Hermeneutics and Communication

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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.

**Course Learning Journal**

**Introduction**

The Hermeneutics and Communication course is fundamental to the graduate program outcome objectives to “Apply Christian worldview, social science, and critical thinking skills to discern social trends, issues, and problems within one’s professional field (whether in family, church, or community) that can potentially be transformed by the positive influence of religious truths, values, and principles.” This Core 1/A Course is an important and excellent introduction, which helps to form the required foundation for future scholarly work by Omega Graduate School (OGS) students. It introduces hermeneutics as science, with methodologies which may be applied to the interpretation in reading and writing of scholarly research, data, literature, other papers and communication. The history and major developments in hermeneutics, biblical hermeneutics and general hermeneutic are discussed and the four core essential elements of, Reading Techniques for Scholarly Subject Research, Faith-integrated Hermeneutics: Reading for Worldviews, Interpretive Methods of Social Research, and Scholarly Writing Techniques/APA 7 Style are emphasized. Students are introduced to course reading resources with seminal materials, also to the OGS Library and several online databases to obtain scholarly research information. The course engages students in hermeneutic literature review and learning how to read through research for developmental reading and essay assignments, which provide opportunities for interdisciplinary social research in areas of interest, contextualization, and integration of religion in societal issues. The course helps students to learn scholarly writing techniques, with use APA 7 guidelines. Hermeneutics and Communication is perfect as the introductory course for students in this college’s graduate programs, as it lays an excellent foundation in methodologies for reading, writing, analyzing, contextualizing and integrating religion, and develops skills required for success at the school and promotes lifelong learning and growth.

**Personal Growth**

The Hermeneutics and Communication course presented me with a deluge of new experiences, information and knowledge that propelled my personal growth.

* The online learning format was an adjustment and yet a blessing, because although I have participated in numerous Zoom meetings, and webinars on various online platforms (Google Meets, Outlook, Teams), I had not participated in online school format. The courses allow the flexibility needed for independent work. I am now more comfortable with the format.
* The syllabus of 6 pages was very useful and informative – I took the time to review the course resources briefly upon my first reading – I retained very little information. I have since then reviewed the syllabus many times to revisit the resources listed and used in assignments. I have read more scholarly writings in this short time frame than ever.
* My vocabulary was extended to include ‘hermeneutics’ among other words.
* The Developmental Reading assignment was challenging for me - finding appropriate quotes from scholarly works, to identify the essential element, discuss if additive/variant to my understanding/knowledge and the contextualization were new concepts to me. My first draft of the assignment was discarded, because, it took a while for me to understand the requirements, even though I attended the sessions that reviewed what was required. I count it all growth experiences.
* The readings in general ‘took me down some rabbit holes’ which consumed my time, as I tried to extend my knowledge and understanding by browsing at additional sources of information noted in the reference lists of the books or journal articles that I read. I learned that I need to keep focused and prioritize the tasks in my assignments and pursue what seems to be interesting writings, at another convenient time.
* Scholar’s Porch – new to me but beneficial, as I read the information shared by students and instructors, and added content and comments that I wanted to share.
* It is such a great blessing to me to be a student at OGS. The outstanding welcome, support, patience, encouragement, prayers, interactions with instructors and fellow students have given me a sense of belonging and feeling supported.

**Reflective**

Reflectively, I acknowledge that as Zimmermann (2015) suggests, that scientific results and conclusions would not have significance to us without experiential references that make them consequential. We strive to acquire increased knowledge about things which we profoundly care about and have impacted us on basic levels. **“**Hermeneutic thinkers…contest the idea that knowledge is obtained through disinterested observation. Rather, hermeneutic thinkers say that we only conduct experiments and want to know about the world because we are already deeply involved in it at the level of everyday, practical activity. Without this prior experiential relation to things, scientific results would be meaningless,” (Zimmerman, 2015) My encounters with homeless individuals at parks, beaches, the grocery stores, traffic lights and other venues, sparked my passion to help and to find more comprehensive solution to this pervasive social issue of homelessness.

Reflectively, in researching my topic of interest, it seems that the issue of homelessness has been researched from many angles over several decades; however, the problem persists and the number of homeless individuals nationwide and worldwide has skyrocketed, while the gap in solutions implemented widens. This is a pervasive issue in many countries, and expansive research has been performed to not only identify the sources that trigger homelessness but to find solutions. The writer thinks that if through research the leading cause or causes can be identified and addressed, the overall social challenges of homelessness could be assuaged. Mental illness seems to be one of the major causes of homelessness. The question remains regarding what should be the targets of future research to control or remedy this social issue.

**Conclusion**

The Hermeneutics and Communication course is an excellent foundational course, which sets a frame work for success. The course is built on essential elements previously discussed, with course outcomes which integrates faith based hermeneutic methodologies, develops skills of learning to read and write scholarly papers through developmental readings, interpretations and conceptualizations. I think this course has ‘awakened the scholar within me’ and motivated me to do my very best as unto the Lord, with His guidance. I feel that this course provided me with several tools that I needed; tools that I will use. The course has met my professional goals, giving me confidence to move forward through the supportive culture of OSG. My interactions with faith filled instructors, students and others within the OCG family, provide a safe space to share my faith and encourage others. The worship sessions at our Chapel Meetings have promoted my spiritual growth, to realize that God’s plan is for me to trust Him in all things, use my talents as He leads and not to worry about the size of the homeless population and the enormous gap between the needs and solutions currently available to address them, but to know that God hears the cries of the homeless, is more than able to address the problem, in His perfect way and timing. We just need to ‘play our part’ and fulfill our purpose in God’s plan. I am thankful for this course, have learned much, and know that there is a vast amount of knowledge still yet to be acquired. I feel very blessed to be attending Omega Graduate School to research that God has called me to do. Although I do not know as yet which direction or path that I should take, I know that it will be revealed as I let God lead the way. The Hermeneutics and Communications course has met the outlined outcome targets, was great experience for me, and has propelled me towards achieving professional, religious and personal goals.

**References**