

LDS Perspectives on Psychology

Semester: Fall 2017
Course: Psych. 353-001
Room: B132 JFSB
Time: W 4:00pm–6:30pm

Instructor: Edwin E. Gantt, Ph.D.
Office: 1086 SWKT
Phone: 422-9785
Hours: TBA

PLEASE TURN-OFF YOUR CELL PHONES!!!

Readings:

A packet of required readings is available in the BYU Bookstore.

Jackson, A. P. & Fischer, L. (Eds.) (2005). *Turning Freud Upside Down: Gospel Perspectives on Psychotherapy's Fundamental Problems*. Provo, UT: BYU Press.

Course Description and Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to bring the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ as found in the teachings and doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to bear on the subject matter, theories, and practices of contemporary psychology. It is taken as a starting point that this Gospel is true. The purpose of this class is to see what gospel truth has to offer us in terms of our understanding of ourselves and our actions, and to investigate any divergence there may be between such gospel-based understandings with those that are prominent in secular psychology. We will do this by examining the writings of a number of LDS General Authorities, philosophers, social scientists, as well as the Standard Edition of the LDS Scriptures.

Learning Outcome Objectives

1. Students will express a reasoned position on the enduring questions, issues, and concerns of the discipline of psychology that is grounded in and faithful to the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Students will identify various gospel-centered perspectives on psychological science (both in theory and practice) that have been offered by prominent LDS (and other Christian) scholars, as well as prophets, apostles, and other general authorities.
3. Students will demonstrate basic critical thinking skills by comparing and contrasting the basic assumptions about human nature found in the Restored Gospel and in the various secular traditions of mainstream psychology.
4. Students will identify and evaluate the various implications that these assumptions about human nature have for both the theory and practice of contemporary psychology.

<u>Sections</u>	<u>Lecture/Discussion Topics</u>	<u>Approximate Dates</u>
1.	Setting the Stage	Sep 06 / Sep 13
2.	The Hebrew Roots of the LDS Perspective	Sep 20 / Sep 27
3.	The Gospel and Science	Oct 04
4.	Moral Agency and Truth	Oct 11 / Oct 18
5.	Identity and Relationships	Oct 25 / Nov 01
6.	Human Sexuality	Nov 08 / Nov 15 / Nov 29
7.	The Gospel and Psychotherapy	Dec 06 / Dec 13

Course Requirements:

Exams: The first two exams in this course will be given in the Testing Center. Some of the exams in this course will cover a large number of readings and others will cover only a small number of readings. **Please make yourself aware of the Testing Center's hours of operation – failure to take an exam because you did not know the Testing Center would be closed is not a sufficient excuse for taking the exam late!!!**

The **FIRST EXAM** is scheduled for Oct. 5th – Oct. 10th (Late Day) and will cover Sections 1, 2 and 3.

The **SECOND EXAM** will cover Sections 4 and 5 and is scheduled for Nov. 2nd – Nov. 7th (Late Day).

The **THIRD EXAM** will cover Sections 6 and 7 (as well as a number of general, review-oriented questions taken from earlier sections). The final exam will be administered IN CLASS on Saturday, December 16th from 5:45 to 7:45pm. **Please be aware that university policy requires students to take final exams only at the scheduled times. Please make your travel and marriage plans accordingly. Exceptions will not be made!**

Exams in this course will consist of multiple choice items and short essay questions. Each of these exams will be worth 200 points (3 x 200 = 600 total points).

Quizzes:

There will be 11 quizzes in this class – more or less one for each class period after the first day of classes. These quizzes will cover the assigned readings for the class period in which they are given. Each quiz will be worth 20 points. The lowest quiz score will be dropped. Thus, you will get credit for 10 quizzes worth 20 points each for a total of 200 points possible (or the equivalent of one exam grade).

Grading for the Course:

Grades will be assigned according to the following percentage of total points possible scale:

93% - 100%	A	80% - 82%	B-	67% - 69%	D+
90% - 92%	A-	77% - 79%	C+	63% - 66%	D
87% - 89%	B+	73% - 76%	C	60% - 62%	D-
83% - 86%	B	70% - 72%	C-	00% - 59%	E

Alternative Essay Option

Anyone who would prefer not to take the scheduled Section Exams in this course may instead compose an essay of **not less than** 25 pages on any one of the following questions:

1. Should there be an “LDS psychology” or merely an “LDS perspective on psychology?” Why or why not? What concrete difference might such a perspective make to the discipline of psychology as a whole?
2. What exactly is the philosophy of Naturalism? Where does this philosophy show up in our contemporary theories and practices in psychology? Why is such a philosophical framework incompatible with the basic truth of the Restored Gospel of Christ? How might psychology look if it were to abandon its commitment to Naturalism in favor of a more Christ-centered approach?

This essay – which will be worth 600 points – will be graded according to the following criteria:

1. Logical soundness and completeness of the analysis.
2. Effective use of supporting evidence, example, and authoritative sources (which are to be particularly reflective of, but not limited to, assigned course readings).
3. Recognition of assumptions and implications of the ideas discussed in the essay.
4. Technical qualities of the writing, including clarity, legibility, spelling, grammar, usage, consistency with APA style, etc.
5. Overall quality of the work: Does it fit the assignment and answer the question fully? Is it well-organized and thoughtful? Is the argument compelling and complete? Is the final product of publishable quality?

