

COM 803- Hermeneutics and Communications

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February 14, 2025

Professor

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Assignment

Developmental Readings

Create Developmental Readings from seminal sources and scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles. For this course, use five of the seminal book readings in the Course Resources folder and find at least two articles on a topic of research interest. Review the instructions for Assignment #3, the course essential elements, and course readings to identify selections of provided books and located journals to create entries.

Essential Elements

1. Reading Techniques for Scholarly Subject Research
2. Faith-Integrated Hermeneutics: Reading for Worldviews
3. Interpretive Methods in Social Research
4. Scholarly Writing Techniques/APA Style

Source One:

Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., Bizup, J., & Fitzgerald, W. T. (2016). *The craft of research* (4th ed.). The University Of Chicago Press.

Comment 1:

Quote/Paraphrase: “Readers want your analysis, not a summary of your sources. Beginning researchers go wrong when they string together quotations, summaries, and loose paraphrases of sources into a patchwork that reflects little of their own thinking. Such ‘patch writing’ invites the charge *This is all summary, no analysis*. It is a particular risk if you do most of your research online, because it is so easy to cut-and-paste from your sources.” (p. 209)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *reading techniques for scholarly subject research*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is additive to my understanding of writing quality academic research. In order to successfully *contribute* to a body of research, one must *contribute* one’s *own* ideas, thoughts, reflections, and findings, versus simply rephrasing that of other authors. While a worthy goal of research is to be objective, without the “humanness” of a researcher, the meaningfulness of research is incomplete.

Contextualization: As I embark on my doctoral journey in the midst of an artificial intelligence revolution, it is imperative for me to understand the value of my “humanness” in completing social science research. While a computer may be able to rephrase and contextualize existing research, it cannot sense sincere care for one’s neighbor and feel a burden to complete research that blesses others.

While my human heart is called by God to make a difference in my lifetime, artificial intelligence is not. Keeping this in mind as I read and write throughout this program will be essential.

Comment 2:

Quote/Paraphrase: “Everything we’ve said about research reflects our belief that it is a profoundly *social* activity that connects you both to those who will use your research and to those who might benefit- or suffer- from that use. But it also connects you and your reader to everyone whose research you used and beyond them to everyone whose research they used. To understand our responsibility to those in that network, now and in the future, we have to move beyond mere technique to think about the ethics of civil communication.” (p. 311)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *interpretive methods in social research*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is variant from my previous interpretations of incorporating and applying research. Often, research is discussed through the lens of “scientific proof” and less of a “social activity.” Considering research as a form of interconnectivity between those who have come before and those who will come behind challenges authors to weigh the relational, ethical, and moral considerations of applying research.

Contextualization: As I read and apply research in pursuit of my dissertation, it will be invaluable for me to regularly consider my work as a *social activity*, connecting myself to the original research, the author, and the implications of its findings. Moving beyond technique to consideration of the ethical repercussions

of my work will not only protect me as a researcher, but even more importantly ensure that my work is truly contributing to human flourishing and the betterment of the social world.

Source Two:

Creswell, J. W., Clark, V. L. P. (2015). *Understanding research: A consumer's guide, 2nd. Ed.* Pearson Education, Inc.

Comment 3:

Quote/Paraphrase: “In many studies, the researchers do not intend to test a specific theory, but they do use a theory or conceptual framework to guide how they think about the study’s topic. A conceptual framework represents a philosophical perspective, an advocacy or social justice stance on behalf of marginalized groups, or a particular way of viewing knowledge that the researcher uses to inform a study. As with the use of theory, researchers; use of a conceptual framework drawn from the literature also strengthens the rigor and quality of research. This is because the use of a conceptual framework provides researchers with a perspective for thinking about the study topic that is well thought out (as opposed to just using their own personal beliefs.)” (p. 122)21

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *interpretive methods in social research*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is additive to my understanding that quality research is not simply the rephrasing of previous content or the author’s personal beliefs, but instead the interplay of multiple theoretical perspectives and fresh insights in the expression of new ideas. As this text makes clear, research is

strengthened by the incorporation of rich theoretical perspectives from the influential thinkers of the discipline.

