

Syllabus
PT 140 Socio-Cultural Influences on Maturation and Psychopathology:
Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Couples Therapy and Sexuality
J. Wade Spring 2020

Tue. 5:30-7:30
NYGSP: 3 Credits

Course Description

This course explores psychoanalytic perspectives on couples therapy and sexuality. We will consider how the analyst utilizes the exploration of unconscious conflicts to facilitate better functioning in couples, while also working in the “here and now” to foster constructive communication skills. We’ll study how projective identification and transference weave the tangled web clinicians and couples attempt to untangle. We’ll discuss how countertransference interferes with and guides us to control the stimulation in the very stimulating environment of couples therapy. We will explore the changing socio-cultural and gendered landscape of relationships, culling case studies from various media presentations (TV, movies, novels, and news media), as well as the readings.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. better understand how specific defensive structures interfere with intimacy;
2. better understand the challenges and techniques of analytic couples therapy;
3. identify how socio-cultural and gender phenomena impact the health and well-being of the couple;
4. develop critical thinking through writing a final project, logs, and case study responses; and
5. identify and discuss issues of countertransference resistance that make working with couples especially challenging.

Method of Evaluation

Lab Component

There is a weekly lab component in addition to classes and logs. Students will be required to view and/or read 12 media (film, tv, video, podcast, novel, and/or article) presentations about a couple in conflict and submit a review in which the case is explored psychoanalytically. At least six of these should relate specifically to couples’ therapy. In lieu of writing six of the 12 labs a student may write six process notes of actual couples therapy sessions, which the student is currently participating in as therapist or patient.

Logs

Twelve written logs are to be completed soon after each class meeting and submitted to the instructor before the following class meeting. The log is a private communication to the instructor exploring thoughts, feelings, and reactions from class regarding course content and class interactions/class dynamics and a short critique of the assigned reading for that **class (not a synopsis)**. In the final log I ask you to write a self-evaluation of how you met the course requirements.

The subject line of the log email should include PT140 and the date of the class. Student’s name, PT140, class date, instructor’s name, and log # should be at the top of each email. If you write in a page or word document, please copy the text into the body of the email.

Final Paper or Play

The final paper should be 5-8 pages, formatted in the APA style, and focus on a case study of a couple's treatment, choosing a couple from a lab, a class reading, or the student's clinical or personal experience. To explicate the dynamics of the couple and what makes it so difficult for the partners to get along, at least five readings should be considered and cited. Where relevant the paper should explore how economic, social, racial and gender differences affect the couple and the treatment.

A paper that is well developed will receive a Pass. A paper that is incompletely developed and does not cite more than three readings will receive a Low Pass. A paper that is incompletely developed in most areas and/or does not meet basic graduate level standards for written work will be returned to the student for improvement in order to receive credit.

Alternative to the final paper, the student may write a play (8 to 10 pages) or make a film illustrating a couple's therapy treatment. If the student chooses this project, his or her logs should each demonstrate a clear understanding of the class readings. In order to receive a Pass the play or film should illustrate some of the concepts discussed in the readings.

Grading

Students may receive a Pass (P), Low Pass (LP), Incomplete (I), No Credit (NC). Students are evaluated on the basis of attendance, class participation and the ability to understand, integrate and communicate material from the readings and class discussions. This understanding is demonstrated in classroom discussion, in the assigned class presentation, and by the quality of writing in the lab reviews, logs, and the final play, paper or film.

To earn a grade of "Pass," the student:

Misses no more than two class meetings.

Demonstrates understanding of the course subject matter in class.

Submits 12 logs.

Demonstrates understanding of the course subject matter in the logs.

Submits assignments on time.

Submits a well-developed final paper that meets all criteria requested or a well-developed play or film.

To receive a grade of "Low Pass," the student:

Misses no more than two class meetings.

Submits 12 logs.

Demonstrates one or more of the following:

Minimal participation in class,

Problematic/disruptive participation in class,

Minimal understanding of the course subject matter in class discussion or presentation.

All assignments are completed but some are submitted late.

Term paper, play, or film is incompletely developed, some but not all of criteria are met, and/or relevant psychoanalytic theories are poorly integrated

Logs do not regularly address the two stated criteria

To receive a grade of "Incomplete," the student:

Does not submit acceptable written work by the last class meeting of the semester [or date specified by the instructor].

To receive “No Credit”, the student:

Does not submit acceptable written work within 30 days after the end of the semester or
Regularly exhibits disruptive behavior that interferes with the functioning of the class or
Misses more than two classes.

Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to respect the highest standards of academic integrity. CMPS and NYGSP consider it a violation of the requirements of intellectual responsibility to submit work that is not one's own or otherwise to subvert the conditions under which academic work is performed by oneself or by others. Violation may lead to failing a course, academic probation, or in repeated cases, suspension or expulsion.

Assigned Readings**Class 1**

Berry, M. D. (2013). The history and evolution of sex therapy and its relationship to psychoanalysis. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 10, 53-74.
<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=ijaps.010.0053a>

Class 2

Miehls, D. (2011). Surrender as a developmental achievement in couple systems. *Psychoanalytic Social Work*, 18, 39-53.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=psw.018.0039a>

Mitchell, S. A. (1997). Psychoanalysis and the degradation of romance. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 7, 23-41.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=pd.007.0023a>

Class 3

Bischof, G., Stone, C., Mustafa, M., & Wampuszyc, T. (2016). Couple relationships of transgender individuals and their partners: A 2017 update. *Michigan Family Review*, 20, 37-47. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mfr/4919087.0020.106/--couple-relationships-of-transgender-individuals-and-their?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

Blechner, M. J. (2016). Psychoanalysis and sexual issues. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 52, 502-546.

