LDR813 Organizational Dynamics

PHI1923 Contextualization for Social Change

Cerita Buchanan

Omega Graduate School

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Professors

Dr James Strecker

Mr Dave Moser (TA)

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.

**Learning Journal**

This sub term I participated in two courses- LDR 813 Organizational Dynamics and PHI923 Contextualization for Social Change. Both courses allowed me to further expand my thinking around my area of passion. It has been an intense eight (8) weeks with new learning, exposure and defining moments.

**LDR 813 Organizational Dynamics**

This was the first course in the Doctor of Social Leadership (DSL) programme geared solely towards problems and interventions within organizations. When I saw the theme of this course, immediately I thought how aligned this was to my years of training and experience. I am always open to gaining new knowledge about how to solve and transform social problems of society and so I was excited. In particular, how we can achieve social functioning and social change through theological and Christian scholarship, given that I was also exposed to the sociological and social work worldview. The course was intense as it aimed to cover some key areas in transforming people problems in organizations.

The intent of the course was to examine organization, staff and group dynamics that contribute to constructive social change in organizations and to transform people's problems through assessment and evaluation of the problem, conflict resolution and mediation and/or mentoring/coaching skills. The course analyzed leadership and explored communication and conflict resolution and various methods and techniques to ensure effective practice. It also sought to explain social change in organizations and how this is critical for transformation and it introduced interdisciplinary perspectives on human behavior. This course is aligned with overall objectives of the OGS program, in particular it aligns with course LDR815 Transforming People Problems but is more focused on organizational dynamics and change.

LDR813 (Organizational Dynamics) is aligned with the programme through its approach to problem solving from a cultural social leadership interdisciplinary perspective. I have taken courses on group dynamics and leadership, however, though I have been exposed to organizational dynamics through short workshops/seminars this is my first time taking a full course on organizational dynamics. The growth opportunity and experience has been exciting and insightful, in particular, the insights gained on succession planning, management and leadership theory and practice. The course has stretched my thinking around decision-making in organizations and how this can impact sustainability. The course videos were useful to expand my thinking and challenged me to look at culture, power and leadership in direct ways. There was quite a long list of course reading resources which at first appeared daunting but as I maneuvered through the course I was able to select appropriate articles to expand my theoretical thinking to match my experience and exposure to organizational behaviour and organizational dynamics. I have gained good mastery over the content and disciplines of the course that will help me in my constructive interdisciplinary approach to changing the world one person, group and organization at a time.

As I reflect on the sub-term’s learning and experience I can confidently say that my exposure to this course has positively impacted my life. In particular, being at an organization (University) that is currently in transition and experiencing many financial challenges and leadership changes has allowed me to assimilate and contextualize the knowledge I have gained. In doing this course there is an article that I came across by Keerio & Ahmad (2023) that will help my department and University create a succession plan training module that will help with restructuring and change in the future.

Critical learning in the course was around the development of management theory from classical/traditional theories such as Taylorism and Fordism with a focus on economic efficiency and productivity compared to modern management theories that focus on people, people problems, human nature and staff needs in order to complete tasks and achieve organizational success. At the core of this is that humans make up organizations and therefore that focus should be on people, their problems and needs and their interactions/dynamics in groups as employees and leaders.

The course has been effective in expanding my mind around people's problems in groups and organizations, teamwork and group dynamics, management theory and leadership. The content in this course reflects material that I will continue to use in my professional practice.

**PHI923 Contextualization for Social Change**

This was a conceptually challenging course at first look with very new concepts and ideologies. However, after reading and interactions over the residency weekend, the concepts came alive and meaningful. The intent of the course was to develop a mature complex Christian worldview integrating theology, scripture, religion and culture and Christian traditions and to contextualize and develop a communication strategy for social change based on “Christian interdisciplinary research insight.”

The course is very relevant to the programme, it fits into the sequence of the curriculum and builds on earlier courses, PHI 805: Faith-Learning Integration and Interdisciplinary Studies and PHI815: History of the Integration of religion and society. This course further deepens and expands the theological and sociological connection through an understanding of Christian and social contextualization to further cement our calling as Christian scholars. PHI923 further builds on interdisciplinarity but adds an important part of how to contextualize for social change that will lead to readiness for the action research project, therefore it is rightly timed in the curricular sequence.

Beyond my experience in my bible class at church, throughout the sub term I was stretched to discern the critical worldview of authors as I read the Christian models of contextualization and biblical teachings and made connections to cultural context and how it connects to the modern and postmodern world. There has been new learning around Hesselgrave’s continuum, Hiebert’s critical contextualization model, Smart’s Religious dimensions and other approaches to Contextualization. The course stretched my thinking about cultural and spiritual alignment and analysis of social problems and concerns giving greater context for the integration of religion, society and sociological study. In the course, I have achieved some level of mastery, in what at first appeared a daunting task. Though there is always more to learn, I can confidently say that I have gained a good level of mastery that contributed to educational and critical knowledge development.

The course was instrumental in giving me a safe space to think about women’s work and worth and Christianized othering based on gender inequality in the family, work/organization, church and society. In particular, it allowed me to assess and analyze my thinking within the gender inequality discourse within Christianity and how women have been othered in some religious settings and denominations when compared to scriptural expression of sameness ( as expressed in imago dei) but different yet equally important in God’s eyes.

Upon reflection, there are some new insights gained and considerable learning around immersive contextualization that merges sociological imagination with theological and religious thinking which helps in preparation of interdisciplinary research thinking for constructive action and social change. The course cemented ideological and methodological concepts and techniques for interdisciplinary integration that recognizes culture and various worldview for contextualization. Based on my participation in this course, it raises many questions about my own professional practice as a Christian scholar practitioner operating in a secular University:

* How can I integrate theological thinking and analysis into more courses for student exploration and
* Has my own practice as a leader/manager within the University been adequately contextually aligned to religious thinking and theological integration with social work?

Overall, the course was effective in meeting my professional, religious and educational goals through the increase in knowledge of religion and society integration and how it relates to my area of social reform to change the world in my lifetime.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the growth process has been real and is ongoing. I look forward to the andragogic rigour of the courses that I will take in the next sub term. I am eternally grateful for all the new learning and knowledge resources which I will continue to build on. I look forward to continuing to expand my knowledge in transforming people's problems in organizations and contextualizing for social change as I step into my purpose as a Christian scholar as I endeavor to change the world.