You must notify the instructor before the scheduled time of the first exam if you wish to take advantage of this alternative examination option. NOTE: This option cannot be used as a form of “extra credit” to shore up failing exam grades in the course.

DEADLINES: The term paper is due at the time of the final exam (*December 16th at 7:45 pm*). A first rough draft of your paper is due by the completion date of the First Exam (*October 10th*). A second rough draft is due by the completion date of the Second Exam (*November 7th*). You will be expected to work closely with the TA and Dr. Gantt on this project. However, since our time is not unlimited, please make sure that you pay close attention to these deadlines. Note also that the neither Dr. Gantt nor the TA is under any obligation to examine drafts or outlines that are late. Failure to meet established deadlines will almost certainly result in a poorer final product and, thereby, yield lower grades on the basis of quality alone. In addition, **each missed deadline** will result in a one full grade reduction in the final product, independent of overall quality. This is not a project you postpone until finals week and it is not a project to be taken lightly! Expectations of quality are very high. A high quality paper would be one that could be submitted to the Psychology Department’s Undergraduate Journal (*Intuition*) with high likelihood of acceptance for publication.

Late Work:

No late work will be accepted! If you feel that you cannot complete an assignment on time you must a) make arrangements with me well in advance of the due date for the assignment, and b) your excuse had better be very, very good – that is, university excused absence or verified medical necessity.

Please note also that not carefully reading the syllabus, not arriving at the Testing Center in sufficient time to complete an exam, or just plain forgetting to take an exam is not a good enough reason to be granted an exception! It is your responsibility to be aware of the exam dates and Testing Center hours of operation. Failure to allot enough time to complete an exam is not sufficient reason to be allowed to finish it later.

Formal Appeals:

If you ever have an objection to an Exam or Quiz question, you are invited to write your objection to the question and provide an argument as to why your answer was the right one, or why the question was inappropriate or misleading. I will not hear oral arguments (no matter how high-pitched and emotional) until after I have read your prepared brief first. Appeals must be no more than one page in length and must be turned in to me no later than one week after the exam or quiz was taken.

Electronic Nuisances and Classroom Courtesy:

Please turn off your cell phones before class begins. Laptop computers are welcome ONLY AS LONG as they are being used to take notes and do not distract others. My class is not the place to be checking your email, surfing Youtube, or leveling up your character in World or Warcraft! Students who employ their laptop computers for such purposes, or who otherwise create distractions for others in the class with such devices, will be asked to turn them off or not bring them to class. Similarly, cell phones are to be turned off during class time, calls are not to be taken and texting is prohibited. Students who engage in such activities will first be asked to cease. However, if the behavior persists, the student will be asked to leave the class. Discourteous classroom behavior also includes: frequently arriving late for class, talking or sleeping or studying other materials (including the newspaper or homework) in class, and leaving class early. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “It is an insult to a meeting for persons to leave just before its close” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 287). Please be courteous in your class behavior. **I reserve the right to lower your final grade for consistently discourteous class behavior.**

Learning Outcomes:

Each program at BYU has developed a set of expected student learning outcomes. These will help you understand the objectives of the curriculum in the program, including this class. To learn the expected student outcomes for the programs in the psychology department and college go to <http://learningoutcomes.byu.edu> and click on the College of Family, Home and Social Sciences and then the psychology department. We welcome feedback on the expected student learning outcomes. Any comments or suggestions you have can be sent to <FHSS@byu.edu>.

Special Needs:

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities Office (378-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895; D-282 ASB.

Academic Standards and Moral Integrity:

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul – We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things” (Article of Faith 13).

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instance of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers.

See <http://www.byu.edu/stlife/campuslife/honorcode/honcode.html> for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification.

As required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the university prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment—including sexual violence—committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of “Sexual Misconduct” prohibited by the university.

University policy requires any university employee in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report incidents of Sexual Misconduct that come to their attention through various forms including face-to-face conversation, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. If you encounter Sexual Misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at t9coordinator@byu.edu or 801-422-2130 or Ethics Point at <https://titleix.byu.edu/report-concern> or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours). Additional information about Title IX and resources available to you can be found at titleix.byu.edu.

Psych. 353 Readings – Fall 2016

Section One: Setting the Stage

September 6th

Maxwell, N. A. Things as they really are. . . *AMCAP Journal*, 16(1), 39-48.

Maxwell, N. A. (1976). Some thoughts on the gospel and the behavioral sciences. *BYU Studies*, 16 (4), 589-602.

September 13th

Sorensen, A. D. (1981). The shotgun marriage of psychological therapy and the gospel of repentance. *BYU Studies*, 21 (3), 291-300.

Williams, R. N. (1998). Restoration and the “turning of things upside down”: What is required of an LDS perspective. *AMCAP Journal*, 23(1), 1-30.

Section Two: The Hebrew Roots of the LDS Perspective

September 20th

Faulconer, J. E. (1999). Hebrew versus Greek thinking. In J. E. Faulconer, *Scripture Study: Tools and Suggestions* (pp. 135-153). Provo, UT: FARMS.

Wilson, M. R. (1989). Where the Church Went Wrong. In M. R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, pp. 166-192. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Optional Reading:

Wilson, M. R. (1989). The Contour of Hebrew Thought. In M. R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, pp. 135-165. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.

September 27th

Maxwell, N. A. (1993). From the beginning. *Ensign*, 18-20 (November).

Oaks, D. H. (1995). Apostasy and restoration. *Ensign*, 84-87 (May).

