



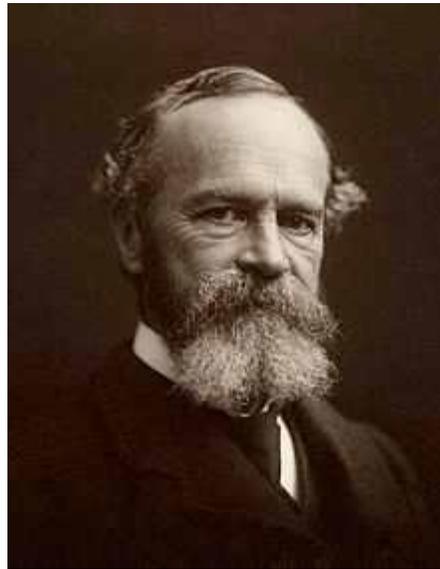
Buy Now

\$29.95

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
http://www.word-pdf-converter.com

# Course Title:History of religion and culture.(Prepared by MAHMUD on behalf of WRC PREDATORS)

## William James



<b>Full name</b>	William James
<b>Born</b>	January 11, 1842 New York City, New York
<b>Died</b>	August 26, 1910 (aged 68) <a href="#">Tamworth, New Hampshire</a>
<b>Era</b>	<a href="#">19th/20th</a> century philosophy
<b>Region</b>	Western Philosophy and Psychology
<b><u>School</u></b>	<a href="#">Pragmatism</a>
<b>Main interests</b>	<a href="#">Pragmatism</a> , <a href="#">Psychology</a> , <a href="#">Philosophy of Religion</a> , <a href="#">Epistemology</a> , <a href="#">Meaning</a>
<b>Notable ideas</b>	The <a href="#">Will to Believe Doctrine</a> , the <a href="#">pragmatic theory of truth</a> , <a href="#">radical empiricism</a> , <a href="#">James-Lange theory</a> of emotion, <a href="#">psychologist's fallacy</a>
Influenced by	<a href="#">[show]</a>
Influenced	<a href="#">[show]</a>

**William James** (January 11, 1842 – August 26, 1910) was a pioneering American [psychologist](#) and [philosopher](#) who was trained as a [physician](#). He wrote influential books



Buy Now

\$29.95

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

on the young science of psychology, [educational psychology](#), psychology of [religious experience](#) and [mysticism](#), and on the philosophy of [pragmatism](#). He was the brother of novelist [Henry James](#) and of diarist [Alice James](#). In the summer of 1878, James married Alice Gibbens.

William James was born at the [Astor House](#) in New York City. He was the son of [Henry James Sr.](#), an independently wealthy and notoriously eccentric [Swedenborgian theologian](#) well acquainted with the literary and intellectual elites of his day. The intellectual brilliance of the James family milieu and the remarkable epistolary talents of several of its members have made them a subject of continuing interest to historians, biographers, and critics.

James interacted with a wide array of writers and scholars throughout his life, including his godfather [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#), his godson [William James Sidis](#), as well as [Charles Sanders Peirce](#), [Bertrand Russell](#), [Josiah Royce](#), [Ernst Mach](#), [John Dewey](#), [Macedonio Fernández](#), [Walter Lippmann](#), [Mark Twain](#), [Horatio Alger, Jr.](#), [Henri Bergson](#) and [Sigmund Freud](#).

## Discovering Himself

William James received an eclectic trans-Atlantic education, developing fluency in both German and French. Education in the James household encouraged cosmopolitanism. The family made two trips to Europe while William James was still a child, setting a pattern that resulted in thirteen more European journeys during his life. His early artistic bent led to an apprenticeship in the studio of [William Morris Hunt](#) in [Newport, Rhode Island](#), but he switched in 1861 to scientific studies at the [Lawrence Scientific School](#) of [Harvard University](#).

In his early adulthood, James suffered from a variety of physical ailments, including those of the eyes, back, stomach, and skin. He was also [tone deaf](#).<sup>[2]</sup> He was subject to a variety of psychological symptoms which were diagnosed at the time as [neurasthenia](#), and which included periods of [depression](#) during which he contemplated [suicide](#) for months on end. Two younger brothers, Garth Wilkinson (Wilky) and Robertson (Bob), fought in the [Civil War](#). The other three siblings (William, Henry, and Alice James) all suffered from periods of invalidism.

