

Week 5

FAITH HEALING

Social Psychology of the Paranormal
OLLI Spring 2026
Barry Markovsky

Is it “medical”?

- A medical treatment is intended to ___ an illness or injury
 - heal
 - palliate
 - prevent
- Does faith-healing claim medical status?
- Should it? Does it matter?

Is it “quack”?

(or pseudo-, fake, sham, etc.)

- Are treatments untested, unproven, or disproven scientifically?
- Do treatments only operate via unknown or unnatural mechanisms?

Where's the social psych.?

- “Faith”: belief without evidence
- Perceptions, judgments, experiences
- Personal identity issues
- Social influences

Videos

- “A Question of Miracles” — Full documentary
- James Randi Exposes Peter Popoff —
From “An Honest Liar” documentary
- Shorts — Various sources

end