

Research Seminar ADS810

Discussion Board Reflections

Reflection #1

[Kanasha Blue](#)

Dec 11, 2017 at 9:08pm
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Dr. Gallagher's lecture was insightful especially for someone who does not have a specific dissertation topic or a set career path. Her statements "Immerse yourself in your area and your topic will choose you, it will also define your career," spoke volumes to me. At first, I was skeptical about the topic of choosing you but if you immerse yourself and be open to all the possibilities anything is possible. The more familiar you are with the subject area, the more familiar you will become with what is missing from the field. Along the same lines was the advice of starting an affair with a prolific, non-fiction writer. Just keep reading and reading, the more you read, the better writer you will become as it will help you find your voice. It is not always easy to read the academic material, as most times it's dry but understanding that reading non-academic material can also help you find your writer's voice is reassuring.

Dr. Gallagher stated, "We must never lose sight of the fact that the study of religion is essentially the study of people," she then goes on to say, "The study of (fill in the blank) is essentially the study of people." By looking at any area of research through the lens of it's a study of people will change your perspective on the subject. Humanizing the subject will allow for more ethical thinking and self-examination of why you're doing the research. Apart from humanizing the subject, studying should take place without reduction, reduction to societies stereotypes or our preconceived notations and illustrations.

The concept of phenomenology research is new to me, and the way Dr. Gallagher explained how she used it for her research made sense. At first, I wasn't able to understand how you research a "lived experience" or "A lived Religion Approach," because everything people do is a lived experience. To clarify this Dr. Gallagher explained that this concept is for "When you want to speak about abstract events in your field." Phenomenology research in the criminal justice field would be beneficial in shedding lighting on the mindset or mentality of an offender as most criminal justice research is quantitative, adding this qualitative point of view would be helpful to the field. This is definitely food for thought.

Reflection #2

[Kanasha Blue](#)

Dec 11, 2017 at 4:28pm
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Father Creagh lecture was quite enjoyable and informative on conquering the dreaded dissertation and being a part of a cohort. As Father Creagh himself came from a cohort

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style Ph.D. program, he had sound and credible advice for the group in this area. He iterated the importance of looking out for each other, helping and guiding each other through this challenging processes. It is important to look out for one another as we will learn a lot from each other during the process. As a part of the cohort member also have a responsibility to be prepared as Father Creagh says, "Come ready to go." If everyone shows up unprepared how can we learn from each other? It's interesting that after so many years, Father Creagh is still close with his Ph.D. cohort and even makes time for a class reunion once a year. He says, "Enjoy it all, as it's privilege time."

Father Creagh also had sound advice for making through the classwork portion of the Ph.D. process including get everything done on time. The task of getting things done on time is a difficult one and may require just hitting the submit button. Although the paper is not perfect, it is ok to just submit it to not let all the assignments accumulate on each other. Prioritizing and doing your working is a part of not letting the wheel fall off the cart.

Of all the advice given by Father Creagh, the most important is the why. Why a Ph.D., a Ph.D. should not be for vanity but to contribute to the academy and ultimately adding a slice of your research that brings the academy that much closer to being whole. As Brian alluded to above, embodying the Vincentian mission of Niagara University to help the marginalized. To do this, there must be a sense of humility and a sense of service.

Reflection #3

[Kanasha Blue](#)

Dec 12, 2017 at 12:50am

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Without a doubt, I was overjoyed when I heard a powerful criminal justice professional was coming to lecture to the class. I waited in anticipation class after class for Dr. Ireland's presentation, and his presentation exceeded my expectations. Dr. Ireland delivered a powerful, thought-provoking message. Although I was excited about all the criminal justice knowledge, he delivered to the class because of my criminal justice background; I left with a different sense of excitement than when the class began.

Since I started this program, I have been second guessing myself, second-guessing my abilities to be successful and if I belong in this program. Second, guessing every assignment, every presentation, trying to make it all perfect but coming up short every time. I am aware that we are our worst critic, but these are the thoughts and feelings I have been having about this program. Dr. Ireland dropped some profound knowledge. First, he said he was nervous about presenting; I ponder how can a professor, Dr, and Provost be nervous about public speaking? I too struggle with public speaking and hearing the quivers in his voice at a time, give me hope for the future.