James took up medical studies at [Harvard Medical School](#) in 1864. He took a break in the spring of 1865 to join naturalist [Louis Agassiz](#) on a scientific expedition up the [Amazon River](#), but aborted his trip after eight months, as he suffered bouts of severe [seasickness](#) and mild [smallpox](#). His studies were interrupted once again due to illness in April 1867. He traveled to Germany in search of a cure and remained until November 1868. (During this period he began to publish, with reviews appearing in literary periodicals like the *North American Review*.) He finally earned his [M.D.](#) degree in June 1869, but never practiced medicine. What he called his "soul-sickness" would only be resolved in 1872, after an extended period of philosophical searching. He married Alice Gibbens in 1878.

James's time in Germany proved intellectually fertile, helping him find that his true interests lay not in medicine but in philosophy and psychology. Later, in 1902 he would



Buy Now

\$29.95

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

write: "I originally studied medicine in order to be a physiologist, but I drifted into psychology and philosophy from a sort of fatality. I never had any philosophic instruction, the first lecture on psychology I ever heard being the first I ever gave".<sup>[3]</sup>

## Career

James spent almost his entire academic career at Harvard. He was appointed instructor in [physiology](#) for the spring 1873 term, instructor in [anatomy](#) and physiology in 1873, assistant professor of psychology in 1876, assistant professor of philosophy in 1881, full professor in 1885, endowed chair in psychology in 1889, return to philosophy in 1897, and emeritus professor of philosophy in 1907.

James studied medicine, physiology, and biology, and began to teach in those subjects, but was drawn to the scientific study of the human mind at a time when psychology was constituting itself as a [science](#). James's acquaintance with the work of figures like [Hermann Helmholtz](#) in Germany and [Pierre Janet](#) in France facilitated his introduction of courses in scientific psychology at [Harvard University](#). He taught his first [experimental psychology](#) course at Harvard in the 1875–1876 academic year.<sup>[4]</sup>

During his Harvard years, James joined in philosophical discussions with [Charles Peirce](#), [Oliver Wendell Holmes](#), and [Chauncey Wright](#) that evolved into a lively group informally known as [The Metaphysical Club](#) in 1872. [Louis Menand](#) speculates that the Club provided a foundation for American intellectual thought for decades to come.

William James and [Josiah Royce](#), ca. 1910

Among James's students at Harvard University were such luminaries as [Boris Sidis](#), [Theodore Roosevelt](#), [George Santayana](#), [W. E. B. Du Bois](#), [G. Stanley Hall](#), [Ralph Barton Perry](#), [Gertrude Stein](#), [Horace Kallen](#), [Morris Raphael Cohen](#), [Walter Lippmann](#), [Alain Locke](#), [C. I. Lewis](#), and [Mary Calkins](#).

Following his January, 1907 retirement from Harvard, James continued to write and lecture, publishing *Pragmatism*, *A Pluralistic Universe*, and *The Meaning of Truth*. James was increasingly afflicted with cardiac pain during his last years. It worsened in 1909 while he worked on a philosophy text (unfinished but posthumously published as *Some Problems in Philosophy*). He sailed to Europe in the spring of 1910 to take experimental treatments which proved unsuccessful, and returned home on August 18. His heart failed him on August 26, 1910 at his home in [Chocorua, New Hampshire](#). He was buried in the family plot in Cambridge Cemetery, [Cambridge, Massachusetts](#).

He was one of the strongest proponents of the school of [functionalism](#) in psychology and of [pragmatism](#) in philosophy. He was a founder of the [American Society for Psychological Research](#), as well as a champion of alternative approaches to healing. He challenged his professional colleagues not to let a narrow mindset prevent an honest appraisal of those beliefs.



[Buy Now](#)

**\$29.95**

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

In an empirical study by Haggbloom et al. using six criteria such as citations and recognition, James was found to be the 14th most eminent psychologist of the 20th Century.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Writings

William James wrote voluminously throughout his life. A non-exhaustive bibliography of his writings, compiled by John McDermott, is 47 pages long.<sup>[6]</sup> (See below for a list of his major writings and additional collections)

He gained widespread recognition with his monumental *Principles of Psychology* (1890), totaling twelve hundred pages in two volumes, which took twelve years to complete. *Psychology: The Briefer Course*, was an 1892 abridgement designed as a less rigorous introduction to the field. These works criticized both the English [associationist](#) school and the [Hegelianism](#) of his day as competing dogmatisms of little explanatory value, and sought to re-conceive the human mind as inherently purposive and selective.

