

COM 803- Hermeneutics and Communications

Sam Walker

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. James Strecker

### Assignment #1 – Core Essential Elements

1. Write a three-paragraph essay responding to the following question:

Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:

- a. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the week of the residency. Be prepared to discuss and engage with other students during the live sessions. Post this document in DIAL.
- b. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

### **Essential Element Reflection: Faith-Integrated Hermeneutics**

As an individual whose academic background centers around the social sciences, I have some experience with interpreting and applying relevant research. As a sociology lecturer, I teach undergraduate students about the complexities of individual interpretation of the world. As a Christian, I have heard the term hermeneutics used to describe a robust study of the Bible. As an interdisciplinary learner, I am expectant to see how these concepts intersect and inform one another throughout this course!

According to Zimmerman (2015), hermeneutics can be succinctly defined as “the art of understanding and of making oneself understood” (p. 24). The author intentionally uses the term *art* instead of *science* to describe the practice, noting that although understanding may be guided by methodological principles, it cannot be reduced to them (Zimmerman, 2020, p. 24). When applying this *art* to social *science* research, it is my understanding that an interdisciplinary approach will be required. As with all meaningful education, it is not that one methodology or perspective must “win,” but instead that each paints a fuller picture of the other. By applying all that I learn regarding the art of hermeneutics to my doctoral research, I will offer a more robust understanding of society and religion. Furthermore, principles of hermeneutics can apply to my personal life and faith. Indeed, Zimmerman (2015) would argue hermeneutics is unconsciously at work in my life at all times, and its study will bring this work to consciousness and refine it.

In one exploration of the relationship between hermeneutics and the sociology of religion, author Zakarie Bade (2020) describes the two disciplines as having “distinct yet complementary roles” in understanding religious phenomena (p. 39). Bade (2020) concludes his research by proposing scholars “integrate insights from both fields to enrich our comprehension of religion's multifaceted nature and its impact on individuals and societies” (p. 40). The

integration described by Bade (2020) creates anticipation within me for not only this course, but for the entirety of my doctoral program with Omega Graduate School. As a multifaceted, dynamic, and vital aspect of social life, I am fascinated by the impact of religion on human flourishing. Through this course, I am confident I will gain valuable tools in transforming this personal fascination into meaningful research designed to positively impact my world!

### WORKS CITED

Bade, Z. (2020). Hermeneutics and sociology of religion: Concepts and methods. *International Journal of Contemporary Applied Research*, 5(3), 33-41.

Zimmermann, J. (2015). *Hermeneutics: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.