Slife, B. D. and Reber, J. S. (2005). Comparing the practical implications of Secular and Christian Truth in Psychotherapy. In Jackson, A. P. and Fischer, L. (Eds.), *Turning Freud Upside Down* (pp. 160-182). Provo, UT: BYU Press.

Section Three: The Gospel and Psychology in the Age of Science

October 4th

Slife & Williams (1995). Science and human behavior. In *What's behind the research? Discovering hidden assumptions in the behavioral sciences* (pp. 167-204). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Williams, R. N. (2000). *Faith, Reason, Knowledge, and Truth*. Speeches (Brigham Young University), 1999-2000 (pp. 141-148).

Section Four: Moral Agency

October 11th

Oaks, D. H. Free agency and freedom. *Devotional and Fireside Speeches*, 1987-88, 1-17.

Slife, B. D., and Fisher, A. (2000). Modern and postmodern approaches to the free will/determinism dilemma in psychotherapy. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 40(1), 80-107.

October 18th

Judd, D. K. (2005). Moral Agency. In Jackson, A. P. and Fischer, L. (Eds.), *Turning Freud Upside Down* (pp. 98-115). Provo, UT: BYU Press.

Williams, R. N. (2005). Agency. In Jackson, A. P. and Fischer, L. (Eds.), *Turning Freud Upside Down* (pp. 116-142). Provo, UT: BYU Press.

Section Five: Identity and Relationality

October 25th

Wilkens, S., & Sanford, M. L. (2009). Individualism: I am the Center of the Universe. *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives* (pp. 27-43). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Jackson, A. P. (2005). Relationships: Philosophical and spiritual foundations for counseling. In Jackson, A. P. and Fischer, L. (Eds.), *Turning Freud Upside Down* (pp. 200-215). Provo, UT: BYU Press.

Optional Reading:

Slife, B. D., Petersen, M. J., & Judd, D. K. (2000). Faith and prayer in a Christ-centered family. In D. C. Dollahite (Ed.), *Strengthening our families: An in-depth look at the proclamation on the family* (pp. 142-151). Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft.

November 1st

Warner, C. T. (1986). What we are. *BYU Studies*, 26(1), 1-25.

Warner, C. T., & Olson, T. D. (1984). Another view of family conflict and family wholeness. *AMCAP Journal*, 15-25.

Section Six: Sexuality, Marriage, and Family

November 8th

Holland, J. R. (1988). Of souls, symbols, and sacraments. *Devotional and Fireside Speeches*, 1987-88, pp. 75-85.

Reynolds, E. M. (2012). Chastity as virtue. In L. D. Newell, T. D. Olson, E. M. Reynolds, & R. N. Williams (Eds.), *Virtue and the Abundant Life*, pp. 260-279. Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book.

Budziszewski, J. (2012). The meaning of the sexual powers. In J. Budziszewski, *On the Meaning of Sex* (pp. 17-33). Wilmington, DE: ISI Books.

November 15th

Wilson, M. R. (1989). Marriage and the Family through Hebrew Eyes. *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, pp. 195-236. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Gantt, E. E., & Knapp, S. J. (2008). Contracts, Covenants, and the Meaning of Marriage. In L. Fischer & A. Jackson (eds.), *Turning Freud Upside Down: Gospel Perspectives on Psychotherapy's Fundamental Problems* (Vol. 2). Provo, UT: BYU Press.

November 29th

Byrd, A.D., & Olsen, S. (2001). Homosexuality: Innate and Immutable? *Regent University Law Review*, 14(2), 383-422.

Hafen, B. C. (2009). Same-sex attraction. Address given to the 19th Annual Evergreen International Conference, 2009, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Optional Reading:

Robinson, J. W. (2009). Practical Advice from a Therapist for Responding to Same-Sex Attractions. *Understanding Same-Sex Attractions: Where to Turn and How to Help* (pp. 249-278). Salt Lake City, UT: Foundation for Attraction Research.

Section Seven: The Gospel and Psychotherapy

December 6th

Scott, R. G. (1992). Healing the tragic scars of abuse. *Ensign*, 31-33 (May).

Oaks, D. H. (2006). He Heals the Heavy Laden. *Ensign*, 6-8 (November).

Gantt, E. E. (2003). Hedonism, suffering, and redemption: The challenge of a Christian psychotherapy. In Jackson, A. P. and Fischer, L. (Eds.), *Turning Freud Upside Down* (pp. 52-79). Provo, UT: BYU Press.

December 13th

Yanchar, S. C. & Fisher-Smith, A. (2005). Gospel law and natural law: Practicing psychotherapy in a spiritual context. In Jackson, A. P. and Fischer, L. (Eds.), *Turning Freud Upside Down* (pp. 10-35). Provo, UT: BYU Press.

King, A. H. (1998). Atonement: The Only Wholeness. In D. Hague (Ed.), *Arm the children: Faith's response to a violent world* (pp. 317-329). Provo, UT: BYU Studies.

The Argument

Section 1: Setting the Stage

Most undergraduate psychology students are studying psychology because they want to help others, to understand them, to bring some comfort to those who stand in need of comfort. People are suffering emotionally and psychologically, and we want to help them feel better. Because psychology claims to reveal *why* human beings act the way they do (and feel the way they do), we often assume that psychology will unlock the key to alleviating human suffering. For this reason, it appears to most of us that psychology and the gospel of Jesus Christ can be partners in pursuing their shared goals, and that psychology can be an important way in which we can bring about compassionate service to others.

