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Integration of Faith and Learning  
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### Final Paper

Throughout the course of this semester, I have gotten the opportunity to dive deeper into topics that previously I did not necessarily have much information or knowledge about. These topics included exploring the connections between faith and learning, science, different worldviews and cultures, epistemology, hermeneutics and more. In addition to learning about different topics, I also was able to connect my new knowledge about these topics to my social work practice as it currently is as well as looking forward into the future. The two biggest topics that I previously did not have knowledge about were Epistemology and Hermeneutics. My understanding of Epistemology is that it is the study of why we have the worldviews that we have based on the knowledge we have, how we obtained that knowledge, and if there seem to be any true or false qualities to the knowledge. Hermeneutics on the other hand is the study of Biblical interpretation. This dives into the rules and regulations behind the science of interpretation, but also has a level of flexibility to it as well as understanding that interpretation has some art in it as well.

Through studying these different topics, I was able to take a deeper look at my values and beliefs and how they impact my social work practice. Like with Hermeneutics, there is often a subjective perspective on the religious beliefs that I have based on the way I was raised and my prior experiences. Because of the subjective nature of interpretation, Hermeneutics can be extremely beneficial in sifting through what is subjective and what is factual while taking into account the culture and regulations of the time when the Bible was written. Having an understanding of this can help me, as a social worker, to finalize what I believe and why I believe it as well as allow me to be more open minded to the other interpretations that can be derived from the Bible.

Knowing what I believe and why is extremely important for me as a social worker. There are countless worldviews out there such as a Christian worldview or scientific worldview. With each worldview come multiple strong opinions on a variety of different topics. As a social worker, I will have many people share their opinions with me. Understanding Epistemology can make me more competent as a social worker and can better allow me to acknowledge the importance of what a person believes, why they have those beliefs, and how that impacts the situation that they are experiencing currently. I subscribe to a Christian worldview, and there are going to be times where what I believe does not match up with what my client believes. This could be in a case of controversial topics such as vaccinations, abortions, and other similar controversial topics. Many of the social work values involve serving others, fighting for justice, forming relationships, and encouraging others while maintaining integrity, respect, and demonstrating competence. Likewise, many Christian values encourage similar values. When situations arise, it will be important for me to already have gone through the process of establishing what I believe and why.

I do not have all the answers to every situation I will face in my social work career. However, I feel that my Christian worldview gives me an advantage because I have God on my side to influence me and impress me in different decisions. I feel that with taking the social work values to heart, becoming culturally competent, and working to understand where each client is coming from, I will be able to use my Christian perspective to help them to the best of my ability. I understand that my services may be biased because of my beliefs, but I feel that rather than this being a hindrance, it can be a help as I can allow the Holy Spirit to guide me through difficult situations.