PHI 815 – History of the Integration of Religion & Society

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Professor

Dr. David Ward

**David, excellent work on this assignment!**

**You effectively integrated concepts in the Integration of Religion and Society Course Learning Journal to demonstrate how well you understood and learned from the course. Your reflective synthesis aligns with the course's essential elements and reflects your professional interests as an academic.**

**Your reflections show thoughtful engagement with the course content for PHI 815-22. You nailed it when you wrote, "*this course challenged me to study the historical influence Christianity had on society, in particular within the area of education and literacy development. I have never been a huge fan of studying history. However, this course has helped shift my paradigm because the more I study history, the more I have a clearer picture of how society functioned throughout time*." The skill benefit is HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE informed by a Christian worldview. Critical thinking happens when issues in an area of society you feel called to impact like education and literacy development are discerned in relation to their effects in either disintegrating the constructive contributions of faith and morals FROM society versus the humanizing ethical effect of integrating religion IN society! Faith-learning integration and interdisciplinary studies have differing contributions to constructively changing the world. When religion and society are integrated the profound perspectival insights make four kinds of directional contributions: 1) the importance of divinely created purposes in an area of society are reframed, 2) the negative directional effects of fallenness discerns problems, redemptively transforming solutions can be discovered, leading to restoring the integration of religion’s benefits in society for constructive social change. Where PHI 805 provides the transformational learning process to change the world as a Christian, PHI 815 provides the perspective and models for actually effecting constructive change through application.**

**Thank you for introducing me to exciting new learning about heutagogy, or self-determined learning. I discovered the term in the title of one of your journal sources,, and when I looked it up, I experienced an epiphany about the kind of learning OGS specializes in. I’ll send you source I discovered on heutagogy.**

**I look forward to having you in future classes and going to the Library of Congress together in time. Keep u the excellent work, David! Dr. Ward Grade: A**

***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.

I am currently enrolled in Omega Graduate School’s (OGS) Doctor of Social Leadership program as a first-year student. Due to my past educational experience, I have some advanced standing credits applied to my current program. Thus, what would normally be taken in the second-year term, I was enrolled in *PHI 815: History of the Integration of Religion and Society* during my first term at OGS, and I am grateful for the exposure to this course at such an early stage of my program.

Overall, this is an outstanding course that provides learners with the understanding of how Judeo-Christian values and beliefs have impacted society across the history of mankind. In addition, the course involves the integration of interdisciplinary studies toward a robust understanding of the impact of religion on society. Furthermore, I believe this course provided me with a more deepened understanding of interdisciplinary studies, and allowed me to view social issues across multiple disciplines. This provided a fuller understanding how one can advance constructive social change. 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**

The essential core elements of this course resonated well with my personal development. As a devoted follower of Christ, this course challenged me to study the historical influence Christianity had on society, in particular within the area of education and literacy development. I have never been a huge fan of studying history. However, this course has helped shift my paradigm because the more I study history, the more I have a clearer picture of how society functioned throughout time. This was a prevalent area of relevance to my current role as an educator in higher education. In addition, this led me to understand how Christianity has aided in changing society through leaders within the Christian faith. This element was very fitting into my program, as I was able to understand how it applies to social leadership and influences within positive social change.

In addition to learning so many wonderful insights through my developmental reading assignments, I shared with my instructor and colleagues that I feel as if this program has been a breath of fresh revelation for me in understanding the interconnected pieces that God is enlightening me about constructive social change and leadership influences. What impacted me was the concept of how God uses revivals to change society through one or a few people. It is as if God pours revelation of what His will is for society through the lives of leaders who are inspired to share the goodness of what God has forth toward humanity. It is this goodness that radiates and sparks a change in the behavior of the leader, which acts as a domino-effect toward society as a whole. In essence, we are called to help change the world, but the first step in doing this is to change the world around our individual sphere: family; friends; coworkers; neighbors… ultimately the people around us, and in so, those people are then called to change their world around them.

**Application of New Learning**

One of the biggest takeaways from this course was shown when my instructor provided me with some feedback about never hearing the term *heutagogy*. Likewise, I was not familiar with this term and honestly this was the gold nugget for me toward my professional development and application of new knowledge. As a practitioner of organizational and learning development, I have often focused my skills and crafts in applying andragogy, which is the study of adult learning to my teaching application. However, I now find myself in a role that requires me to craft and develop self-directed, virtual learning programs within my workplace. Not knowing that there was a term for self-directed learning, *heutagogy*, I plan on learning more about this field of study to see how I can apply this in my future skills and workplace applications.

I feel aligned with the content of this course and I believe God has called me to become an even better leader to impact the world around me. I am reliant on understanding how God’s Word has the power to transform individuals, which in turn can transform society as a whole. One way I believe my doctoral studies are helping me to apply my learning is by uncovering the mysteries and knowledge found in God’s original plan, which is the knowledge that promotes life and substance for continuous growth and development. Seeing that Jesus is the creator of all things—including the knowledge He allows me to discover—I can be sure that God has started a good work within me and will bring this work to completion when Jesus returns (Philippians 1:6).

Lastly, one of the most prevalent things that I can share that was transformational was how God had illuminated my understanding of His support for learning and how it applies to discipleship. I am amazed at the story of Philip in the Book of Acts where he taught the Ethiopian eunuch to read the passage in Isaiah. This principle integrated a lot of insights from my studies in psychology that supports Lev Vygotsky’s theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD); this is the theory that there are moments when learners need the help and guidance from a facilitator or teacher to learn concepts beyond their abilities and comprehension. Without someone to teach them, just as what was said from the eunuch, how else could anyone learn without instructional support.

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, I am so pleased with my own learning outcomes from this course. I found myself deep-diving into materials that I have never studied before. I am excited to share that my experience has been thought-provoking, mentally stimulating, and has helped adjust my paradigm toward becoming an even better leader of constructive social change. This course has led me to also understand my area of focus in the confounding areas of education and adult learning, as learning involves a change in behavior. Thus, what this course has helped me to see is how behavior has changed throughout history from the impact of religious beliefs, values, and influencers that were directly inspired by a revelation. My hope is that as I proceed throughout my studies that God continues to enlighten me with distinct revelation on how I can best serve others in the pursuit of constructive social change.