation has revealed that it is to better align my professional decisions with both professional values and faith-based ethics.

Professional situations requiring the advisement of empirical data must be balanced with ethical considerations rooted in faith, leading me to ask critical questions about how I can ensure my decisions reflect not only good business sense but also integrity, compassion, and fairness as defined by my faith. Critical questions I can ask in this context may include:

1. **How can I balance empirical data with ethical values in decision-making?**

This question addresses the tension between using data-driven insights (business sense) and ensuring that the outcomes align with faith-based principles like fairness and compassion.

1. **In situations where profit conflicts with ethics, how do I ensure that ethical considerations are not compromised?**

This touches on the potential conflict between business objectives and maintaining integrity, questioning how to prioritize ethical decision-making when the two are at odds.

1. **How do I lead in a way that encourages both organizational success and the personal growth of my team in line with faith-based principles?**

This question reflects on how to foster an environment where success is not just defined by financial outcomes or professional milestones, but also by the holistic development of employees and teams under ethical leadership.

1. **What frameworks can I establish to ensure accountability to ethical standards in decision-making processes?**

This is a probe on how to institutionalize ethical guidelines that reflect my faith, ensuring that they are not only personal convictions but part of the organizational culture.

1. **How do I discern when to prioritize compassion over efficiency in leadership decisions?**

This question addresses the balance between making quick, efficient decisions and taking the time to consider the compassionate approach that might better align with Christian values.

1. **How do I ensure that transparency and fairness guide my interactions with both internal and external stakeholders?**

This question encourages reflection on how to maintain ethical communication and decision-making, particularly when dealing with external partners or navigating complex organizational dynamics.

**Conclusion**

The *Hermeneutics and Communication* course has proven to be an amazing start to my doctoral studies, directly contributing to my professional, religious, and educational goals. Professionally, the course equipped me with the tools to interpret complex texts and situations more critically, informing me on how to make more ethical decisions in my leadership roles. It has activated the foundational skills I need to navigate the intersection of secular knowledge and faith-based values.

Religiously, the course increased my understanding of the influence of scripture, reminding me to approach the Bible not just as a text for personal edification, but as a complex, multi-layered document that requires careful, contextual interpretation. This will only enhance my ability to communicate biblical principles more effectively within my faith community. The focus on faith-integrated hermeneutics has reinforced my conviction that leadership in both secular and Christian contexts must be grounded in a well-rounded ethical framework​.

Educationally, the course has improved my academic writing and research skills, preparing me for the more rigorous upcoming demands of doctoral-level research. The emphasis on developing a scholarly voice and adhering to APA 7th edition standards will increase my confidence in presenting academic arguments, while the lessons on critical reading will improve my ability to engage with complex documents. These skills will serve me well in future coursework and research projects​.

 **Works Cited**

Sire, J. W. (1998). *How to read slowly: reading for comprehension*. HarperOne.

Zimmermann, J. (2015). *Hermeneutics: a very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.