[President Jimmy Carter's Moral Equivalent of War Speech](#), on April 17, 1977, equating the United States' [1970's energy crisis](#), [oil crisis](#) and the changes and sacrifices Carter's proposed plans would require with the "moral equivalent of war," may have borrowed its title, much of its theme and the memorable phrase from James' classic essay "The Moral Equivalent of War" derived from his last speech, delivered at Stanford University in 1906, in which "James considered one of the classic problems of politics: how to sustain political unity and civic virtue in the absence of war or a credible threat...." and "...sounds a rallying cry for service in the interests of the individual and the nation." <sup>[7]</sup> <sup>[8]</sup> <sup>[9]</sup>

## Epistemology

James defined [true](#) beliefs as those that prove useful to the believer. His [pragmatic theory of truth](#) was a synthesis of [correspondence theory of truth](#) and [coherence theory of truth](#), with an added dimension. Truth is verifiable to the extent that thoughts and statements correspond with actual things, as well as the extent to which they "hang together," or cohere, as pieces of a puzzle might fit together; these are in turn verified by the observed results of the application of an idea to actual practice.<sup>[10]</sup><sup>[11]</sup>

"The most ancient parts of truth . . . also once were plastic. They also were called true for human reasons. They also mediated between still earlier truths and what in those days were novel observations. Purely objective truth, truth in whose establishment the function of giving human satisfaction in marrying previous parts of experience with newer parts played no role whatsoever, is nowhere to be found. The reasons why we call things true is the reason why they are true, for 'to be true' means only to perform this marriage-function," he wrote.<sup>[12]</sup>

James held a world view in line with [pragmatism](#), declaring that the value of any truth was utterly dependent upon its use to the person who held it. Additional tenets of James's



Buy Now

\$29.95

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

pragmatism include the view that the world is a mosaic of diverse experiences that can only be properly interpreted and understood through an application of "radical empiricism." Radical empiricism, not related to the everyday scientific [empiricism](#), asserts that the world and experience can never be halted for an entirely objective analysis, if nothing else the mind of the observer and simple act of observation will affect the outcome of any empirical approach to truth as the mind and its experiences, and nature are inseparable. James's emphasis on diversity as the default human condition — over and against duality, especially Hegelian dialectical duality — has maintained a strong influence in American culture, especially among liberals (see [Richard Rorty](#)). James's description of the mind-world connection, which he described in terms of a "[stream of consciousness \(psychology\)](#)", had a direct and significant impact on [avant-garde](#) and [modernist](#) literature and art.

In *What Pragmatism Means*, James writes that the central point of his own doctrine of truth is, in brief, that "Truths emerge from facts, but they dip forward into facts again and add to them; which facts again create or reveal new truth (the word is indifferent) and so on indefinitely. The 'facts' themselves meanwhile are not true. They simply are. Truth is the function of the beliefs that start and terminate among them." [Richard Rorty](#) claims that James did not mean to give a theory of truth with this statement and that we should not regard it as such. However, other pragmatism scholars such as [Susan Haack](#) and [Howard Mounce](#) do not share Rorty's [instrumentalist](#) interpretation of James.<sup>[13]</sup>

In *The Meaning of Truth*, James seems to speak of truth in relativistic terms: "The critic's [sc., the critic of pragmatism] trouble...seems to come from his taking the word 'true' irrelatively, whereas the pragmatist always means 'true for him who experiences the workings.'"<sup>[14]</sup> However, James responded to critics accusing him of [relativism](#), [scepticism](#) or [agnosticism](#), and of believing only in relative truths. To the contrary, he supported an [epistemological realism](#) position.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Cash Value

From the introduction to William James's *Pragmatism* by Bruce Kuklick, p.xiv.

