PHI 923 Contextualization for Social Change (Spring 2025, Subterm B)

Donovan A. McFarlane

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Professor David Moser

**Content Questions**

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

a. Weekend Residency: 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).

**Culture is the Most Meaningful Basis for Contextualization**

***Course Essential Element: Culture and Contextualization***

Working in the field of education in our global society, culture is an important perspective from which to view and understand today’s learners and classrooms. As an educator, “Culture and Contextualization” as a theme or core essential element impacts my approach to teaching and fostering learning in my classroom. With students from over 60 different countries and numerous cultures in my classrooms, acquiring cultural understanding and knowledge is vital to developing cultural competence to facilitate communication and meaning. The complex issue of culture brings religious consideration into mind as we engage diverse individuals.

We are currently living in a global world where diverse cultures interact through people, values, brands, language, religions and beliefs and where diverse worldviews stemming from culture give meaning to what is and what ought to be. Culture refers to the way of life of a people or the beliefs and customs shared by a group of people. As human beings, we are born into families and families are born to a culture or ways of doing and believing. Therefore, we act within the context of culture, whether we are talking about our worldviews or Christian worldview which is shaped by the religious values or beliefs people adopt from cultural socialization. Culture includes and encompasses religion (Parkes, Laungani & Young, 2015).

We cannot give meaning or significance to life and the things happening around us without drawing from forms and practices within our culture. When it comes to Christian Worldview or Religious Worldview, we give meaning to things based on our experiences and learning derived from culture that teaches us religion. How we think, perceive, evaluate and engage religious practices and give meaning to things around us stem from cultural milieu (Cohen, Wu & Miller, 2016).

Abdulla (2018) communicates the importance and value of culture in contextualization of religion by arguing that “cultural practices becoming “religionized” and religious ideas becoming part of the culture” (p. 102) demonstrate the dynamic relationships between one’s culture and their religion. Our culture oftentimes dictates our religion. For example, one being Saudi Arabian and Muslim, one being Chinese and Buddhist. While this is not always the case, in many instant, understanding culture gives way to better understanding one’s faith and beliefs and how such shape their religious worldviews. This has great implication for ministry or cross-cultural evangelism practices regardless of our religion. We must remember that whether we are ministering in a city or a jungle, culture was already there, and even before faith, belief, and religion.

**References**

Abdulla, M.R. (2018). Culture, religion, and freedom of religion or belief. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, *16*(4), 102-115.

Cohen, A.B., Wu, M.S., & Miller, J. (2016). Religion and culture: Individualism and collectivism in the East and West. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *47*(9), 1236-1249.

Parkes, C. M., Laungani, P., & Young, B. (2015). Culture and religion. In *Death and bereavement across cultures* (pp. 9-20). Routledge.