However, it is important to ask ourselves whether psychologists can really unlock the truth about human nature, and, thereby, help them with their problems? This first section of the class will explore the possibility that we need to be *extremely* cautious in our attempts to build bridges between the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and the theories and practices of psychology because the theories and practices of contemporary psychology are rooted in a secular tradition that in many ways is fundamentally at odds with the restored gospel. These two traditions have vastly different foundational assumptions or worldviews, and, thus, entirely different approaches to understanding and pursuing truth. Indeed, President Ezra Taft Benson went so far as to say that “a higher degree today, in the so called social sciences, can be tantamount to a major investment in error.” Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Dr. A. D. Sorenson, and Dr. Richard N. Williams each make the same unique claim: If we embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, *we can’t be content with psychology as it is*.

In the second article of this section, Elder Maxwell warns that as we build bridges between revealed truth and the world of scholarship, our theories and practices *should not* be indistinguishable from those of a purely secular approach. They not only need to look different, they need to *be* different. That is, we should invite psychologists to adopt certain revealed truths as the foundation for their research, including the truth that human beings are moral agents, that there is opposition in all things, and that the adversary is real and trying to jeopardize our salvation.

Elder Maxwell presented his ideas at the commencement of a conference here at BYU that was specifically dedicated to exploring the relationship between the gospel and the behavioral sciences. Throughout the remainder of the conference, presenters eagerly discussed the ways in which their research bridged the gospel and psychological theory. Dr. Sorenson was at that conference and observed that many of the presumably “gospel-based” theories that were presented were in fact indistinguishable from purely secular approaches. More troubling, though, was that when they *did* differ from a purely secular approach, they *also* differed from the restored gospel. Sorenson warned that if we sloppily try to blend two competing worldviews, we may irrevocably dilute the tradition that is most important to us (the Gospel). If we’re going to build a new tradition, it needs to be built squarely on the foundation of restored truth.

In the last article of this section, Dr. Williams argues that psychology is part of an intellectual tradition that has been informed by the Great Apostasy. The Apostasy has, he argues, touched every aspect of intellectual scholarship, including the scientific tradition from which psychology draws so much inspiration. He agrees with Sorenson that “Earlier dispensations lost their grasp of gospel truths by so integrating seemingly plausible theories.” In response, Williams argues that a truly Latter-day Saint perspective on psychology is grounded in certain crucial assumptions: (1) God, our Father, lives and Jesus is the Christ; (2)

human beings are moral agents; (3) there is a war for our souls; (4) human life and action are fundamentally and inescapably moral. The “restoration turns upside down not just religious convention,” he argues, “but the whole of the Western intellectual tradition.” This means that not only does the restored gospel provide a genuine alternative grounding for contemporary psychological science and therapy, but one that is profound and radical.

Section 2: The Hebrew Roots of the LDS Perspective

In the previous section, it was argued that there are irreconcilable philosophical and practical differences between contemporary psychology and the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, and that simply blending the two approaches cannot help but have deleterious consequences. This section will explore the intellectual origins of these differences. In short, we will see that much of the difference comes down to the profound difference between the Greek and the Hebrew worldviews.

Professor James Faulconer explains some of the basic differences between the Greek and the Hebrew worldviews. First, and most importantly, the Greek worldview focuses attention almost exclusively on that which does not change. In simple terms, in order to be truth, something has to be abstract, unchanging, true everywhere and all the time (e.g., mathematical truth). For this reason, Greek philosophers valued universal explanations and universal laws in their attempt to make sense of the world. Psychologically speaking, for Greek philosophers, the essence of a person was defined in terms of what is fundamentally unchanging about him or her. In addition, the Greeks understood time as being strictly linear and causality as, therefore, sequential and necessary.

In contrast, as Professor Marvin Wilson demonstrates, the Hebrew worldview understood ultimate reality as dynamic unity rather than a static dualism, embodied materiality rather than abstract spiritualism, and in terms of that which is active, relational, contextual, and agentive. Things are not defined by what they look like, or in terms of abstract qualities or characteristics, but rather in terms of what they *do* and *how* they are. Activity is at the heart of the Hebrew language and culture. Therefore, the essence of a person is rooted in the *way* the person acts and responds to others in concrete events. In addition, the Hebrews viewed time non-linearly and understood the past and future to be fundamentally interpretive, dynamic, and flexible – much more so than the Greeks did. This opens up a very different account of causality and allows the possibility of genuine moral agency.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Elder Neal A. Maxwell both explain how during the Great Apostasy, the Greek philosophical worldview became the lens through which revealed truth was evaluated and interpreted. Many truths were discarded or altered because they did not make sense from the perspective of Greek philosophy. Greek philosophy became the predominant grounding of the Western intellectual tradition, at the expense of the Hebrew worldview and dynamic revealed truth. The *entire* intellectual discourse of Western culture from this point forward was permeated by the Greek world view.

If, as Richard Williams claimed, the Restoration was designed to turn *all* things upside down, then perhaps the Restoration can offer an alternative to the scientific naturalism that pervades our psychological theories and practices. Dr. Brent Slife and Dr. Jeffrey Reber identify some very specific ways in which our current scientific tradition in psychology is informed by Greek philosophy. Specifically, the idea that all events can be explained by universal scientific laws is simply a reiteration of the Greek idea of truth. Slife and Reber contrast what psychotherapy might look like from the lens of Christian/Hebrew truth versus what it currently looks like from the secular tradition of scientific naturalism.

