Statistics for Social Research III

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Omega Graduate School

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Professor

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**Assignment #4 – Course Learning Journal**

The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working on 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.

**Introduction**

As an OGS student with a social science background (BA and MA in Sociology) and one who has been in an applied sociology career in healthcare analytics, I have thought and said that taking statistical and research courses are my bread and butter of the OGS program. It is the realm where I spend much of my time. As noted earlier, I had been disappointed in my experience with OGS statistical and research courses, because it has been about covering basics of statistics, not what I was expecting in a PhD level statistics course. I do understand that many of the OGS students do not have a social science background, thus the way the statistic courses are currently structured works well for them. What I propose OGS to do is to have two distinct courses for statistics, such as below.



Students with a social science background could enroll in the SS (social science) courses and the typical OGS student could enroll in the regular courses. The students from both course identifiers could meet with the same professor, the difference would be that the SS students would work independently from the regular course instruction, thus they could focus their efforts on mastering advanced statistics to which they would be using for their research and dissertation.

**Personal Growth**

This semester for statistics I was more pleased, because I was allowed to modify my course study and focus. The social research that I am interested in would utilize more advanced statistics and I need to focus my efforts on reading, learning, and doing those types of statistical procedures. I felt like I had the opportunity this semester to do that, and it was worth the time, effort, and money to learn what I need to do to be confident in conducting social research utilizing advanced statistics. As a professional sociologist, my peers are conducting social research utilizing advanced statistics in their publications and presentations, I need to be able to perform at that high level of social research. So, I am glad that I was given the opportunity to expand my learning as such this semester. OGS seeks to support the development of the students, whatever their calling may be, and giving flexibility to OGS students with a social science background allows for OGS’s support to those students whose calling is to be professional social scientists, among their peers who attended a standard PhD program in social sciences, such in my case would be among peers who received a PhD in Sociology from a typical university. I do feel like I am lagging behind my peers in the realm of statistics and research, but I feel I am making progress after this semester, given the flexibility that allowed me to focus on the work my calling has for me.

**Reflective Entry**

I do understand that OGS’s statistics courses were designed for the non-social science background students, and I think the courses work well for them. I am just thinking that if OGS wants to recruit students with a social science background, that some modification in the courses, especially the research and statistics courses, is needed in order to support those students. Without this modification, OGS’s PhD program is not sufficient to support the needs of the students with a social science background. In reading the OGS web site, it did seem that OGS was a good place for students with a social science background, however, from my experience at OGS, I found that it is not the case. At least not yet. With some modifications to the program, I believe OGS would be a good place for students without a social science background and for students with a social science background. I do know that OGS’s president is working hard to make OGS a good program for non-social science students and for social science students.

**Conclusion**

I believe in the mission of OGS, “The Mission of Omega Graduate School is to equip scholar-practitioners, from a Christian perspective, with research skills for constructive social change.” I also find that OGS’s program allows students of different backgrounds and vocations to participate in doing social research to help bring about constructive social change in their sphere of influence, this should include, I argue in the academic social science sphere for those who are called in such an area of social research.