James went on to apply the pragmatic method to the epistemological problem of truth. He would seek the meaning of 'true' by examining how the idea functioned in our lives. A belief was true, he said, if it worked for all of us, and guided us expeditiously through our semihospitable world. James was anxious to uncover what true beliefs amounted to in human life, what their "Cash Value" was, what consequences they led to. A belief was not a mental entity which somehow mysteriously corresponded to an external reality if the belief were true. Beliefs were ways of acting with reference to a precarious environment, and to say they were true was to say they guided us satisfactorily in this environment. In this sense the pragmatic theory of truth applied Darwinian ideas in philosophy; it made survival the test of intellectual as well as [biological fitness](#). If what was true was what worked, we can scientifically investigate religion's claim to truth in the same manner. The enduring quality of religious beliefs throughout recorded history and



**Buy Now**

**\$29.95**

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

in all cultures gave indirect support for the view that such beliefs worked. James also argued directly that such beliefs were satisfying — they enabled us to lead fuller, richer lives and were more viable than their alternatives. Religious beliefs were expedient in human existence, just as scientific beliefs were.

## Will to Believe Doctrine

Main article: [The Will to Believe](#)

In William James's lecture of 1896 titled "The Will to Believe," James defends the right to violate the principle of [evidentialism](#) in order to justify hypothesis venturing. This idea foresaw the demise of evidentialism in the 20th century [[citation needed](#)] and sought to ground justified belief in an unwavering principle that would prove more beneficial. Through his philosophy of [pragmatism](#) William James justifies religious beliefs by using the results of his hypothetical venturing as evidence to support the hypothesis' truth. Therefore, this doctrine allows one to assume belief in God and prove His existence by what the belief brings to one's life.

## Free Will

In The Will to Believe, James simply asserted that his will was free. As his first act of freedom, he said, he chose to believe his will was free. He was encouraged to do this by reading [Charles Renouvier](#), whose work convinced James to convert from [monism](#) to [pluralism](#). In his diary entry of April 30, 1870, James wrote,

"I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life. I finished the first part of Renouvier's second Essais and see no reason why his definition of free will — 'the sustaining of a thought because I choose to when I might have other thoughts' — need be the definition of an illusion. At any rate, I will assume for the present — until next year — that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will."<sup>[16]</sup>

In 1884 James set the terms for all future discussions of [determinism](#) and [compatibilism](#) in the [free will](#) debates with his lecture to [Harvard Divinity School](#) students published as "The Dilemma of Determinism." In this talk he defined the common terms "hard determinism" and "soft determinism" (now more commonly called "[compatibilism](#)").

"Old-fashioned determinism was what we may call hard determinism. It did not shrink from such words as fatality, bondage of the will, necessitation, and the like. Nowadays, we have a soft determinism which abhors harsh words, and, repudiating fatality, necessity, and even predetermination, says that its real name is freedom; for freedom is only necessity understood, and bondage to the highest is identical with true freedom."<sup>[17]</sup>

James called compatibilism a "quagmire of evasion,"<sup>[17]</sup> just as the ideas of [Thomas Hobbes](#) and [David Hume](#) that free will was simply freedom from external coercion were called a "wretched subterfuge" by [Immanuel Kant](#).

James described [chance](#) as neither hard nor soft determinism, but "[indeterminism](#)". He said



[Buy Now](#)

**\$29.95**

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

"The stronghold of the determinist argument is the antipathy to the idea of chance...This notion of alternative possibility, this admission that any one of several things may come to pass is, after all, only a roundabout name for chance." [18]

James asked the students to consider his choice for walking home from Lowell Lecture Hall after his walk.

"What is meant by saying that my choice of which way to walk home after the lecture is ambiguous and matter of chance?...It means that both Divinity Avenue and Oxford Street are called but only one, and that one either one, shall be chosen." [19]

With this simple example, James was the first thinker to enunciate clearly a two-stage decision process (others include [Henri Poincaré](#), [Arthur Holly Compton](#), [Karl Popper](#)), with chance in a present time of random alternatives, leading to a choice which grants consent to one possibility and transforms an equivocal ambiguous future into an unalterable and simple past. There is a temporal sequence of undetermined alternative possibilities followed by adequately determined choices.

James' two-stage model effectively separates chance (the indeterministic free element) from [choice](#) (an arguably determinate decision that follows causally from one's character, values, and especially feelings and desires at the moment of decision).

