

CALL FOR PAPERS • The Annual Meeting of Mormon Scholars in the Humanities

March 26-28, 2020
Oxford University, England



Mormon Scholars in the Humanities (MSH) invites proposals for its 2020 annual conference. The conference topic this year is Aesthetics, and papers or panels organized around the theme are encouraged.

The culture that surrounds the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has had mixed feelings about the body and the senses. While the “natural man” is an enemy to God, the spirit and the body are man’s soul. And while both scriptures may mean “men” as all human beings, there might be even more ambivalence about women’s bodies. While historically Mormon teachings have indicated that a body is necessary for both aesthetic experience and the achievement of the highest realms of exaltation, how do we grapple with the span of time between receiving a perfected body and “the flesh” that we contend with now? Furthermore, the arts of all varieties have long been embraced and promoted by Church leaders, including President Spencer W. Kimball in “The Gospel Vision of the Arts.” We wish to explore how Church doctrine and culture can affect artistic production, style, and consumption. This conference encourages participants to explore “aesthetics” in the widest sense of the term.

Potential topics include:

- What is the aesthetic and the sensory? To what degree is it necessarily embodied? How might an embodied aesthetic experience relate to an individual’s “spirit” or to the Holy Spirit?
- What is the relationship between the aesthetic and the ethical? What is the relationship between the aesthetic and truth, being true, or even the Truth? What might be some theological implications connected with aesthetics?
- How is religious art created and viewed? How do issues of patronage and taste complicate its production/appreciation?
- What is the role of music, literature, and poetry in the Church?

As always, we also invite high-quality paper proposals on other topics, including those that reflect one’s current professional research interests or pedagogy in the humanities. Interested scholars (affiliated or independent) and graduate students are invited to submit 250–350 word abstracts for papers, as well as proposals for organized panels. Abstracts and proposals are due Friday, November 1, 2019, using the portal link below. Acceptance notices will be sent out by Friday, December 6. All presenters are required to register for the conference but are not required to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Graduate students wishing to be considered for a Graduate Student Travel Grant can indicate that when making their submission. Information about the registration fee and available accommodation will be posted soon at mormonscholars.net.

Submission Portal: <https://forms.gle/us1WAX15ByAW2TgJ9>

Deadline: Friday, November 1, 2019