(NOTE: In the optional reading, Dr. Marvin R. Wilson further explores the contours of Hebrew thought, showing how the Hebrew people were an energetic, dynamic people whose language reflects an understanding of the world as vibrant, embodied, relational, and earthy. Dr. Wilson describes the ways in which Hebrew thinking is characterized by poetry, the painting of verbal pictures, and a preference for Block Logic rather than the tightly contained, step-by-step analytic logic of the Greeks. Furthermore, Dr. Wilson shows how in Hebrew thought all things are taken to be theological and saturated with religious meaning and significance. This reflects a perspective that stands in stark contrast to our modern tendency to dualistically divide the world up into distinct realms of secular and sacred, public and private, reason and faith, and then insist that the two realms have no contact or possibility of meaningful intercourse. Finally, he shows how the Hebrew worldview entails not only a different view of time and history, but that religion is more than a set of beliefs or creedal propositions with which one agrees. Rather, in the Hebrew worldview, faith is a way of knowing the world in the widest sense possible and religion is an entire way of life.)

Section 3: The Gospel and Psychology in the Age of Science

So far, the course has aimed at establishing that there are irreconcilable differences between the Greek and Hebrew worldviews, that the Greek worldview dominated intellectual thought during the Great Apostasy, and that modern scientific naturalism is simply a variant of traditional Greek thought. With that in mind, it should be increasingly clear now why Maxwell, Sorenson, and Williams all wanted us as psychologists to be very cautious about blending the restored gospel of Jesus Christ with psychological theories and practices that are rooted in scientific naturalism. In addition, we can begin to see why it might be important to redeem the discipline from its apostate traditions so as to begin rebuilding it from the ground up in a way that is faithful to the revealed truths of the gospel of Christ.

However, there is one major obstacle that must be addressed first. Because naturalistic psychological theories appear to have been verified by empirical research, we often assume that naturalistic theories are more reliable or more objective than theories grounded in differing philosophical or theological assumptions. In the first article of this section, Dr. Williams and Dr. Slife show how empirical research is not a privileged path to certain truth. Every experiment performed by a scientist is grounded in certain *pre-investigatory philosophical assumptions* about the nature of truth and how it is to be discovered. Experimental evidence, empirical observations, mathematical models, and correlational studies do not *prove* that conventional theoretical models and assumptions are true, and, perhaps even more importantly, they also do not prove such models false.

Every theory that is supported by scientific evidence relies on a specific *interpretation* of the evidence, and these interpretations are guided by philosophical assumptions that cannot be empirically tested. The type of questions we ask narrows the spectrum of possible answers we can find. If, for example, I ask “What time is it?”, “Turtle” would be a nonsensical answer. The question itself dictates a range of viable answers even before any answers are formulated. In the same way, if I ask “What parts of the brain caused this behavior?” the only answers that will make sense are those which are expressed in terms of casually determinative brain function. In this way, the pre-investigatory assumptions underlying our research methods profoundly influence not only the questions we ask but also the types of answers we can formulate and accept. In other words, all scientific research (and the resultant empirical claims of such research) boils down to a commitment to a particular philosophical worldview. Therefore, if one starts from a different set of philosophical assumptions, one is likely to generate very different findings. This, however, does not necessarily mean that such scientific inquiry is any less

reliable or unscientific. By means of careful analysis of the philosophy of science and scientific method, Slife and Williams help to “level the intellectual playing field” so that science and religion can engage in a more productive and critical dialogue, clearing a space for an alternative (theistically grounded) paradigm of human nature to be explored and even flourish.

Dr. Williams also explains why *reason* is neither the opposite of faith nor a more reliable source of knowledge than faith. He argues that our modern conceptions of reason and faith have been affected by the Great Apostasy and the Greek philosophical tradition. Further, he shows how *faith* is not best understood as the absence of certainty or the opposite of reason. Rather, reason and faith, he says, are two *different* dimensions or sources of human knowledge. In addition, Williams claims that for Latter-day Saints faith does not rest on the authority of either reason or empirical evidence. Instead, for Latter-day Saints, the truth of our beliefs rests on the occurrences of certain *events*. Witnesses of these events testify of what they have seen and experienced. This is, indeed, how Apostolic ministry works. As such, this reflects a radically different approach to knowledge and truth from that found in traditional rationalism and empiricism.

As psychologists, we must recognize that many of our beliefs are really *pre-investigatory assumptions* that can never be proven by traditional experimental research – because such research is based on these assumptions and takes them for granted. For this reason, the doctrines that Elder Maxwell and Dr. Williams suggest we use as a starting point for a Latter-day Saint approach to psychology must be precisely that: a starting point, not a theory to prove or to test using traditional scientific methodologies. As a starting point, then, they can guide the questions we ask and the methods we use as we study human behavior.