## Philosophy of religion

James did important work in [philosophy of religion](#). In his [Gifford Lectures](#) at the [University of Edinburgh](#) he provided a wide-ranging account of [The Varieties of Religious Experience](#) (1902) and interpreted them according to his pragmatic leanings. Some of the important claims he makes in this regard:

- Religious genius (experience) should be the primary topic in the study of religion, rather than religious institutions—since institutions are merely the social descendant of genius.
- The intense, even pathological varieties of experience (religious or otherwise) should be sought by psychologists, because they represent the closest thing to a microscope of the mind—that is, they show us in drastically enlarged form the normal processes of things.
- In order to usefully interpret the realm of common, shared experience and history, we must each make certain "[over-beliefs](#)" in things which, while they cannot be proven on the basis of experience, help us to live fuller and better lives.

The investigation of [mystical](#) experience was constant throughout the life of James, leading him to experiment with [chloral hydrate](#) (1870), [amyl nitrite](#) (1875), [nitrous oxide](#) (1882), and even [peyote](#) (1896). James claimed that it was only when he was under the influence of nitrous oxide that he was able to understand [Hegel](#). [20] He concluded that while the revelations of the mystic hold true, they hold true only for the mystic; for others,



[Buy Now](#)

**\$29.95**

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

they are certainly ideas to be considered, but can hold no claim to truth without personal experience of such. For example, consider the claim to truth held by the immutable laws of physics.

## Instincts

Like Sigmund Freud, James was influenced by Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection.<sup>[21]</sup> At the core of James' theory of psychology, as defined in *Principles of Psychology* (1890), was a system of "instincts."<sup>[21]</sup> James wrote that humans had many instincts, even more than other animals.<sup>[21]</sup> These instincts, he said, could be overridden by experience and by each other, as many of the instincts were actually in conflict with each other.<sup>[21]</sup> In the 1920s, however, psychology turned away from evolutionary theory and embraced radical behaviorism.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Theory of emotion

James is one of the two namesakes of the [James-Lange theory of emotion](#), which he formulated independently of [Carl Lange](#) in the 1880s. The theory holds that emotion is the mind's perception of physiological conditions that result from some stimulus. In James's oft-cited example; it is not that we see a bear, fear it, and run. We see a bear and run, consequently we fear the bear. Our mind's [perception](#) of the higher adrenaline level, heartbeat, etc., is the emotion.

This way of thinking about emotion has great consequences for the philosophy of [aesthetics](#). Here is a passage from his great work, *Principles of Psychology*, that spells out those consequences.

[W]e must immediately insist that aesthetic emotion, pure and simple, the pleasure given us by certain lines and masses, and combinations of colors and sounds, is an absolutely sensational experience, an optical or auricular feeling that is primary, and not due to the repercussion backwards of other sensations elsewhere consecutively aroused. To this simple primary and immediate [pleasure](#) in certain pure sensations and harmonious combinations of them, there may, it is true, be added secondary pleasures; and in the practical enjoyment of works of art by the masses of mankind these secondary pleasures play a great part. The more classic one's taste is, however, the less relatively important are the secondary pleasures felt to be, in comparison with those of the primary sensation as it comes in. [Classicism](#) and [romanticism](#) have their battles over this point. Complex suggestiveness, the awakening of vistas of memory and association, and the stirring of our flesh with picturesque mystery and gloom, make a work of art romantic. The classic taste brands these effects as coarse and tawdry, and prefers the naked beauty of the optical and auditory sensations, unadorned with frippery or foliage. To the romantic mind, on the contrary, the immediate beauty of these sensations seems dry and thin. I am of course not discussing which view is right, but only showing that the discrimination between the primary feeling of beauty, as a pure incoming sensible quality, and the secondary emotions which are grafted thereupon, is one that must be made.



Buy Now

\$29.95

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

## William James' bear

From [Joseph LeDoux's](#) description of William James's *Emotion* [22]

Why do we run away if we notice that we are in danger? Because we are afraid of what will happen if we don't. This obvious (and incorrect) answer to a seemingly trivial question has been the central concern of a century-old debate about the nature of our emotions.

