COM 803 – Hermeneutics and Communication

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Professor

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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.

As first-year students in Omega Graduate School’s Doctor of Social Leadership program, graduate students will enroll in *COM 803: Hermeneutics and Communication* during their first semester. This course is appropriately placed in the first semester to provide students with the working knowledge of the interpretation of research and scholarly writing. As I reflect on the purpose behind this course and the experience of research about hermeneutics, I can certainly see the value of this course as it relates to my future studies and insights within the field of social sciences. Primarily, *hermeneutics* involves the interpretation of written text, but I have discovered that in the field of social sciences it is often involved in the interpretation of life. Based on my course experience, I will describe how this course led to my personal growth and a reflective application of new learning towards my professional field.

**Personal Growth**

Since this is the first of two classes that I am taking at Omega Graduate School (OGS), I was certainly in a learning curve. While this has not been my first graduate course in life, this was my first experience at OGS, and I was learning how to function as a graduate student with relevantly new expectations. What I refer to as *relevantly* is because I am familiar with writing in APA format, especially the 7th edition as I finished my Education Specialist program prior to attending OGS, but I realize that OGS’s developmental reading assignments were new concept to me. Although the developmental reading assignment is new to me, I thoroughly enjoyed that assignment because I felt that it led me to become a better researcher.

However, as I was learning about hermeneutics, I was challenged by the vagueness of the third assignment's expectations. Mainly, the challenge I had was interpreting what it meant to “… intelligently read the scholarly subject literature and publish social research about the topic of your research interest.” In the field of psychology, intelligence can mean and stem from a lot of things, and since my educational background stems from studying psychology, I couldn’t wrap my mind around how to interpret this information. Thus, I aimed at dissecting and articulating the course essential elements in that assignment.

In order to address the course essential elements, I had to research and become familiar with the different viewpoints of hermeneutics. While hermeneutics can be heavily focused on biblical interpretation of the Word of God, there are many more facets of life where hermeneutics (or interpretation of life) can be applied. Thus, I want to share how I plan to apply my new found knowledge in hermeneutics to my professional development.

**Application of New Learning**

This course has provided me with a great appreciation for receiving and interpreting feedback. I am grateful for the feedback provided in my third assignment, as I plan on applying and practicing better written communication skills in the future. I realized after submitting my paper without running it through a grammar tool, that there are elements that involve wrongful verb tense or a lack of plural verses singularity in my word choices. I see how reviewing my work prior to submitting it can produce better communication. In addition, I plan on using a text-to-speech tool to read my initial written draft, so I can listen to my written work. This process will help me, as I struggle with dyslexia, and often fix mistakes after simultaneously reading and hearing my work.

There is a reason why this class is called Hermeneutic and Communication, because in order to help communicate properly, the foundational theory of communication must be applied. Communication theory involves both a sender and receiver of information. While this class is not a remedial communication class, it is important to consider how foundational communication theory applies to the interpretation of text and the world around us.

The goal of effective communication involves a clear channel from a sender encoding a message to a receiver who has to decode said message. In essence, the sender is the communicator, while the receiver is the audience interpreting the message. If the audience does not interpret the message correctly, the decoding can become polluted and result in a lack of communication. In this same way, I have realized through the experience of my third assignment, that I have some tendencies to wrongfully type my message without clear grammar or proper verb tenses. This is something that I plan on applying in my future classes.

In addition, I plan on applying a more careful consideration to those I communicate with within my workplace. I understand it is easy to misinterpret certain text and verbiage in emails and messages within the office space. In addition, I am responsible for creating self-paced, online training programs which involve narration and other forms of communication. Therefore, I must consider proper directive and word usage in my projects to not lead my audience in misinterpreting essential knowledge and materials for their self-paced learning experience.

**Conclusion**

Looking back from when I first began this course, I can honestly say that I now value this course. At first, I was questioning why this course existed and how it was meaningful toward my doctoral studies. However, I see that the concept of hermeneutics has provided me with a refined perspective of both biblical interpretation and interpretation within social science literature. This course has also influenced my personal development by providing me with a keen understanding that hermeneutics is the foundational skill that is required before any other academic skill can be acquired. Thus, the need to continue to refine how I communicate in writing is essential for my future as a scholar-practitioner and career goals. Because I am pursuing this degree toward my future career trajectory within higher education administration, I believe that this course has provided me with another lens of humanity that allows me to view society from a constructivist perspective. Ultimately, just as this course is a foundational-level course for my graduate studies, I believe that other courses will build upon this knowledge that I gained in this class. This is why the course is relevant and timely in the progression of my program.