Contextualization: As I begin reading, discerning, and applying research in my doctoral program, I seek to do more than simply “rephrase.” While engaging meaningfully with each of my development readings, I will be presented the opportunity to grasp multiple theoretical perspectives in my field of study. The intersectionality of these perspectives will give me a greater landscape from which to work as I produce original research and contribute to social scholarship.

Source Three:

Haack, D. (2009). *A practical method of Bible study for ordinary Christians, Revised*. Ransom Fellowship Publications.

Comment 4:

Quote/Paraphrase: “The skill of analysis involves reflecting prayerfully on the text in all aspects to determine what it means. Obviously, we must approach analysis with care, with prayer, and with much humility. The reason is that even in the best of circumstances (on this side of heaven), our understanding of what is not immediately plain in the Bible will always be incomplete (because we are finite creatures) and at least partially mistaken (because we are not only finite, but fallen as well.)” (p. 37)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *faith-integrated hermeneutics: reading for worldviews*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is variant from my initial thoughts surrounding hermeneutics. When studying the “art and science of understanding,”

I am led to believe that we may come to a complete, full, and resolved understanding on whatever topic is at hand. Through this text, I am reminded that I will never be able to fully comprehend the mystery and depths of God's Word on this side of eternity, no matter how strong my hermeneutical skillset may be.

Contextualization: As I seek to incorporate scripture into my coursework and research, it will be valuable for me to consider how hermeneutics may differ in regards to the Bible versus other texts. Although I will never be able to "fully understand" the scriptures on this side of life, this does not disregard the value of continually expanding my hermeneutical toolkit. In fact, I am instead led to believe that this never ending unfolding of the scriptures throughout my lifetime motivates my desire for studying hermeneutics all the more.

Comment 5:

Quote/Paraphrase: "The second reason to correlate is that the unity of scripture means that our study should not result in a mass of knowledge and facts, but the development of a Christian mind and life centered in a living relationship with Christ. Correlation will help us focus on the great central themes of God's revelation, bringing structure and order to our study. The biblical message is the unfolding story of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation- and each of these four great themes are woven throughout the Scriptures like threads in a great tapestry. Tracing those threads is vital if our minds are to be renewed, and the more we trace the details, the more we'll appreciate the glory of the complete story." (p. 49)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *faith-integrated hermeneutics: reading for worldviews.*

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is additive to my knowledge of incorporating scripture into my doctoral research. It is important to not simply pick and choose elements of the scriptures to support my claims, but like all other research, to incorporate the findings of scripture holistically. There truly is “glory in the complete story” of the Bible.

Contextualization: To meaningfully and valuably intertwine scripture into my social research, I will need to do so with a portrait of the metanarrative and central themes of the Bible in mind. As a follower of Jesus, I seek to honor the Lord through all of my work, including my doctoral dissertation. To do this well, I will need faith, perspective, and a well-stocked hermeneutical toolbelt.

Source Four:

Elder, L., & Paul, P. (2003). *The thinker's guide to how to read a paragraph: The art of close reading.* The Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Comment 6:

Quote/Paraphrase: “When we read, we translate words into meanings. The author has previously translated ideas and experiences into words. We must take those same words and re-translate them into the author's original meaning using our own ideas and experiences as aids. Accurately translating words into intended meanings is an analytic, evaluative, and creative set of acts.” (p. 1)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *reading techniques for scholarly subject research.*

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is additive to my previous knowledge of interpreting text. Whether the content of the text is from that of research sources or the Holy Scriptures, being faithful to the intention and meaning of the original author is an important discipline. In an era of information overload, it is all the more important to take the time to truly understand what one is reading and then apply the content in a way that is appropriate and contextualized to the author's original point.

Contextualization: As I gather a large amount of research in pursuit of my doctoral degree, it will be necessary for me to consider the intention, context, and original meaning of each author as I apply (or refute) their claims. In order to create original research in an ethical and honorable way, I must be protective and intentional in the ways that I employ another author's work. Although I will use my own experience as an aid in applying research, I will still need to "re-translate" my work into the author's original intent.