It all began in 1884 when William James published an article titled "What Is an Emotion?" [23] The article appeared in a philosophy journal called *Mind*, as there were no psychology journals yet. It was important, not because it definitively answered the question it raised, but because of the way in which James phrased his response. He conceived of an emotion in terms of a sequence of events that starts with the occurrence of an arousing stimulus {the [sympathetic nervous system](#) or the [parasympathetic nervous system](#)}; and ends with a passionate feeling, a conscious emotional experience. A major goal of emotion research is still to elucidate this stimulus-to-feeling sequence—to figure out what processes come between the stimulus and the feeling.

James set out to answer his question by asking another: do we run from a bear because we are afraid or are we afraid because we run? He proposed that the obvious answer, that we run because we are afraid, was **wrong**, and instead argued that we are afraid because we run:

Our natural way of thinking about... emotions is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression. My thesis on the contrary is that the bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion (called 'feeling' by [Damasio](#)).

The essence of James's proposal was simple. It was premised on the fact that emotions are often accompanied by bodily responses (racing heart, tight stomach, sweaty palms, tense muscles, and so on; [sympathetic nervous system](#)) and that we can sense what is going on inside our body much the same as we can sense what is going on in the outside world. According to James, emotions feel different from other states of mind because they have these bodily responses that give rise to internal sensations, and different emotions feel different from one another because they are accompanied by different bodily responses and sensations. For example, when we see James's bear, we run away. During this act of escape, the body goes through a physiological upheaval: blood pressure rises, heart rate increases, pupils dilate, palms sweat, muscles contract in certain ways (evolutionary, innate defense mechanisms). Other kinds of emotional situations will result in different bodily upheavals. In each case, the physiological responses return to the brain in the form of bodily sensations, and the unique pattern of sensory feedback gives each emotion its unique quality. Fear feels different from anger or love because it has a different physiological signature {the [parasympathetic nervous system](#) for love}. The mental aspect of emotion, the feeling, is a slave to its physiology, not vice



[Buy Now](#)

**\$29.95**

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

versa: we do not tremble because we are afraid or cry because we feel sad; we are afraid because we tremble and are sad because we cry.

## Philosophy of history

One of the long-standing schisms in the [philosophy of history](#) concerns the role of individuals in social change.

One faction sees individuals (as seen in Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* and Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution, A History*) as the motive power of history, and the broader society as the page on which they write their acts. The other sees society as moving according to [holistic](#) principles or laws, and sees individuals as its more-or-less willing pawns. In 1880, James waded into this controversy with "Great Men and Their Environment," an essay published in the [Atlantic Monthly](#). He took Carlyle's side, but without Carlyle's one-sided emphasis on the political/military sphere, upon heroes as the founders or overthrowers of states and empires.

A philosopher, according to James, must accept [geniuses](#) as a given entity the same way as a biologist accepts as an entity Darwin's 'spontaneous variations.' The role of an individual will depend on the degree of its conformity with the social environment, epoch, moment, etc. [\[24\]](#)

James introduces a notion of receptivities of the moment. The [societies'](#) mutations from generation to [generation](#) are determined (directly or indirectly) mainly by the acts or examples of individuals whose genius was so adapted to the receptivities of the moment or whose accidental position of authority was so critical that they became ferments, initiators of movements, setters of precedent or fashion, centers of corruption, or destroyers of other persons, whose gifts, had they had free play, would have led society in another direction. [\[25\]](#) For James, the great men of history manipulate the thoughts of society. "Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives." He continues, "The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it."

## View on Spiritualism and Associationism

James studied closely the schools of thought known as [associationism](#) and [spiritualism](#). The view of an associationist is that each experience that one has leads to another, creating a chain of events. The association does not tie together two ideas, but rather physical objects. [\[26\]](#) This association occurs on an atomic level. Small physical changes occur in the brain which eventually form complex ideas or associations. Thoughts are formed as these complex ideas work together and lead to new experiences. [Isaac Newton](#) and [David Hartley](#) both were precursors to this school of thought, proposing such ideas as "physical vibrations in the brain, spinal cord, and nerves are the basis of all sensations, all ideas, and all motions..." [\[27\]](#) James disagreed with associationism in that he believed it to be too simple. He referred to associationism as "psychology without a soul" [\[28\]](#) because



[Buy Now](#)

**\$29.95**

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

there is nothing from within creating ideas; they just arise by associating objects with one another.

