The following is an electronic appendix to the book, Integrative Approaches to Psychology and Christianity by David N. Entwistle, containing suggested assignments that professors can use to facilitate student learning outcomes in conjunction with the book.
Appendix 1: Suggested Assignments

*Be an opener of doors for such as come after thee.*
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Integration is more caught than taught.*
—Randy Sorenson

This appendix is designed for professors who are using this book as a text for undergraduate or graduate courses in psychology, sociology, social work, pastoral counseling, or other fields in which the integration of Christian faith and the behavioral sciences is considered. The nature of your discipline, your student population, your own approach to integration, and the learning objectives that you have developed for your course will, of course, guide your creation and selection of assignments, but you may garner some ideas from the suggestions that follow.

Having used this book to lay a foundation from which to pursue integrative research, most professors will want to create assignments that help their students pull this information together and apply it to concrete issues. Several of the long-term projects listed below can serve this purpose. Alternatively, numerous books are available that demonstrate an integrative approach to a particular topic, and professors may want to use such books to help students see how the issues addressed in this book can be applied to specific psychological topics.

The Questions for Reflection and Discussion at the end of each chapter are designed to stimulate thinking and application of the chapter material for both general readers and students. They can be used as assignments for which you specify writing guidelines and grading criteria. They can also be used as questions for class or small group discussions.

Short-term assignments involving journal critiques or summaries can be a very effective pedagogical strategy. Having students read journal articles on integration can help them to see how the issues presented in this book are currently being addressed in professional circles. Journal assignments can effectively
be designed as written summaries, written critiques, or class presentations. Depending on your disciplinary specialty, the following journals may be useful for this purpose.

- Christian Education Journal
- Christian Scholar’s Review
- Journal of Biblical Counseling (useful for demonstrating both anti-integration and Colonialist positions, depending on the article)
- Journal of Psychology and Christianity
- Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling
- Journal of Pastoral Counseling
- Journal of Psychology and Theology
- Journal of Religious Gerontology
- Marriage and Family: A Christian Journal
- Pastoral Psychology
- Review of Religious Research
- Social Work and Christianity
- Sociology of Religion

The quality, theological slants, and relational models of these journals vary, and other journals could be added, but this list should provide a good starting point.

**Long-Term Projects**

Long-term projects can give students the opportunity to personalize their understanding of integration and to try their hand at exercising interdisciplinary scholarship. Following are several possible long-term projects.

- Have students choose a psychological theory or topic that can be explored in-depth from both psychological and theological perspectives, culminating in an integrative analysis. Students can dig into psychological research, theological scholarship, and integrative writings on the topic. This assignment can easily be tailored to nonclinical matters (e.g., compare and contrast Piaget’s theory of cognitive development to the process of Christian maturity; compare research on diffusion of responsibility to biblical injunctions to care for widows, orphans, and the poor; etc.).

- Have students pick a biblical topic that can be related to psychological research and theory (e.g., look at the role of parents in instructing children about God and his designs through everyday interactions and through the communal liturgies and rituals prescribed in the Bible, and then compare this to research on memory formation and retrieval, learning paradigms, or parenting strategies.)

- Provide an extensive comparison between psychological and theological methodologies (e.g., compare the Bible’s use of historical stories to postmodern narrative approaches...
to psychology; compare and contrast the scientific method and a specific hermeneutical system of biblical interpretation; etc.).

- Have students develop their own personal philosophy of integration papers over the course of the entire semester. I do this by first having students write individual papers on epistemology, cosmology, and philosophical anthropology. After they receive feedback on these papers, the students revise and combine their papers at the end of the semester. The final paper includes an extensive introduction, sections on epistemology, cosmology, philosophical anthropology, and a statement of the student’s approach to relating psychology and Christianity. Each student must classify his or her approach (e.g., Enemies, Spies, Colonialist, Neutral Parties, Allies, or some other model), state the advantages and limitations of his or her position, and reflect on the factors that led to his or her approach to relating psychology and Christianity. I make students aware that I will grade these papers on the quality of their thinking, defense, and writing rather than on whether or not they agree with my position.

- Book reviews—a number of books on integration (and against integration) have been written over the years. Any of these books (pro or con) could be selected for a book review and analysis. Alternately, a book dealing with an applied aspect of integration could be reviewed and critiqued.

- Recognizing that integration is about how we live and what we believe, students could participate in a group project involving social action, such as volunteering in literacy programs, homeless shelters, and other settings in which they can reflect on the application of psychology and Christian belief to tangible problems that exist in their communities.

Chapter-By-Chapter Suggestions

Introduction

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to write a brief essay on how they understand the relationship of psychology and Christianity. (Alternatively, for non-Christian students, you might frame the question in terms of how they understand psychology in relation to their philosophy of life or religious commitment.) You may want to keep these essays, have them write an essay on the same topic at the end of the semester, and then have them write a final essay on how their original views have been strengthened or modified over the course of the semester.

