

Syllabus
PT 152 Character Studies in Literature
U. Gosmann **Fall 2020**

Wed. 1:30-3:30
NYGSP: 2 Credits

Course Description

In the context of a psychoanalytic training program, we read literature to practice immersing ourselves in symbolic complexity, staying “underwater” with ambiguity, and floating with different currents of meaning. Literature invites and facilitates the study of unconscious dynamics and character types. This study and practice will enable us to understand and engage with our patients more deeply.

Since the inception of psychoanalysis, literature has helped analysts to think about the vicissitudes of the human mind and the complexities of the analytic process. The two fields have mutually enriched each other because both lend form and expression to otherwise inchoate and elusive psychological experience. We will read plays and novellas that Freud used to develop his metapsychology, fairy tales, and myths to sample the history of how psychoanalysis has drawn on literature for its development. We will read contemporary novels, essays, stories, and poems, for which there is little or no analytic commentary yet; these will allow us to exercise our own psychoanalytic thinking and feeling capacities freely.

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Identify ambiguity and different layers of meaning in literary texts, analogous to layers of meaning in clinical material;
- Derive and articulate emotional information from literary style;
- Describe some unconscious dynamics revealed by different literary characters (Oedipus complex, defense mechanisms, dual drives, narcissism, mourning, melancholia);
- Describe different conceptualizations of the psychoanalytic process (making the unconscious conscious, models of psychic conflict, i.e. drive/defense and life drive/death drive, Bion’s theory of thinking);
- Explain some ways in which psychoanalysis has drawn on literature to formulate its own concepts and process.

Method of Instruction:

The instructor will lead discussion of assigned readings, concepts, and class process. Each week a different student will be assigned to present the week’s readings. Students will contribute to class discussions drawing on their responses to readings, clinical experience, life experience, and integration of learning in other courses and from other resources.

Course Requirements:

1. Class attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes. Credit will not be given to students who have more than two absences. Notification of an intended absence is expected prior to the class that will be missed.

2. Weekly response papers: Students write a weekly response paper (approximately 250 words) and submit it electronically (ugosmann@cmps.edu) at the latest the day before class. Follow this method: Read the literary text and write a personal and spontaneous response to it (equivalent to a counter-

transference experience, objective and subjective, in a clinical setting). If a theoretical text was assigned, indicate some of its ideas and integrate it with your response to the literary text. (A response paper is not required for the first class, total number: 11.)

3. Class presentation: One time during the semester, each student will be assigned to give an oral presentation of that week's assigned reading.

4. A written log is to be completed at the end of each class meeting and emailed.

A log is a private communication to the instructor comprising thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the class meeting regarding course content and observation of class dynamics. (A log is not required for the last class, total number of logs: 11)

5. Final paper:

1. Choose a literary text from the syllabus to write about, or a text closely related to the syllabus (i.e. another fairy tale, another essay by James Baldwin, another story from *The Emigrants*). The learning objectives may help you generate a focus on a particular aspect of the literary piece.
2. Include at least 3 references to the psychoanalytic literature in your paper.
3. Make appropriate use of subject specific vocabulary.
4. Write between 6 and 8 pages, not including the reference page, and use APA format. The paper is due the last class and should be submitted by email.

A paper that is well developed in all of the above areas will receive a **Pass**. A paper that is incompletely developed in some of the above areas, and/or has poorly integrated relevant developmental theories 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.

Elements of Evaluation: Class participation, attendance, quality of writing in the logs and in the final paper.

Grading: Students may receive a Pass (P), Low Pass (LP), Incomplete (I), or 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 and by the quality of writing in the response papers, logs, and in the term paper.

For a grade of "Pass"

Miss no more than two class meetings.

Demonstrate understanding of the course subject matter in class.

Submit 11 response papers and logs.

Demonstrate understanding of the course subject matter in the logs.

Submit assignments on time.

A clear and well-organized presentation to the class of the assigned reading.