On the other hand, a spiritualist believes that mental events are attributed to the soul. Whereas in associationism, ideas and behaviors are separate, in spiritualism, they are connected. Spiritualism encompasses the term [innatism](#), which suggests that ideas cause behavior. Ideas of past behavior influence the way a person will act in the future; these ideas are all tied together by the soul. Therefore, an inner soul causes one to have a thought, which leads them to perform a behavior, and memory of past behaviors determine how one will act in the future.[\[28\]](#)

These two schools of thought are very different, and yet James had a strong opinion about the two. He was, by nature, a [pragmatist](#), and therefore believed that one should use whatever parts of theories make the most sense and can be proven.[\[29\]](#) Therefore, he recommended breaking apart spiritualism and associationism and using the parts of them that make the most sense. James believed that each person has a soul, which exists in a spiritual universe, and leads a person to perform the behaviors they do in the physical world.[\[29\]](#) James was influenced by [Emmanuel Swedenborg](#), who first introduced him to this idea. James states that, although it does appear that humans use associations to move from one event to the next, this cannot be done without this soul tying everything together. For, after an association has been made, it is the person who decides which part of it to focus on, and therefore determines in which direction following associations will lead.[\[26\]](#) Associationism is too simple in that it does not account for decision-making of future behaviors, and memory of what worked well and what did not. Spiritualism, however, does not demonstrate actual physical representations for how associations occur. James therefore chose to combine the views of spiritualism and associationism to create his own way of thinking that he believed to make the most sense.

James was the first president of the American branch of the [Society for Psychical Research](#). The lending of his name made [Leonora Piper](#) a famous medium. He wrote that "the supernormal knowledge which she unquestionably displays" was at least achieved through genuine [telepathy](#), though he remained unconvinced she communicated with spirits. [\[30\]](#) In time James found the investigations of Piper's mysterious abilities boring.[\[31\]](#)

## Bibliography

### Works by James

- [The Principles of Psychology](#), 2 vols. (1890) Dover Publications 1950, vol. 1: [ISBN 0-486-20381-6](#), vol. 2: [ISBN 0-486-20382-4](#)
- [Psychology \(Briefer Course\)](#) (1892) University of Notre Dame Press 1985: [ISBN 0-268-01557-0](#), Dover Publications 2001: [ISBN 0-486-41604-6](#)



**Buy Now**

**\$29.95**

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

- [\*The Will to Believe\*](#), and *Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1897)
- *Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine* (the [Ingersoll Lecture](#), 1897)
  - *The Will to Believe, Human Immortality* (1956) Dover Publications, [ISBN 0-486-20291-7](#)
- *Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals* (1899), Dover Publications 2001: [ISBN 0-486-41964-9](#), IndyPublish.com 2005: [ISBN 1-4219-5806-6](#)
- [\*The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature\*](#) (1902), [ISBN 0-14-039034-0](#)
- *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), Hackett Publishing 1981: [ISBN 0-915145-05-7](#), Dover 1995: [ISBN 0-486-28270-8](#)
- *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909), [Hibbert Lectures](#), University of Nebraska Press 1996: [ISBN 0-8032-7591-9](#)
- *The Meaning of Truth: A Sequel to "Pragmatism"* (1909) Prometheus Books, 1997: [ISBN 1-57392-138-6](#)
- *Some Problems of Philosophy: A Beginning of an Introduction to Philosophy* (1911), University of Nebraska Press 1996: [ISBN 0-8032-7587-0](#)
- *Memories and Studies* (1911) Reprint Services Corp: 1992: [ISBN 0-7812-3481-6](#)
- [\*Essays in Radical Empiricism\*](#) (1912) Dover Publications 2003, [ISBN 0-486-43094-4](#)
  - critical edition, Frederick Burkhardt and Fredson Bowers, editors. Harvard University Press 1976: [ISBN 0-674-26717-6](#) (includes commentary, notes, enumerated emendations, appendices with English translation of "La Notion de Conscience")
- *Letters of William James*, 2 vols. (1920)
- *Collected Essays and Reviews* (1920)
- Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, 2 vols. (1935) Vanderbilt University Press 1996 reprint: [ISBN 0-8265-1279-8](#) (contains some 500 letters by William James not found in the earlier edition of the *Letters of William James*)
- *William James on Psychological Research* (1960)



