COM 803-12: Hermeneutics and Communication

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Professor

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**Instructor Assigned Essay or Project**

1. Write a 5-page paper about the need for hermeneutics, or how to intelligently read

the scholarly subject literature and published social research about the topic of your

research interest. Explain why learning how to read scholarly literature is needed to

learn how to do scholarly writing about your research interest. Cite sources from the

seminal course resources and find at least two articles about a topic of your interest.

The student should direct developmental readings from Assignment #2 on the issue of

hermeneutics and a subject of their research interest for this assignment.

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of ten scholarly research sources (NOTE: Use at least

five books provided in course resources and the remaining scholarly

peer-reviewed journal articles).

**The Need for Hermeneutics**

There is a significant need for hermeneutics in all aspects of society because it involves communication and the interpretation of all therein amongst reflective parties within said communication. “The terms ‘hermeneutics and ‘phenomenology’ are often used interchangeably in literature, which results in confusion for the reader.” **(**Dowling 2004).

The reader should never be confused because the author is taking them on a mental and spiritual journey regarding their actual story throughout the duration of the reader reading, comprehending, and interpreting of said story.

The genesis of the word hermeneutics is very interesting because it includes multiple countries, languages, dialects, and a variety of interpretations therein as well. “Hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word ερµηνευειν (hermeneuein), meaning to interpret, and its derivative ερµηνεια (hermeneia) meaning interpretation.” **(**Demeterio, 2001).

**“**It has a linguistic relationship with Hermes, the swift footed messenger of the Olympian gods, who necessarily had to master the language of the gods, understand and interpret what these immortal beings have in mind, and translate and articulate their intention to the mortal beings.” **(**Demeterio, 2001). “The main reason why hermeneutics seemed to be a very complicated idea is that it has indeed become complex due to the inter-twining of its multiple layers of meanings and concerns.” **(**Demeterio, 2001).

“The first step, therefore, in understanding it is to untangle its multiple layers. In its barest sense, hermeneutics can be understood as a theory, methodology and praxis of interpretation that is geared towards the recapturing meaning of a text, or a text-analogue, that is temporally or culturally distant or obscured by ideology and false consciousness.” **(**Demeterio, 2001).

I liken the interpretation of the quote to staff interpretation of medical data whereas the patients’ actual short- and long-term recovery are directly and indirectly affected by the accuracy of the information entailed therein such informal correspondence.

As indicated in the Dowling source (Dowling, 2004), there is an interesting relationship between both hermeneutics and phenomenology. “Maura Dowling traces the relationship between these two philosophies and explains the various terms used when describing the different schools of phenomenology is mapped.” (Dowling, 2004)

**“**The origin of hermeneutics is traced, and the role of Gadamer in developing the work of Heidegger is explored.” (Dowling, 2004)**. “**Gadamer’s belief in the importance of pre-understanding or prejudice is found to be central to hermeneutics.” (Dowling, 2004)

“In practical terms with regards to hermeneutics in health care, there is a significant need for nurse researchers to explore clearly the philosophical underpinnings of hermeneutics.” (Dowling, 2004).

This quote entails philosophical questions in health care regarding practical life, art and aesthetic experience, interpretation, and history, and reflective language therein, and the relative concepts of hermeneutics in terms of prior understanding, the process of understanding throughout interpretation, the application of all therein, and the actual intent of whomever the author may be therein.

Hermeneutics is likened to meaning interpretation.” **(**Schmidt, 2016). This ideal is an essential element within health care especially when it comes to nurses and their respective daily tasks whereas communication amongst fellow nurses, staff, doctors, and, most importantly, their patients can interpret necessary reports with accurate information within the patients’ medical treatment plans. “Hermeneutics concerns theories for correctly interpreting texts.”**(**Schmidt, 2016).

“While “hermeneutics” is not a common word in English, “interpretation” is. We understand there are interpreters and interpreters in many fields of study. One interprets novels, poems, plays and movies. One interprets the Bible, the Torah, the Koran, the Tao Te Ching and the Brahmasutra.” **(**Schmidt, 2016).

Schmidt **(**Schmidt, 2016) conveys valuable elements within the historical value of interpretation regarding hermeneutics whereas the universal language entailed therein is evident in every aspect of human society.

  Pessimism, optimism, and neutral outlooks are often interchangeable within hermeneutics because hermeneutics entails human interpretation of information, and all therein are human traits whereas the emotional aspects of each outlook are either negative, positive, or neutral which are various determinants in the actual interpretation of information.

It is ideal for health care professionals to not include their own emotional outlooks or insights into any aspect of the actual hermeneutics interpretation to ensure as close to the best accuracy within comprehension of said information. The health care organization, staff, and patients are directly affected by all therein.

“Literary criticism has developed many theories for interpreting literary texts. It would seem we know more about hermeneutics than we thought. For Gadamer hermeneutics is the philosophical theory of knowledge that claims all cases of understanding necessarily involve both interpretation and application.” **(**Schmidt, 2016).