The final paper covers item one, described above.

Subject specific vocabulary is used correctly.

APA format is used appropriately.

The paper is at least six pages long, without the reference page.

For a grade of “Low Pass”

Miss no more than two class meetings.

Submit 11 response papers and logs.

One or more of the following are present:

Minimal participation in class

Problematic participation in class

Minimal understanding of the course subject matter demonstrated in class, in the individual presentation, and in the logs.

All assignments are completed but some are submitted late.

The final paper has one or more of these issues:

The material fails to cover adequately item 1.

The paper cites only one source or fails to include an outside source for item 2.

Vocabulary is used incorrectly.

The paper is less than 6 pages long, or is without the reference page.

The paper fails to follow appropriate APA format.

The paper is submitted after the due date.

For a grade of “Incomplete”

Acceptable written work is not submitted by the last class meeting of the semester.

For a grade of “No Credit”

Acceptable written work is not submitted within 30 days after the end of the semester *or*

Regularly disruptive behavior interferes with the functioning of the class *or*

More than two absences

Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to respect the highest standards of academic integrity. The Graduate School considers 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.

Required Texts:

Hoffmann, E.T.A. (2016). *The Sandman (Penguin little black classics)*. (P. Wortsman, Trans.). Penguin Classics. (Original work published 1816).

Rankine, C. (2004). *Don't let me be Lonely*. Greywolf Press.

Robinson, M. (1980). *Housekeeping*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Sebald, W. G. (1996). *The emigrants*. New Directions.

Sophocles (2008). *Oedipus the King*. In *Antigone, Oedipus the King, and Electra*. (H. D. F. Kitto, Trans.). University of Oxford Press. (Translation originally published in 1962) (or any other edition of the translation by Kitto).

Please note: Students will need to purchase the required texts (Hoffmann, Rankine, Robinson, Sebald, and Sophocles) or borrow them from another library.

To access full text documents from the PEP links, you'll need to first log into your PEP account.

Assigned Readings

Class 1: The Uses of Metaphor in Clinical Practice

Excerpts from Ferro, A. (2015). *Reveries: An unfettered mind*. Karnac.

Gosmann, U. (2015). Antonino Ferro and Giuseppe Civitarese. *The analytic field and its transformations*. London: Karnac, 2015. 204 pages. *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 40(1), 100-107.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=mpsa.040.0100a>

Griffin, F. L. (2005). Clinical conversations between psychoanalysis and imaginative literature. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 74(2), 443-463.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=paq.074.0443a>

Class 2: Freud's Use of Literature 1: Oedipus

Freud, S. (1966). Letter 71, Extracts from the Fliess papers. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 1, pp. 263-266). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1897)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.001.0263a#p0263>

Laplanche, J., & Pontalis, J.-B. (1973). "Oedipus complex." In *The language of psycho-analysis* (pp. 282-287). (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Norton.

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=ipl.094.0001a>

Sophocles (2008). *Oedipus the king*. In *Antigone, Oedipus the king and Electra*. (H.D.F. Kitto, Trans.). Oxford World's Classics. University of Oxford Press, 1962. Reissued 2008. (or any other edition of the translation by Kitto)

Class 3: Freud's Use of Literature 2: The Uncanny

Hoffmann, E.T.A. (2016). *The Sandman (Penguin little black classics)*. (P. Wortsman, Trans.). Penguin Classics. (Original work published 1816)

Class 4: Freud's Use of Literature 3: The Uncanny

Freud, S. (1955). The 'Uncanny'. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 17, pp. 217-252). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1919)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.017.0217a#p0217>

Class 5: Fairy Tales

Bettelheim, B. (1976). The jealous queen in "Snow White" and the myth of Oedipus; "Snow White." In *The uses of enchantment: The meaning and importance of fairy tales* (pp. 194-199; 199-214). Knopf.