**Buy Now**

**\$29.95**

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

- *The Correspondence of William James*, 12 vols. (1992–2004) University of Virginia Press, [ISBN 0-8139-2318-2](#)
- [The Dilemma of Determinism](#)

## Collections

- *William James: Writings 1878–1899*, (1992). [Library of America](#), 1212 p., [ISBN 978-0-94045072-1](#)  
Psychology: Briefer Course (rev. and condensed Principles of Psychology), The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy, Talks to Teachers and Students, Essays (nine others)
- *William James: Writings 1902–1910*, (1987). [Library of America](#), 1379 p., [ISBN 978-0-94045038-7](#)  
The Varieties of Religious Experience, Pragmatism, A Pluralistic Universe, The Meaning of Truth, Some Problems of Philosophy, Essays
- *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*, (1978). University of Chicago Press, 912 p., [ISBN 0-226-39188-4](#)  
Pragmatism, Essays in Radical Empiricism, and A Pluralistic Universe complete; plus selections from other works
- In 1975, Harvard University Press began publication of a standard edition of *The Works of William James*.

## Secondary works

- [Jacques Barzun](#). *A Stroll with William James* (1983). Harper and Row: [ISBN 0-226-03869-6](#)
- [Deborah Blum](#). *Ghost Hunters: William James and the Search for Scientific Proof of Life After Death* (2006). Penguin Press, [ISBN 1-59420-090-4](#)
- Wesley Cooper. *The Unity of William James's Thought* (2002). Vanderbilt University Press, [ISBN 0-8265-1387-5](#)
- Howard M. Feinstein. *Becoming William James* (1984). Cornell University Press, [ISBN 978-0801486425](#)
- [Louis Menand](#). *The Metaphysical Club* (2001). Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, [ISBN 0-374-52849-7](#). analyzes the lives and relationship between James, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., Charles Sanders Peirce, and [John Dewey](#).
- Gerald E. Myers. *William James: His Life and Thought* (1986). Yale University Press 2001 paperback: [ISBN 0-300-08917-1](#). focuses on his psychology, includes 230 pages of notes.



**Buy Now**

**\$29.95**

( Word Converter - Unregistered )  
<http://www.word-pdf-converter.com>

- James Pawelski. *The Dynamic Individualism of William James* (2007). SUNY press, [ISBN 0-7914-7239-6](#).
- Robert D. Richardson. *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism* (2006). Houghton Mifflin, [ISBN 0-618-43325-2](#)
- Robert D. Richardson, ed. "The Heart of William James" (2010). Harvard U. Press, [ISBN 978-0674-05561-2](#)
- Linda Simon. *Genuine Reality: A Life of William James* (1998). Harcourt Brace & Company, [ISBN 0-226-75859-1](#)

## **Fiction**

- Richard Liebmann-Smith. *The James Boys: A Novel Account of Four Desperate Brothers* (2008) posits Jesse and Frank are noms de outlaw used by William and Henry James's two younger brothers who went West and fought in the Civil War. Written somewhat in the style of Henry James.

William James: William James, American philosopher and psychologist, a leader of the philosophical movement of pragmatism and a founder of the psychological movement of functionalism. What did William James write? William James wrote *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), *The Will to Believe, and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1897), *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), *Pragmatism: A New Name for Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), and other works. Why is William James famous? William James was the son of Henry James (Senior) of Albany, and Mary Robertson Walsh. He had four siblings: Henry (the novelist), Garth Wilkinson, Robertson, and Alice. William became engaged to Alice Howe Gibbens on May 10, 1878; they were married on July 10. They had 5 children: Henry (born May 18, 1878), William (born June 17, 1882), Herman (born 1884, died in infancy), Margaret (born March, 1887) and Alexander (the artist) (born December 22, 1890). Writings. William James was a psychologist and philosopher who had a major influence on the development of psychology in the United States. Among his many accomplishments, he was the first to teach a psychology course in the U.S. and is often referred to as the father of American psychology. James was also known for contributing to functionalism, one of the earliest schools of thought in psychology. His book *The Principles of Psychology* is considered one of the most classic and influential texts in psychology's history.