Course Learning Journal

Cynthia K. Loving

Omega Graduate School

COM-803 Hermeneutics and Communications

Dr. Jim Strecker

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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.

**Learning Journal Entry**

**Introduction**

COM-803, *Hermeneutics and Communication*, has been a transformative journey, reshaping my understanding of how faith-based principles can profoundly influence the way we interpret texts, whether sacred or secular. At first glance, the concept of hermeneutics seemed daunting, perhaps even inaccessible, as if it were an intellectual exercise suited only for theologians or academics. Yet, this course quickly proved otherwise, revealing hermeneutics to be an essential and dynamic discipline. It bridges the gap between religious and academic fields while equipping students to skillfully navigate the multifaceted challenges of communication in an increasingly complex world.

This course occupies a pivotal role within the Omega Graduate School program, serving as both a cornerstone and a catalyst for developing leaders who embody thoughtfulness and reflection in their professional and personal endeavors. By integrating faith into the interpretation process, it empowers students to approach knowledge with intellectual rigor, ethical sensitivity, and spiritual insight. COM-803 has pushed me to critically examine the ways in which interpretation shapes our understanding of communication, truth, and human connection, offering profound implications for how I engage with both my work and my community.

**Personal Growth**

The journey through COM 803-12 has been both challenging and deeply enriching, pushing me to grow personally, professionally, and spiritually. As someone engaged in both education and church leadership, I initially viewed these two domains as somewhat distinct. However, this course has shown me how intricately linked they are through the lens of faith-integrated hermeneutics. It has encouraged me to critically examine the intersection of faith, knowledge, and leadership, and to recognize how biblical principles can shape our understanding of both education and ministry.

One of the most impactful lessons has been the emphasis on the ethical implications of interpretation. Hermeneutics, I have learned, is never neutral. It is shaped by biases, assumptions, and worldviews. Acknowledging this has been both humbling and empowering, as it has inspired me to approach interpretation with greater empathy and humility. Whether analyzing sacred texts or engaging with contemporary issues, I now see the importance of creating spaces where diverse perspectives can be shared and valued.

This course has also sharpened my critical thinking skills. I have learned to approach texts with an open, yet discerning, mindset. Always asking how meaning can be enriched or challenged by faith, reason, and social context. Differentiating between biblical hermeneutics, general hermeneutics, and social science hermeneutics has been particularly eye-opening, as it has given me the tools to engage thoughtfully across disciplines while remaining grounded in a Christian worldview.

**Reflective Entry**

One of the most meaningful takeaways from this course is the principle of transformational hermeneutics, where interpretation becomes an act of moral and spiritual reflection. In my professional sphere, this has profound implications for both education and church leadership.

As a teacher, I have begun to reimagine how I engage my students with academic and spiritual content. Rather than simply imparting knowledge, I now strive to create a curriculum that encourages critical thinking and personal reflection. For example, I challenge my students to explore how academic content intersects with their own beliefs and experiences. By teaching them how to identify bias, evaluate sources, and engage in respectful dialogue, I hope to equip them with tools for both intellectual and spiritual growth. At the same time, I wrestle with the complexity of these challenges. Many of my students come from diverse or difficult backgrounds, and I often question whether this level of critical engagement might overwhelm rather than empower them. Striking the right balance remains a work in progress, but one that I approach with prayer and discernment.

In the realm of church leadership, faith-integrated hermeneutics has enriched my approach to pastoral care and preaching. It encourages me to view scripture not just as static text but as a living and dynamic guide for addressing contemporary issues. For instance, when preparing sermons on social justice or mental health, I now consider not only theological insights but also empirical knowledge from the social sciences. This holistic approach allows me to speak with greater sensitivity and relevance, fostering healing and inclusion within the congregation.

Above all, this course has reinforced the significance of empathy in teaching and leadership. Whether engaging with students or congregants, I now see my role not merely as an instructor or preacher but as a facilitator of understanding and connection. By creating spaces where individuals feel seen, heard, and respected, I hope to embody the principles of faith-integrated hermeneutics in a way that inspires collaboration and spiritual growth.

**Conclusion**

COM 803-12 has been a transformative experience, equipping me with the tools to navigate the complexities of interpretation and communication with greater clarity and compassion. By exploring how faith and reason intersect, this course has deepened my understanding of hermeneutics as both an academic discipline and a spiritual practice. It has challenged me to think critically, engage empathetically, and apply knowledge in ways that promote human flourishing and societal healing.

Reflecting on this journey, I can confidently say that the course has fulfilled its purpose in meeting both my academic and spiritual goals. It has broadened my perspective on the integration of faith and knowledge, inspiring me to lead and teach with integrity, humility, and wisdom. As I move forward, I am excited to incorporate these insights into my professional life, knowing that faith-integrated hermeneutics will continue to shape my understanding of truth, purpose, and community.