The first exam in the course, covering Sections 1, 2, and 3 will require you to address two basic questions: (1) According to Maxwell, Sorenson, and Williams, what are the consequences of adopting a strictly secular approach to psychology, or sloppily blending the secular approach with revealed truth? (2) According to Maxwell and Williams, what specific doctrines must a Latter-day Saint approach to psychology use for its foundation? In addition, the exam will focus on following sorts of questions: What are the differences between the Greek and the Hebrew worldviews? What are the consequences of introducing Greek thought into the Christian faith? How is modern scientific naturalism (secular truth) related to the Greek world view? What are the consequences of the Greek worldview in psychotherapy and psychological science? How might psychotherapy be different if grounded in a Hebrew worldview (Christian truth)? Finally, the exam will require that you be able to answer questions such as: Why can't traditional empirical methods prove theories true or false? What philosophical assumptions ground traditional scientific methods in psychology? In what ways are we mistaken about the way we understand reason and faith? How does the Latter-day Saint perspective claim we find truth?

Section 4: Moral Agency

It's probably time to recap what we've covered so far in the course. First, we have learned that we can't be satisfied with psychology as it currently stands because it has been informed by a philosophical tradition that can be traced to the Great Apostasy and which is ultimately antithetical to the truth claims of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Specifically, scientific naturalism and the quest to explain human behavior in terms of universal scientific laws mechanically operating on mere matter relies on a fundamentally Greek philosophical worldview that is in its most important ways diametrically opposed to the Hebrew worldview that grounds the Restoration. A genuinely Latter-day Saint approach, we have seen, is one that is

grounded in pre-investigatory assumptions that are at odds with the conventional scientific paradigm that has been embraced by contemporary psychology. Of course, changing the philosophical starting point will have implications for the kinds of questions we ask and how we seek to answer them.

One of the first and most important starting points for a psychology congenial to the restored gospel is the assumption that human beings are fundamentally moral agents. Dr. Williams explains why the assumption of moral agency needs to be at the heart of all of our research and theorizing. It is not an issue about which we can be ambivalent or uninterested. It is absolutely vital to the entire enterprise of redeeming and re-envisioning psychological science. In addition, Williams explores the possibility that moral agency is quite different from what we commonly understand as free will. Agency, he shows, isn't just the ability to make random choices or to do whatever we happen to want to do. Rather, moral agency is *living in the world truthfully*. This characterization of moral agency is significant because it reflects a uniquely Hebrew perspective on moral agency. Rather than agency being a static trait that human beings may or may not possess – which is how it is often understood in contemporary discussions – Williams argues that moral agency is a *way of being*. In addition, Williams explores how we can construct narratives about human behavior that don't rely on traditional (i.e., mechanical or efficient) causal determinism. He presents what he calls a *minimalist* view of determinism, in which preceding events and surroundings matter to our choices and actions, but which are not *sufficient* to account for them. This is, however, more than simply saying that our choices and actions are merely “influenced” by causal variables while not being entirely determined by them. Williams offers a profoundly alternative conceptualization of moral agency, one that is not only intellectually viable in its own right but which is also distinctly grounded in the worldview of the restored gospel.

In his article, Elder Dallin H. Oaks responds to some important misconceptions about the nature of moral agency. External constraints and coercion do not take away our agency, Elder Oaks maintains. He also agrees with Williams that agency is both fundamental and distinctly different from simply the ability to do whatever we want.

Section 5: Identity and Relationality

From this section onwards, the course is guided by the assumption that (1) moral agency is real, and (2) that naturalism has inherent problems as a foundation for psychological theories and practices. At this point, therefore, we can begin to piece together what an LDS perspective on psychology might actually look like in some specific ways. Although we will introduce some more pre-investigatory philosophical assumptions, each of these will assume the reality of moral agency. In other words, now that a conceptual groundwork for an LDS perspective on psychology has been laid we can now start filling out some of the concrete details of that new perspective. This does not mean that our work is finished here, nor does it mean that the new perspectives we discuss are flawless. There is still much work to do even after we have completed the readings and lectures of this course.

Christian psychologists Steve Wilkens and Mark Sanford invite us to explore what they term the “hidden worldview” of individualism. Although few people recognize that they have adopted a fundamentally individualistic worldview – thus its “hidden” nature – it is clearly the case that much the way in which we live our daily lives is guided by basic philosophical and cultural assumptions that place high value on the importance of the individual. Indeed, as Wilkens and Sanford point out, for many in the modern world the individual self is the “primary reality and that our understanding of the universe and lifestyle should be centered in oneself.” We can see this worldview reflected not only in our culture's concern with matters of self-

esteem, self-discovery, and self-actualization, but also in psychology's focus on the needs and autonomy of the individual person. In addition, our culture's willingness to think that the fulfillment of individual desires is the highest good in life, combined with a pervasive moral relativism in which the individual person is held to be the final arbiter of what counts as morally right and wrong, reflects an underlying worldview of individualism. The unfortunate consequence of such a worldview, however, is that because it entails egoism not only do all human relationships become inescapably manipulative in nature, means-ends engagements wherein other people are reduced to being objects for the self to use and consume, but also encourages a false understanding of the nature of freedom, responsibility, and obligation.

In his chapter, Dr. Aaron Jackson addresses in detail what it means to adopt a *relational ontology* – as opposed to the worldview of individualism described by Wilkens and Sanford – as a foundation for conducting psychotherapy. In such the relational worldview that Jackson articulates, human relationships are taken to be fundamental to accounting for who we are and why we do what we do. In Jackson's perspective, we are not isolated egos seeking happiness by engaging in relationships with other isolated egos. Our identity as human beings only makes sense in the context of our relationships with others. This represents a dramatic departure from conventional psychological literature on the nature and purpose of human relationships.