Comment 7:

Quote/Paraphrase: "One of the most important abilities that a thinker can have is the ability to monitor and assess his or her own thinking while processing the thinking of others. In reading, the reflective mind monitors how it is reading while it is reading. The foundation for this ability is knowledge of how the mind functions when reading well. For example, if I know that what I am reading is difficult for me to understand, I intentionally slow down and paraphrase each sentence. I put the meaning of each sentence that I read into my own words." (pg. 7)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *reading techniques for scholarly subject research*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is additive to my understanding of information processing. It is vital to be an active learner through all modalities, but especially reading. Assessing one's own thinking while simultaneously assessing the thinking of another requires focused, intentional thought.

Contextualization: Like all readers, I have experienced times of completing a page or chapter of a book and thinking, "I cannot recall anything I just read." At a certain level, one can take in each word without understanding *any* word. As I engage with graduate studies, it will be more valuable to read a *little* with total focus than to read *a lot* without any focus. I desire to engage with my course developmental readings in such a way that it truly "sinks in."

Comment 8:

Quote/Paraphrase: "If I realize that I am unsympathetic to an author's viewpoint, I suspend judgment about the text's meaning until I have verified that I truly understand what the author is saying. I strive not to commit a common mistake that some readers make in reading: "I don't really know what this means, but it is *wrong, wrong, wrong!*" Instead I try to accurately understand the author's viewpoint while reading. I attempt to enter that viewpoint, to be open to it as much as possible. And even if I don't agree fully with the author's view, I appropriate important ideas whenever possible. I take command of the ideas that I think are worthwhile rather than dismissing all the ideas simply because I don't completely agree with the author's view." (pg. 7)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *reading techniques for scholarly subject research*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is additive to my understanding that scholarly research requires an openness to opposing viewpoints. If a researcher fails to sincerely consider and evaluate the opinions and perspectives of those “on the other side of the argument,” they form an incomplete understanding. One is unable to defend their position accurately without seeking to consider the alternate position one may take in any particular topic.

Contextualization: In my future evaluations (if I indeed continue towards this dissertation topic) of religious social environments and emotional experiences, I will be faced with countless opposing perspectives and insights from those across the religious spectrum. While it will be vital for me to use discernment in my reading, it is also advantageous for me to seek out variant perspectives. This holistic understanding of the topic will enrich my ability to use social research in a way that leads to constructive change.

Comment 9:

Quote/Paraphrase: “To be an effective reader within disciplines, you must learn to identify, for any given subject, whether it is best understood as a system of supporting systems (such as math and science) or a system of conflicting systems (such as philosophy, psychology, and economics). If you are within a system-harmonious field, your task is to master the systems and come to see how they support each other. If you are within a system-conflicting field, your task is to master the systems by exploring how they conflict with each other. Of course,

in seeing how conflicting systems exclude each other, you would also discover how they overlap. Conflict between systems of thought is rarely, if ever, total and absolute. You will find conflicting systems in all disciplines in which there are competing schools of thought..” (pg. 19)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *reading techniques for scholarly subject research*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is additive to my knowledge of effective reading techniques in scholarly research. In the social sciences, there are countless theoretical perspectives one may consider when interpreting a text or research findings. When using hermeneutical skills in social research, the context of a “system-conflicting” field is important to keep in mind.

Contextualization: As a sociology instructor, I consistently teach students about the various theoretical perspectives of the discipline. I often compare these perspectives to “styles of glasses” students might put on to interpret the world around them. Similarly, every time I read for my doctoral research, I am wearing “glasses” of theoretical perspectives, personal experience, and prior knowledge in my interpretation. This act requires discernment and tact.

Source Five:

Pyrczak, F., & Tcherni-Buzzeo, M. (2019). *Evaluating research in academic journals: A practical guide to realistic evaluation*. Routledge.

