**Assignment #IV**

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Omega Graduate School

SR 968- 22 Sociological Methodology

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December 6, 2024

**Course Learning Journal**

[Download as Word Document](https://www.ogsdial.org/system/assignment_word.php?ASSIGNMENT_ID=9632)

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**

1. **Introduction**

The intent of this course, Sociological Methodology, was to explore the intersection of sociology and theology in addressing complex social issues. This course provided tools for analyzing and responding to real-world challenges by integrating sociological theories and faith-based perspectives. The course challenged my understanding of the relationship between faith and social science by demonstrating how these perspectives can complement and challenge each other in understanding social problems. For example, exploring the role of FBOs in addressing homelessness shows the tension between providing immediate relief, guided by biblical principles of compassion and charity, and advocating for systemic change to address the root causes of poverty.

This course fits nicely into the graduate program by equipping students with the analytical and methodological skills necessary for advancing social leadership. By exploring different sociological theories and research methods, I gained a deeper understanding of the complexities of social issues and the diverse approaches to addressing them. This knowledge will be critical for researching and advocating for policy changes in my future career. I like how it is well positioned early in the program sequence to ensure that foundational knowledge of the sociological framework is established. It provides a baseline of understanding and practicality as I explore topics of interest, such as systemic advocacy and faith-driven interventions in future courses and life practicalities.

1. **Personal Growth**

This course challenged me in several ways, fostering significant personal and intellectual growth. Analyzing social inequality through frameworks like Weber’s theory of social stratification stretched my understanding of how systemic barriers perpetuate poverty. It is particularly eye-opening to see how FBOs operate within these systems structures, often filling gaps left by secular institutions but struggling to address root causes. This prompted me to evaluate the role of FBOs in society and the need for them to engage in broader advocacy efforts to create meaningful change in the lives of others and communities.

 I also mastered skills like integrating theological and sociological perspectives in my writings. For example, I analyze biblical teachings from Amos 5:24 and James 1:27 in the context of poverty alleviation, deepening my ability to connect concepts with practical applications in an academic way. Writing assignments, particularly the essay on FBOs, improved my ability and capacity to organize and present ideas. This growth was valuable as it supported my ability to synthesize various sources and develop arguments, a skill I struggled with but improved through practice and feedback.

 A new insight I gained was recognizing the balance FBOs could take between immediate relief efforts and systemic advocacy. Their support in providing food, shelter, and counseling is excellent. I now understand the importance of pairing these efforts with long-term strategies like policy advocacy to address systemic inequalities. This has encouraged me to consider how I can contribute to my vocation and experiences while simultaneously alleviating a pressing need. I am motivated to explore strategies and partnerships that can address the root causes of social issues, which is fun, rewarding, and a unique passion of mine, helping solve problems for humanity's common good.

**Reflective Entry**

 Furthermore, this course has influenced how I view my professional field and volunteer engagements in the context of community-based and faith-based interventions. In my work with organizations, boards, and commissions that address social issues such as homelessness and food insecurity, this course showed the importance of combining direct services with system change. This course inspired me to explore ways to work on policy changes. By integrating a sociological perspective, I believe I can contribute to co-creating better solutions for others.

 One question that arose during the course is whether FBOs are equipped to tackle systemic barriers. The tension between charity and justice is a recurring theme that I have seen, and this course reinforces my belief that faith-based interventions should evolve to address structural issues. It also challenged my thinking on how FBOs can balance their commitment to serving spiritual needs such as teaching and preaching and immediate needs and advocating for social justice for the love of people. This balance requires careful consideration of resource allocation, organized and funded capacity, and collaboration with others and secular partners.

**Conclusion**

This course has been instrumental this term. Professionally, it has enhanced my ability to approach complex social issues with a multidisciplinary lens. This will be invaluable in my future career as I seek to address social problems nuanced and effectively and may be the in-between person between the church, government, and secular communities in Maryland in the coming year. Religiously, it has deepened my understanding of biblical teachings on justice and charity, encouraging me to view poverty alleviation as both spiritual and practical. This has enriched my faith and inspired me to live out my values through social action. Educationally, it has strengthened my critical thinking and writing skills, preparing me for future courses and professional challenges. The ability to analyze complex texts, synthesize information, and construct coherent arguments will be essential. Ultimately, this course has equipped me with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to contribute to society, guided by my faith and deeper understanding of our world's social forces.