Modern psychology often addresses relationship difficulties in naturalistic, causal terms. Professors C. Terry Warner and Terrance Olson, however, provide an alternative account of human relationships that assumes moral agency is real. According to Warner, we are constantly receiving invitations from those around us as to how we should treat them. Moral agency, Warner would say, is rooted in choosing to either genuinely respond to these invitations or to neglect them. When we resist the moral promptings we experience, our whole *way of being* changes and we begin to see the world in a way that justifies our neglect, indifference, and even wrongdoing. In short, Warner argues that we can live in the world in two fundamentally different ways: we can live in the world in a *resistant* way of being, or in a *responsive* way of being. It is only by responding to the signals we receive from others about how we should treat them that we can see and understand the world truthfully. Obviously, this perspective on moral agency has much in common with that articulated by Dr. Williams. As Warner and Olson describe it, this approach can account for a large array of relationship difficulties and successes, and do so in a way that does not reduce human beings to either "meat machines" or individualistic egos driven by the desire for personal gratification. Further, it describes how agency is choosing within a moral context of right and wrong, and isn't just the ability to do whatever we want. This also reflects a uniquely Hebrew way of understanding the world because it assumes that what is most fundamental in human relationships is the *way we are being* towards others, not some unchanging characteristic about people as individual selves. It, thus, presents relationships not as a tool for pursuing our individual happiness, but as an expression of our moral response to other people.

(NOTE: In the optional reading, Slife, Petersen, and Judd team up to discuss two problematic philosophies that families can inadvertently adopt as they attempt to make sense of their relationships with each other. The first of these is hedonism, which manifests itself in the assumption that the purpose of our relationships with others is to make us happy or contented. The authors here point out that at root this perspective assumes that other people are really just means to our own ends, a view that typically leads us to conclude that if we aren't happy, then the relationship is somehow broken. The second philosophy the authors identify is moralism, or the assumption that a good family can be maintained by applying abstract moral principles to individual situations. We often assume that as long as we adopt and follow the appropriate moral principle, the results we desire will follow. The focus of our relationships here becomes the abstract principles and propositions rather than the flesh-and-blood people with whom we

live and the flesh-and-blood Christ whom we worship. Slife, Petersen, and Judd are reiterating some of the things that we've discussed earlier in the course (e.g., universals, abstractions, and ideas are the product of Greek thought, while Hebrew thought focuses on the particular, the active, and the relationship), but in a more specific and concrete manner.)

The second exam in this course will focus on the following types of questions: Why must agency be a starting point – or foundational assumption – in our research? Why isn't genuine moral agency compatible with traditional casual determinism or free will? How does Williams' alternative view of determinism allow for meaningful moral agency? How does Williams define moral agency? According to Elder Oaks, how can we lose our agency and how can't we lose our agency? Furthermore, the exam will ask you to respond to questions such as: What is self-betrayal? How does Warner's theory reflect a *Hebrew* worldview? What is collusion? What is self-deception? What is a relational ontology and what difference does a relational ontology make in the practice of psychotherapy? What is individualism and why is it a problematic worldview for Latter-day Saints? What is the gospel-based alternative to individualism, egoism, and moral relativism?

Section 6: Sexuality, Marriage, and Family

Fewer fields of inquiry have been as thoroughly saturated in naturalistic, individualistic, and deterministic assumptions as human sexuality. Contemporary psychology almost universally assumes that our sexual drives and impulses are biological and insatiable, and that our intimate relationships are for the primary purpose of personal pleasure and for the propagation of our genes. The idea of sexual attraction assumes that there are external forces outside of our control acting upon our thoughts and desires.

Elder Jeffrey Holland, Elder Bruce Hafen, Dr. Edwin Gantt, Dr. Stan Knapp, Sister Emily Reynolds, Dr. J. Budziszewski, Dr. Dean Byrd, Dr. Jeffrey Robinson, and others have tried to tackle these assumptions head-on. Elder Holland, for example, talks about how intimacy must be understood in moral and holistic ways, and must not be thought to be just a matter of personal pleasure and satisfaction. Sexual intimacy requires a personal commitment beyond simple physical fidelity or interaction. Sexual relationships symbolize complete intimacy in all affairs of our lives. Sexual relationships are sacramental, in that, like any priesthood ordinance, they represent a bestowal of the divine power to create life. Sister Reynolds advocates a broader view of chastity that not only makes full contact with the broadest sense of virtue, but which is also based on a view of sexuality that is similarly broadened to make full contact with the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. In particular, she argues that the traditional view of chastity – the view grounded in a biologically reductive version of sexuality – is deeply problematic because it actually drives us apart and dehumanizes our sexual desires and relationships. By way of alternative to this view, she offers a view of chastity that understands it as a particular form of charity, in which chastity frees us to have the close, loving relationships that scripture describes with phrases like “pure in heart” and “of one heart” – phrases that embody the best of our understanding about what Zion could be like and is when our hearts are right.

Finally, philosophy professor and Catholic natural law theorist J. Budziszewski makes a case for understanding human beings as divinely designed for sexual intimacy, and not just sexual intercourse. Budziszewski seeks to correct some of the more prevalent errors about the nature and meaning of sexual relations that have come to dominate our modern cultural and intellectual, as well as moral, landscape. He argues that sex is inherently meaningful and purposive, and that we have caused for ourselves a great deal of pain and suffering by trying to deny its inherent meaningfulness and moral purposes by mistaking the pleasure of sexual

intimacy for a fundamental good in itself. For Professor Budziszewski, sexual relations are fundamentally a matter of “unitive intimacy,” of oneness and wholeness in complementarity, that point us to something more intense than mere sexual desire leading to pleasurable intercourse. Ultimately, sexual intimacy reveals the distinctiveness of masculine and feminine nature, as well as the necessarily complimentary roles that men and women play.