Comment 10:

Quote/Paraphrase: “It is uninformative for researchers to conclude with a simple phrase such as “more research is needed.” To be helpful, researchers should point

to specific areas and research procedures that might be fruitful in future research...Often, the suggestions for future research indicate how future studies can overcome the limitations in the current study.” (p. 162)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *scholarly writing techniques*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is additive to my understanding of academic writing. While it is reasonable to assume that almost all social science research will conclude with a suggestion for further studies, this suggestion is incomplete without greater contextualization. It is important for future scholars to be able to continually build upon the foundation that has been set with each layer of research and findings.

Contextualization: In my master's capstone project, I ended with the exact sentiment that “further research was needed.” I was sure to give direction for this further research and provide suggestions for the surrounding relationships that would be worth reconsidering and expanding upon. As I begin my doctoral studies, I acknowledge that no matter my findings, social research is constantly evolving and will indeed conclude with a call for further research. This is not a negative conclusion, but instead the natural landing place of this kind of research.

Source Six:

Wellner, G. (2023). Material hermeneutics of digital technologies in the age of AI. *AI & Society*, 38(6), 2159–2166. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-020-00952-w>

Comment 11:

Quote/Paraphrase: “A document is the heir of the analog age, hence it is fixed and can be accessed in an identical way over and over again; a performance is the way we receive information as an unstable representation that keeps changing as in the case of traffic data in online navigation maps, social networks’ feed, scenes in online games or real-time stock exchange data. In performances, algorithms produce the information and determine how it is presented to the users. The performances keep changing according to the time they are produced and often according to the characteristics of the person who operates the app. Unlike a document which one could read time and again, under the performance regime the displayed information cannot be re- read. The information will always change the next time it is displayed. Digital material hermeneutics need to deal with this challenge. How can meaning be extracted in a highly dynamic environment?” (p. 2165)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *interpretive methods in social research*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is variant from my initial thought process surrounding the place of artificial intelligence in research. While documents are “stable,” responses from artificial intelligence are not. Therefore, the process of incorporating, applying, and citing the findings of these systems requires discernment.

Contextualization: As I begin working towards my dissertation in the midst of an artificial intelligence revolution, I will be forced to continue learning about and adapting to the ways in which technology is shaping society, education, and

research. Keeping context such as this comment within view will be important as I form my own thoughts regarding artificial intelligence and research.

Source Seven:

Henrickson, L., & Meroño-Peñuela, A. (2023). Prompting meaning: a hermeneutic approach to optimising prompt engineering with ChatGPT. *AI & Society*, 1-16.

Comment 12:

Quote/Paraphrase: “Our experiments showed that, in terms of hermeneuticity, ChatGPT affirmed neither its positive nor negative polarities of hype. In all cases, the system generated readable texts that responded clearly to our prompts. While some responses were deemed trite, they did provide at least some meaning for the user, even if that meaning was only related to surface- level explanations of theory and/or to affirming the user’s point of view. ChatGPT offered limited novel insight into the topics of discussion, with this insight being more common in response to vaguer prompts. Although more precise prompts increased ChatGPT’s analytical precision, they also appeared to diminish the hermeneuticity of analysis. This result may indicate inherent limitations of ChatGPT: the system is programmed to limit speculation, follow instructions precisely, and present its ideas as distinctive, all of which work against the hermeneuticity of its responses.” (p. 14)

Essential Element: This comment is associated with the essential element *interpretive methods in social research*.

Additive/Variant Analysis: This comment is additive to my understanding of artificial intelligence. When working with a variable computer program, there is

an undeniable “human touch” from the programmers who have input content into the technology, yet this kind of technology will never be equivalent to that of human knowledge and communication. As revealed through this study, programs like ChatGPT are specifically designed to be as objective as possible. While social research seeks this same objective, one must keep this consideration in mind when applying hermeneutics to this technology.

Contextualization: As I continue to discover the role of artificial intelligence software like ChatGPT in my research as well as my day-to-day life, it is my desire to interpret the information it provides with thoughtfulness and discernment. Keeping hermeneutical principles in mind and considering the way in which such technology is constructed and designed will be invaluable.

Works Cited

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