Chapter 1

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to spend an hour before the next
class observing their own behavior and thinking about the factors that influenced their thoughts, emotions, and cognitions during that period of time. When they return to the next class, rather than discussing the content of their observations, discuss the difficulties of trying to be “objective” in exploring our own behavior. Broaden the discussion to the larger issues involved in social science research (for instance, while the researcher is not directly observing herself, subjective factors still affect how she frames her research questions, what sources of data she will admit, how she analyzes and interprets the data, and so forth).

**Class discussion:** Provide students with an extended copy of the quotation from Tertullian (one source for this is noted in the text, although it is widely available from other sources). Ask them to summarize Tertullian’s argument. You may want to provide some historical context regarding his concerns. Ask the students to interact with Tertullian’s reasoning and to defend their opinions on the proper relationship between Athens and Jerusalem, the Academy and the Church, reason and faith.

**Class exercise:** Ask students to reflect on a time when they first saw something from a different perspective (this could be a social issue, understanding of someone’s behavior, or something visual that they examined from different angles). Ask them the following questions: How did the change in perspective transform your understanding and behavior? Your change of perspective may have provided insight for you, but did it change the object or situation that you observed? Why might it be hard for people to see things from other points of view?

**Chapter 2**

**Prior to reading the chapter:** Ask students to write brief essays in which they discuss whether science is a challenge to Christian faith, corroborates Christian faith, or is unconnected to Christian faith.

**Class discussion:** Discuss the significance of Francis Bacon to the development of science, and his firm Christian convictions. Pass out a page with one or more of the following quotations, followed by a discussion of their significance in terms of the incompleteness of human knowledge, the appropriate applications of human knowledge and the danger of pride; the dangers of unwise mingling of the two sources of knowledge; and the unity of truth as revealed the book of God’s Word and the book of God’s Works.

To conclude therefore, let no man upon a weak conceit of sobriety or an ill-applied moderation think or maintain, that a man can search too far, or be too well studied in the book of God’s Word, or in the book of God’s Works; . . . but rather let men endeavour an endless progress or proficience in both; only let men beware that they apply both to charity, and not to swelling; to use, and not to ostentation; and again, that they
do not unwisely mingle or confound these learnings together.¹

Wherefore, to conclude this part, let it be observed, that there be two principal duties and services, besides ornament and illustration, which philosophy and human learning do perform to faith and religion. The one, because they are an effectual inducement to the exaltation of the glory of God. For as the Psalms and other Scriptures do often invite us to consider and magnify the great and wonderful works of God: so if we should rest only in the contemplation of the exterior of them, as they first offer themselves to our senses, we should do a like injury unto the Majesty of God, as if we should judge or construe of the store of some excellent jeweler, by that only which is set out towards the street in his shop. The other, because they minister a singular help and preservative against unbelief and error; for as our Saviour saith, You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God; laying before us two books or volumes to study, if we will be secured from error; first, the Scriptures, revealing the Will of God; and then the creatures expressing His Power; whereof the latter is a key unto the former: not only opening our understanding to conceive the true sense of the Scriptures, by the general notions of reason and rules of speech; but chiefly opening our belief, in drawing us into a due meditation of the omnipotency of God, which is chiefly signed and engraven upon His Works.²

(This last quotation is often summarized as: “There are two books laid before us to study, to prevent our falling into error; first, the book of God’s Word, which reveals the will of God; and the book of God’s Works, which express His power.”)

**Class experience:** Show selected parts of *Galileo’s Battle for the Heavens*, a PBS NOVA presentation available from WGBH Boston. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/galileo.

**Chapter 3**

*Prior to reading the chapter:* Ask students to write brief essays about how psychology is viewed by people from their religious backgrounds.

**Class discussion:** Discuss the varieties of church backgrounds from which your students come, how psychology is viewed in these backgrounds, and try to discern patterns of reaction to psychology in terms of the historical and theological origins of their denominations.

**Chapter 4**

*Prior to reading the chapter:* Have students write brief essays on how their personal experiences and culture have shaped their views of the world.

**Alternative assignment and discussion:** Reproduce Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” (found in *The Republic*, Book VII, ³

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¹ Bacon, *Advancement of learning*, 14.
² Ibid., 36.
Chapter 5

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to write brief essays on the various ways that they learn things about the world.

Class discussion: Discuss the advantages and limitations of various ways of knowing. Compare and contrast modernist assumptions about the ability to have objective certainty compared to postmodernist assumptions about the subjective nature of knowledge. Discuss the factors that limit epistemic certainty.

Class activity: Break the class into several small groups of 3 or 4 students. Hand out large sheets of paper and several colored markers to each group. Have the groups draw graphic representations of various ways of knowing. After the groups are done, have each group present their drawing, and have other groups comment on what could not be known about the world using only those epistemic methods. Have the students return to their groups and ask them to draw graphic representations of factors that limit epistemic certainty. Have them present their drawings. Lead the class in a discussion of how human finitude, fallenness, and frailty affect knowledge claims.

Chapter 6

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to write brief essays on an experience in which they reflexively felt impelled to praise God.

Class discussion: Discuss the implications of viewing nature as our sister, versus seeing nature as our mother.

Chapter 7

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to collect several quotations from Scripture, literature, poetry, or popular music that relate to the nature of human beings.