In my opinion, the criticism entailed therein is constructive criticism because it entails all human elements of interpretation of past, present, and future whereas the human emotion entailed within the receipt and interpretation of the information along with the subsequent interpretation of all therein is reflective of emotions, facts, or all the above. When said information is utilized in a constructive criticism strategy, the likelihood of a successful short and/or long-term result is likely to occur.

**“**We want to understand what hermeneutics means in contemporary continental philosophy. Contemporary analytic philosophy also discusses language, meaning and understanding texts; however, that analysis would require a separate book.” (Schmidt, 2016).

The geographical, geospatial, and omni spatial localities of continents, provinces, islands, countries, and additional localities all have one thing in common. It is not one language. It is not one belief. It is not one nationality. It is not one anything. So, what is it really? A universal interpretation of all therein whereas information is disseminated reflective of the actual locality therein. This is very effective in tele-health, communication with accurate interpretation amongst health care professionals and respective patients, and all therein throughout the global human society we all reside within.

**“**Focusing entails structures of dialogue so that no one member takes the entire group off onto an unrelated tangent to distract the collective group focus.” (Schmidt, 2016).  **“**First, we can ask about the range of hermeneutics. Stop signs do not require interpretation. Either you know what it means when you see one, or you do not.” (Schmidt, 2016).

The quotation is very relevant because there is a focal point on natural human behavior some may refer to as common sense in terms of sayings such as keep your mind on your own business whereas the interpretation of whatever information per topic is less likely to entail flawed inaccuracies. Realistically, who would like to have any loved one in a health care organization riddled with inaccuracies? I believe no one would enjoy enduing unnecessary faults of inaccurate interpretation which is why hermeneutics is so relevant in every industry, especially in our health care industry where all our loved one’s encounter interpretation of information at some point throughout each loved one’s life {lives}.

“Gravity is not an interpretation of nature but a law or, more accurately, a well-confirmed hypothesis that could be modified if the evidence calls for it.” (Schmidt, 2016).  Gravity is essential because it determines the level of human compassion for fellow humans, and when gravity is reflective of the golden rule, the likelihood of anyone effected from the gravity of interpretation in hermeneutics is likely to occur in either a pessimistic, optimistic, neutral, or possibly other result.

“Scientific hypotheses do not seem to be interpretations in the sense that there are several interpretations of Hamlet.” (Schmidt, 2016).

My thesis and hypothesis entail the quote that entailed Hamlet whereas such human was well known for having multiple interpretations of various topics much like numerous other subject matter experts that were criticized during their time in power and later praised once the results yielded public gratitude.

 My interpretation of human behavior is varied because of post-humous gratifications towards humas whom much accurate hermeneutics interpretation of information had, however, they encountered numerous setbacks from those that were either challenged, jealous, envious, and/or not called by God to be the actual interpreter in the first place.

 Discernment is a gift. Hatred is a fault. When it comes to hermeneutics, the two to occasionally interact, however, they will never be the same nor agree on any short- or long-term interpretation on any topics because they are antonyms to one another within any form of interpretation anywhere in the world.

“In tradition, this is where hermeneutic rules of interpretation were first discussed. What exactly does Hegel mean in the introduction to the Phenomenology of Spirit where he speaks of “a determinate negation”? As we shall discover, Friedrich Schleiermacher argues that hermeneutics is required in all cases of understanding spoken or written language.” **(**Schmidt, 2016). “Gadamer goes even further (as just mentioned) to argue that any case of understanding anything necessarily involves interpretation.” **(**Schmidt, 2016).

“Traditionally hermeneutics, as a set of rules for interpretation, has been used when a passage does not make sense.” (Schmidt, 2016)

“A quick check of the dictionary reveals that “unfold” can also mean disclose. But still, we do not usually say this about people. But, of course, it is Shakespeare (Hamlet, I.i.2) and some words were used differently in the sixteenth century. Hence the interpreter must understand the language as it was used when the text was written. A dictionary, editor or scholar may help. Today we would write “Stop and identify yourself”. The interpreter must know the language as it was used at the time of the writing.” (Schmidt, 2016).

“Hermeneutics presupposes that texts and text analogues that are distant in time and culture, or that are blanketed by ideology and false consciousness, would necessarily appear chaotic, incomplete, contradictory and distorted, and that they need to be systematically interpreted to unveil their underlying coherence or sense.” **(**Demeterio, 2001).

“As this working definition suggests, hermeneutics has three different layers of meanings and concerns: namely, 1) theory, which is concerned about the epistemological validity and possibility of interpretation; 2) methodology, which is concerned about the formulation of reliable systems of interpretation; and 3) praxis, which is concerned about the actual process of interpreting specific texts.” **(**Demeterio, 2001).

“Hermeneutics, as a praxis of interpretation, emerged very early in the history of civilizations. The great cultures of antiquity generally had their share of sacred literature that needed to be interpreted and re-interpreted by their priestly and royal classes.”  **(**Demetrio, 2001)

Conclusively, it is ideal to grasp, control, and deliver effective communication via hermeneutics ideals to ascertain accuracy, prevention of errors, and substantial short- and long-term gains acquired through all therein.

~ Brent M. Dixon

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