Bettelheim, B. (1976). "Brother and sister": Unifying our dual nature. In *The uses of enchantment: The meaning and importance of fairy tales* (pp. 78-82). Knopf.

Brothers Grimm (2011). Little brother and little sister. In *Grimm's complete fairy tales* (pp. 39-43). (M. Hunt, Trans.). Canterbury Classics.

Brothers Grimm (2011). Little Snow White. In *Grimm's complete fairy tales* (pp. 187-194). (M. Hunt, Trans.). Canterbury Classics.

Class 6: Myths

- Ovid (1921). Narcissus and Echo. In F. J. Miller (Trans.), *Metamorphoses* (2nd ed., pp. 149-161). Loeb Classical Library/Harvard University Press. (Original work c. 8 C.E.)
<https://archive.org/details/metamorphoses01ovid/page/148/mode/2up>
- Gosmann, U. (2019). Lost to himself: Narcissus and Freud's theory of narcissism reinterpreted. *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 106, 113-130.
<https://guilfordjournals.com/doi/pdf/10.1521/prev.2019.106.2.113>
- Laplanche, J., & Pontalis, J.-B. (1973). "Narcissism"; "Primary narcissism, secondary narcissism." In *The language of psycho-analysis* (pp. 255-257; 337-338). (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Norton.
<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=ipl.094.0001a>

Class 7: Novel 1

Robinson, M. (1980). *Housekeeping*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Chapters 1-8.

Class 8: Novel 2

- Robinson, M. (1980). *Housekeeping*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Chapters 9-11.
- Meyerowitz, R. (2000). "Ruthlessness gives way to Ruth": Mothering and mourning in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 87(2), 189-226.
<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=psar.087.0189a>

Class 9: Biographical Essay

Baldwin, J. (1955). Stranger in the village. In *Notes of a native son* (pp. 163-208). Beacon Press.

Class 10: Stories

- Sebald, W. G. (1996). *The emigrants*. New Directions.
- Charles, M. (2016). Ashes of remembrance: Reconfiguring the phoenix. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 103(1), 41-67.
<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=psar.103.0041a>

Class 11: Poems

- Bishop, E. (2008). At the fishhouses (1955); The moose (1976). In R. Giroux & L. Schwartz (Eds.), *Poems, prose, and letters* (pp. 50-52; 158-162). Library of America.
- Bishop, E. (1947). A letter to her psychoanalyst Ruth Foster. (archival material)

Class 12: Poems

Rankine, C. (2004). *Don't let me be lonely*. Greywolf Press.

Suggested Reading

- Berman, E. (Ed.) (1993). *Essential papers on literature and psychoanalysis*. New York University Press.
- Bettelheim, B. (1976). *The uses of enchantment: The meaning and importance of fairy tales*. Knopf.
- Davoine, F. (2016). *Fighting melancholia: Don Quixote's teaching*. Karnac.
- Freud, S. (1958). The theme of the three caskets. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 12, pp. 289-302). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1913)
- Felman, S. (Ed.) (1982). *Literature and psychoanalysis: The question of reading: Otherwise*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Freud, S. (1959). Delusions and dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 9, pp. 1-96). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1907)
- Gabbard, G. O. (Ed.). (2001). *Psychoanalysis and film*. Karnac.
- Lacan, J. (2016). *Anxiety. The seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book X*. Polity.
- Phillips, A. (2001). *Promises, promises: Essays on psychoanalysis and literature*. Basic Books.
- Rabaté, J.-M. (2014). *The Cambridge introduction to literature and psychoanalysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sharpe, E. F. (1940). Psycho-physical problems revealed in language: An examination of metaphor. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 21, 201-213.
- Spence, D. P. (1993). The metaphorical nature of psychoanalytic theory. In E. Berman (Ed.), *Essential papers on literature and psychoanalysis* (pp. 102-114). New York University Press.
- Williams, P., & Gabbard, G. O. (2007). *Key papers in literature and psychoanalysis*. Karnac.