Class discussion: Have students present the results of the assignment listed above, and discuss the particular insights and perspectives offered by each source.

Class exercise: Have students sit in a circle, and put an object in the middle. Ask the students to sketch the object from their vantage point. Discuss how psychology and theology present different views of their common subject, just as the student sketches present different perspectives of the object. Note how the previous chapters form a groundwork that helps us understand how
assumptions can color our perceptions (worldview), 2) makes different epistemic approaches viable (epistemology), and 3) contextualizes human life within a framework that allows for both supernatural and natural explanations (cosmology). Also note that we have so far only addressed integration at worldview and foundational levels, and that the current chapter lays the groundwork for creating models of integration (chapter 8), while future chapters will allow us to build on these models by looking at disciplinary and scholarly integration, applied integration, and public and personal integration. You could expand the exercise by noting that the student drawings are two dimensional, while the object that we study is three dimensional, and that the object has other uses and characteristics that cannot be represented graphically. Discuss how a biopsychosocial perspective of humanity is complementary with a perspective of humanity as made in the image of God, limited creature, and fallen.

Chapter 8

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to think about the ways that they use models in everyday life (e.g., maps, cognitive representations, recipes, etc.).

Class discussion: Lead the class in a discussion of why it is important to separate our models of reality (whether psychological, theological, or integrative) from the reality that our models represent.

Chapter 9

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to identify one or more areas of perceived conflict between psychology and theology.

Class discussion: Discuss the areas of perceived conflict and evaluate whether those conflicts are intrinsically irreconcilable, or if they might represent a misunderstanding or an erroneous conclusion drawn from one discipline or the other.

Class presentation: Review the Nally case in which John MacArthur and Grace Community Church were unsuccessfully sued in the California court system for the suicide of a man counseled at Grace. Discuss how the case illustrates both the nature of the Secular and Christian Combatants positions and the roots of that conflict.3

Chapter 10

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to think about whether or not there can be such a thing as a “good” spy.

Class discussion: Lead the class in a discussion of how someone could be a spy or a colonialist with good intentions. While the terms spy and colonialist tend to be used as pejorative terms, people who engage in both activities believe that they are serving a higher good. Discuss

3. See Weitz, Clergy malpractice in America. See also LeVicoff, Christian counseling and the law.
Chapter 13

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to think about what it would be like to live in a foreign place with a different culture and language.

Class discussion: At the beginning of class, use their reflections to frame the difficulties of relating psychology and theology as different cultures and language groups. Discuss how integration is similar to a lifelong immersion into another culture by which one becomes bilingual and multicultural. How does one do this without becoming syncretistic? Is there a danger that integration, if done poorly or without care, can simply become a form of syncretism? How do we guard against this?

Class exercise: Illustrate the dissonance produced by ambiguity by showing pictures of incomplete images, impossible images, or hearing only a portion of a familiar poem or piece of music. Discuss several psychological principles that relate to ambiguity—for example, Gestalt laws of Pragnanz (especially closure and continuity), the Zeigarnik effect (the fact that we tend to remember incomplete tasks better than complete tasks), Marcia’s theories of identity formation—and relate them to the difficulty of handling ambiguity in the task of integration.

A Final Word

I would like to leave you with a word of encouragement. Helping students learn how to be integrative in their thinking

Chapter 11

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to come up with a preliminary definition of “integration.”

Class discussion: Discuss student definitions of integration. Write common elements on the board and try to come up with a definition that the class can agree upon. Discuss the author’s definition of integration and its various levels (worldview; foundational; disciplinary and scholarly; applied; and public and personal).

Chapter 12

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to think about how they resolve apparent discrepancies between biblical interpretation and conclusions based on other grounds.

Class discussion: Discuss the circumstances under which primacy should be accorded to biblical interpretation (e.g., commands about sexual purity supersede the logic that “it can’t be wrong if it feels so right”). Discuss the circumstances under which primacy should be accorded to psychological interpretation (e.g., forgiveness is a process that unfolds over time). Discuss how to discern when one interpretation is stronger than another, and how to live with ambiguity and uncertainty when a clear answer is elusive.

Chapter 10

Prior to reading the chapter: Ask students to think about whether this “higher good” warrants the approach taken in these two models.
is important if we are to aid Christian students in becoming competent pastors, mental health professionals, and social and behavioral scientists. In your classrooms, I pray that you may encourage honest intellectual dialogue, mature Christian reflection, do the best job you can do, and have fun. It is also important to be transparent before your students, to invest in their lives and in their struggles, and to allow them to see how you live out your faith in your personal and professional life. As Randy Sorenson pointed out, “integration is more caught than taught”:

Too often we think that teaching students our integrative models is what they need in order to learn integration. Often what they want, however, is not our models but ourselves—or perhaps more accurately, they want us to model our own integration, and to give them access to our own relationship before God in an open and nondefensive manner. It is as though when they have access to us as not just professors but persons, and to our ongoing life before God—doubts and all, our joys and our terrors—students are well served in finding their own integrative pilgrimage.4

May God give us the grace to bring not just our ideas, but our selves into our courses, and may it be truly said that God was encountered in our classrooms.