Two more important takeaway, "Perfection is not required, and it is not attainable," and "It will not be perfect, do not let the imperfection stop you." These statements are like sweet music to my ears, Dr. Ireland goes on to express if he could overcome and make

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it as a Dr. all of us in this room can do it also. For the first time being in this program, I had a real sense of hope; I can do this. Most of my classmate cover all the important topics and advise Dr. Ireland shared with us that are essential to completing the dissertation writing and defense process. There seems to be one topic not covered by my classmates, which is super important for someone who is struggling with narrowing down an area of interest to studying. Since the semester started, I worry about providing a groundbreaking contribution to the criminal justice, and labor field and I terrified that I will not be able to think outside the box enough to articulate a profound topic. Dr. Ireland reassured me that I do not have to find something groundbreaking or even complicated or profound, I just need to take something from the field and question it. Ask questions and try to answer simple questions, even if I assume I know the answer, question it because the research might surprise me. His simple question of is there a relationship between crime and public housing set the stage for groundbreaking, policy-changing research. I look forward to having Dr. Ireland on my committee.

Reflection #4

[Kanasha Blue](#)

Dec 11, 2017 at 11:07pm

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Dr. Hodge's presentation was insightful and encouraging and something I needed to hear. Dr. Hodge's message on resiliency was powerful and reassuring. Not only was he able to overcome so many personal and family obstacles but his professional career was not a piece of cake either. I thank Dr. Hodge for his transparency as he affirms that it's not how many times you get knocked down, but it is making sure you get up each and every time. Something from the message that resonated with me was Dr. Hodge's did not take a straight path up the career ladder like many of his counterparts. As I look at my coworkers, friends, classmate, and spouse, I see people who know what they want to do in life and is on a straight path to achieve that. Similar to Dr. Hodge's my path has been a zigzag, and with this zigzag comes doubt and vulnerability. I anticipated being in the military forever, at least until I was old but with early retirement, you have to find a new path, that path has included employment in criminal justice, mental health and now labor relations. Dr. Hodges message of there is nothing wrong with having a meandering path to the top because it gives you better stories, is one I truly appreciate.

A few more important components of Dr. Hodge's message including goal setting, realistic self-talk, and encouragement. Dr. Hodge reiterated the importance of setting goals, spiritual, personal, career and academic goals; he also states its important to review your goals daily. Research show that people who set goals, also write down their goals and review their goals daily are more successful than those who make goals but do not record them. Dr. Hodges reports that he set ten goals per year, although he has never achieved all ten goals in one year, they continue to help him grow as a person.

The ideas of realistic self-talk and encouragement were also good messages to take away from the presentation. Having a positive and encouraging attitude plays an

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important role in peoples ability to succeed and overcome obstacles. Dr. Hodge's spoke about how people with a positive mindset are more likely to succeed than those who are negative. It's ok to encourage yourself and if you're not going to encourage your self who should other people encourage you?

After the presentation, I had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Hodge's one on one. He offered me advice on which elective counseling courses would be helpful in my current career path in employment counseling. To make this connection and get such valuable advice is wonderful and the standing offer for assistance anytime will be a helpful tool in the future. Dr. Hodge's could even be a future member of my dissertation committee.

Reflection #5

[Kanasha Blue](#)

Dec 12, 2017 at 1:17am

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As an novice research, Melissa's presentation was exciting and nerve-racking all at the same time. It challenged my existing research technique but gave me direction on new skills I can acquire to make research simpler, quicker and more fun. Some of the research tools Melissa spoke about I was familiar with such as Google scholar and Owl at Purdue writing lab, which was reassuring that I was not starting from scratch. Some tools that were introduced that night included Illiad and the A-Z Databases. I am excited about Illiad, as I can get information to do my research without paying for it and the best part, it's free and fast. I have found the perfect article on Google Scholar in the past but had to spend hours trying to locate a free version.

In the A-Z database, NoodleTools caught my attention, for references I currently use a combination of Microsoft Word, Google Scholar citations, bibme.com or easybib.com. Although all of these tools have their strength, none of them have a place to store the reference and information found in the document for later use. NoodleTools annotation section will be perfect for keeping track of sources over time. I tried it out on a couple of assignment so far, and it seems like a great fit. I still struggle with some of the citations but, I believe if I continue to use this tool and follow the instructions my reference skills will improve. I have also tried out the Proquest database for reviewing other dissertations. I am looking forward to trying out the different features the library offers such as access to a reference librarian for research assistance.