Dr. Gantt and Dr. Knapp address the assumption that the purpose of marriage is to satisfy the mutual needs of each party. Marriage, they argue, is not best seen as an economic contract or an exchange of goods (emotional or physical). It is, rather, about covenanting to live for the sake of the other in compassion and service, whether it happens to bring us personal satisfaction or not. They discuss in detail the difference between a covenant and a contract, and why the distinction makes a difference in the way we think about marriage and family life. Professor Wilson invites us to view marriage and family through Hebrew eyes; that is, from a genuinely biblical perspective that is true to the Hebrew worldview introduced earlier in the course. The Hebrew view, Dr. Wilson shows, understands marriage and sexual intimacy to be fundamentally good, reflecting a relationship of covenant in which selfless love, service, and a giving of oneself to another is taken to be the essential core of what marriage means. Likewise, family is understood to be the fundamental relational and moral context within which our identity as sons and daughters of God is made manifest, and in which we are best able to learn what it means to be and how best to be human. We learn, according to Dr. Wilson, that in the Hebrew worldview the home is a “small temple” wherein not only is the neighbor to be welcomed and shown honor and respect, but God himself is to find peaceable lodging and acceptance.

Elder Bruce Hafen and Dr. A. Dean Byrd both prod us to be a little more skeptical about what psychologists tell us is indubitably the case about sexual desires and relationships. The bulk of the research regarding the nature of homosexuality upon which many claims in the social sciences and the larger culture rest is not nearly as conclusive as it has been depicted, and is informed by many pre-investigatory philosophical assumptions that have not been fully explicated or evaluated. Elder Hafen also makes a clear distinction between experiencing same-sex attraction and engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior.

(NOTE: In the optional reading, Dr. Jeffrey Robinson emphasizes the role of moral agency in sexual attraction and sexual activity, particularly homosexual attraction. In fact, he argues that the term “drive” is a misnomer, representing as it does a problematic engineering metaphor that does not accurately reflect the role of moral agency in our thoughts and desires. Robinson further explains how sexual arousal is a physical sensation akin to thirst, and that arousal itself carries no interpretation until we give it one. Some aberrant interpretations may become habitual and very difficult to discard, but this does not mean that we do not have the capacity to explore new ways of interpreting sexual arousal. Robinson’s approach provides valuable insight into the issue of same-sex attraction, and how to assist those who struggle with this temptation.)

Section 7: The Gospel and Psychotherapy

Traditional psychotherapeutic thinking presupposes that human suffering can be resolved through the use of techniques that have been tested through the scientific method. Human emotional and psychological suffering is akin to a leaking faucet, so to speak, and psychotherapy is the wrench that fixes the leak. Elder Richard G. Scott and Elder Dallin H. Oaks both explain that no technique or method, especially those founded on incomplete or distorted conceptions of human nature and purpose, can resolve human suffering. They argue that the resolution of our suffering lies in turning to Christ and each testifies that Christ can heal all wounds and all ailments. Developing a relationship with *Christ* is the answer, and Christ can

address our suffering in a number of different ways (by teaching us patience, by healing the wounds, or by making us stronger, etc.). Elder Scott also questions some of the traditional assumptions about how therapists should respond to those who are abused. Traditional psychology typically advocates that therapists validate abuse victims and invite them to express their resentment towards the abusers. Elder Scott proposes that in order to fully heal, abuse victims must first learn to forgive the abuser and trust in Christ.

Dr. Gantt explores some of the wide-ranging effects of the assumption of fundamental hedonism in psychotherapy. Traditional psychology treats suffering as an inherent evil to be eliminated by the most efficient and timely means available. Such thinking has led, for example, to a rise in our reliance on modern psychopharmacology to alleviate our psychological and emotional ills. Dr. Gantt proposes that perhaps suffering *isn't* an inherent evil, and that the proper response to clients who suffer may not be to immediately seek ways to help them feel better. Rather, the more fundamental imperative may be to *suffer-with* them, to watch and pray as they experience their transformative Gesthemanes. Turning to Christ, in this perspective, means walking the path He trod, which can entail suffering that ought not necessarily be ameliorated, but rather needs to be made sense of and learned from.

Professor Arthur Henry King offers some valuable insight into how the atonement of Christ can help mend our relationship with God and with others, and how much of our emotional and psychological distress may be a result of our alienation from God and our fellow man. King invites us all to a serious and meditative reflection on what atonement might mean and how it might play out in our lives. In addition, Dr. Yancher and Dr. Smith take a stab at exploring the distinction between Greek and Hebrew philosophy in psychotherapy. They show how traditional diagnostic categories and taxonomies are distinctly Greek in origin, and assume that mental illness is a static trait that people carry with them and from whose effects they suffer as passive victims. They propose instead that we focus on the particular person in their particular context, rather than labeling them and referring to them as a set of symptoms produced by the impersonal operation of certain natural laws. Also, they explore the possibility of miracles that psychologists ignore or neglect because of their adherence to a naturalistic paradigm. They invite their readers to experiment with setting aside the naturalistic worldview in order to see their clients as fundamentally moral agents.