Class 4

Freedman, E. (2013). Immigration and intimacy: Emerging constellations in individual and couples treatment. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 8, 126-128.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=ijpsp.008.0126a>

Ogden, T. (1979). On projective identification. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 60, 357-373.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=ijp.060.0357a>

Class 5

Abse, S. (2009). Sexual dread and the therapist's desire. In C. Clulow (Ed.), *Sex, attachment and couple psychotherapy: Psychoanalytic perspectives* (pp. 103-118). London, England: Karnac.

Elise, D. (2008). Sex and shame: The inhibition of female desires. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 56, 73-98.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=apa.056.0073a>

Class 6

Ormont, L. R. (1997). Bridging in group analysis. *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 22, 59-77.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=mpsa.022.0059a>

Scharff, D. E., & Scharff, J. S. (2014). An overview of psychodynamic couple therapy. In D. E. Scharff & J. S. Scharff (Eds.), *Psychoanalytic couple therapy: Foundations of theory and practice* (pp. 3-24). London, England: Karnac.

Class 7

Eigen, M. (1999). Miscarriages. In *Toxic nourishment* (pp. 35-55). London, England: Karnac.

Hertzmann, L. (2011). Lesbian and gay couple relationships: When internalized homophobia gets in the way of couple creativity. *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, 25, 346-360.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=pptx.025.0346a>

Class 8

Green, L., & Seymour, J. (2009). Loss of desire: A psycho-sexual case study. In C. Clulow (Ed.), *Sex, attachment and couple psychotherapy: Psychoanalytic perspectives* (pp. 141-164). London, England: Karnac.

Class 9

Cole, G. W. (2011). A strange invitation: On the ordinary problem of pornography. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 12, 254-267.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=sgs.012.0254a>

Weille, K. H. (2002). The psychodynamics of consensual sadomasochistic and dominant-submissive sexual games. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 3, 131-160.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=sgs.003.0131a>

Class 10

Basescu, C. (2009). Shifting ground: The therapist's divorce and its impact on her life and work. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 45, 44-64.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=cps.045.0044a>

McCann, D. (2017). When the couple is not enough, or when the couple is too much: Exploring the meaning and management of open relationships. *Couple and Family Psychoanalysis*, 7, 45-58.

Class 11

Goldner, V. (2017). Romantic bonds, binds, and ruptures: Couples on the brink. In S. Nathans and M. Schaefer (Eds.), *Couples on the couch: Psychoanalytic couple psychotherapy and the Tavistock model* (pp. 154-179). London, England: Routledge.

Peltz, R. (2017). Discussion of "Romantic bonds, binds, and ruptures: Couples on the brink." In S. Nathans and M. Schaefer (Eds.), *Couples on the couch: Psychoanalytic couple psychotherapy and the Tavistock model* (pp. 180-192). London, England: Routledge.

Class 12

Kaplan, H. S. (1990). Sex, intimacy, and the aging process. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, 18, 185-205.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=jaa.018.0185a>

Kernberg, O. F. (2011). Limitations to the capacity to love. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 92, 1501-1515.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=ijp.092.1501a>

Lab Possibilities

- Bevan, T., Fellner, E., Harrison, A., Hooper, T., & Mutrux, G. (Producers) & Hooper, T. (Director). (2015). *The Danish girl* [Motion picture]. United States: Focus Features.
- Brunning, L. (2018). Distinctiveness of polyamory. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 35, 513-531. Retrieved from https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:355c60d9-818c-454c-8ed2-7320ccf540f9/download_file?file_format=pdf&safe_filename=The%2BDistinctiveness%2Bof%2BPolyamory%2B-%2BFinal%2BVersion%2B.pdf&type_of_work=Journal+article
- Complex. (Oct 29, 2015). Transgender couples discuss how they battle discrimination on Complex [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyJQ7KeiY48>
- Garcia, N. (Creator). (2012-2013). *Polyamory: Married and dating* [Television series]. Retrieved from <https://www.sho.com/polyamory-married-and-dating>
- Garcia, R. (Creator). (2008-2010). *In treatment* [Television series]. Available on Amazon Prime, Google Play, HBO Now, iTunes, YouTube (paid), Vudu. Jake and Amy. Season 1 episodes 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 42.
- Mort, C. (Creator). (2007). *Tell me you love me* [Television series]. Available on Amazon Prime, Google Play, HBO NOW, iTunes, YouTube (paid), Vudu.
- Perel, E. (2019). *Where should we begin?* Podcast retrieved from <https://www.estherperel.com/podcast>
- Showtime. (2019-2020). *Couples therapy* [Television series]. Available on Amazon Prime, iTunes, Showtime, YouTube (paid). Retrieved from <https://www.sho.com/couples-therapy>
- Solomon, A. (2013, April). *Love, no matter what* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_solomon_love_no_matter_what?language=en
- Zissu, A. (2019, April 2). Podcast & Carol & Ted & Alice. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/02/style/couples-therapy-podcasts.html>, discusses various podcasts discussing couples therapy.