

**Syllabus**  
**PT 161 History of Libido Theory in Freud**  
**R.A. García      Fall 2020**

**Mon. 7:30-9:30**  
**NYGSP: 2 Credits**

**Course Description**

Freud's revolutionary contributions to intellectual and cultural history began with his developing libido theory, which theory grew out of his investigating and treating hysteria and other neuroses over a period of twenty-five years. One collateral result of his investigative and treatment methodology became a new therapeutic approach he called "psychoanalysis." The coming together of these three elements in the 1890s —neuroses, investigative methodology, and therapeutic approach— resulted in a revolutionary psychology that was unique in the history of ideas (theories of mind) and in the proto-psychiatric approaches to mental illness in the second-half of the nineteenth century. The foundation of this new psychology lay in Freud's libido theory, through which he posited the instinctual basis of psychic life, and from that, the significance of sexual trauma in mental illness; the importance of fantasy in mental life; the workings of the unconscious mind as revealed in dreams and "everyday pathology"; and the psycho-sexual stages of human development (and its first crisis, the oedipal complex) in establishing culture. Perhaps, Jonathan Lear (1990) best frames these specific concepts into the broader significance of Freud's revolution when he says that Freud created a "science of subjectivity"; discovered the existence of an "archaic mind" through which all psychic growth must pass; and conceptualized love as a developmental force in human life.

This course addresses the nature of this revolution through a selection of papers in which Freud developed, postulated, and applied libido theory before also modifying it. The new theoretical modifications would introduce their own revolutionary changes, but these do not detract from the significance of what libido theory had already effected in establishing psychoanalysis as a new and unique psychology.

**Objectives**

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to trace the development of libido theory in Freud's thought from its origins to his final statement;
- identify the various concepts out of which libido theory was developed;
- demonstrate the ways in which libido theory was applied to an understanding of various mental illnesses, sexual development, and culture;
- identify the clinical issues that proved problematical in libido theory such as narcissism, masochism, sadism, anxiety, and repetition;
- discuss the changes Freud made to libido theory (e.g., ego-libido, object-libido) in responding to these clinical problems;
- demonstrate an understanding of Freud's reasoning for reconceptualizing libido theory into a new instinctual theory.

## Course Requirements

Class attendance: Students are expected to attend at least ten classes; i.e., credit will not be given to students who have more than two absences. Notification of an intended absence is expected prior to that class's being missed.

- Class preparation: Students are expected to be prepared to discuss the required readings.
- A written log (minimally 250 words) is to be completed after each class meeting and emailed at least a day before the next meeting. Students should have submitted twelve logs for the semester; i.e., **logs are required even for missed classes.**
- A log is a private communication to the instructor that may include thoughts and feelings about the previous class regarding course content; observation of class dynamics; a short critique of the assigned reading for the class; the final log (#12) should include a self-evaluation of how you met the course requirements.
- A paper that fully follows the established format and length as described under "Procedure for the Paper" (see below) and also demonstrates an understanding of the material will receive a Pass. A paper that only partially follows the paper format or demonstrates a poor integration of the material will receive a Low Pass. A paper that does not follow the format or does not meet basic graduate-school level standards for written work will be returned to the student for improvement before credit can be granted.

## Elements of Evaluation

- 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 writing quality of the logs, and in the writing of the paper
- Grading: Students may receive a Pass (P), Low Pass (LP), Incomplete (I), or No Credit (NC).

### Grading:

#### For a grade of "Pass"

- Miss no more than two class meetings.
- Demonstrate understanding of the course subject matter in class.
- Submit 12 logs.
- Demonstrate understanding of the course subject matter in the logs.
- Submit assignments on time.
- The final paper follows the established format and length completely as described in the "Procedure for the Paper."
- Subject-specific vocabulary is used correctly.
- APA format is used appropriately.

#### For a grade of "Low Pass"

- Miss no more than two class meetings.
- Submit 12 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 and in the logs.
- All assignments are completed but some are submitted late.
- The final paper only partially follows the format for coverage or length; vocabulary is used incorrectly.

- 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 due date.

### **For a grade of “No Credit”**

- Acceptable written work is not submitted within 30 days after the end of the semester; 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 subverts the conditions under which academic work is performed by oneself. Violation may lead to failing a course, academic probation, or in repeated cases, suspension or expulsion.

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### **Assigned Readings**

#### **I. The Origins of Libido Theory: The Ubiquity of Repressed Emotion**

##### **Class 1**

Freud, S. (1962). On the psychical mechanism of hysterical phenomena. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 3, pp. 26-39). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1893)  
<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.003.0025a#p0025>

##### **Class 2**

Freud, S. (1962). The neuro-psychoses of defense. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 3, pp. 43-68). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1894)  
<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.003.0041a#p0043>

##### **Class 3**

Freud, S. (1962). Further remarks on the neuro-psychoses of defence. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 3, pp. 159-185). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1896)  
<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.003.0157a#p0159>

##### **Class 4**

Freud, S. (1953). Sexuality in the aetiology of the neuroses. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 3, pp. 261-285). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1898)  
<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.003.0259a#p0261>

## II. Libido Theory Formulated

### Class 5

Freud, S. (1953). Three essays on the theory of sexuality. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 7, pp. 125-189). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1905)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.007.0123a#p0125>

### Class 6

Freud, S. (1953). Three essays on the theory of sexuality. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 7, pp. 189-243). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1905)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.007.0123a#p0185>

## III. Libido Theory Applied: Societal and Cultural Resistances

### Class 7

Freud, S. (1959). On the sexual theories of children. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 9, pp. 207-226). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1908)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.009.0205a#p0207>

### Class 8

Freud, S. (1959). "Civilized" sexual morality and modern nervous illness. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 9, pp. 177-204). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1908)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.009.0177a#p0177>

### Class 9

Freud, S. (1955). The horror of incest. Totem and taboo. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 13, pp. 1-17). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1913)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.013.r0007a#p0001>

## IV. Libido Theory: Problems, Restatements, and Revisions

### Class 10

Freud, S. (1957). Narcissism. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 14, pp. 69-102). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1914)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.014.0067a#p0069>

### Class 11

Freud, S. (1957). Instincts and their vicissitudes. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 14, pp. 111-140). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1915)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.014.0109a#p0111>

## Class 12

Freud, S. (1964). Beyond the pleasure principle. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 18, pp. 3-11; 12-23; 44-61; 62-64). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1920)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.018.0001a#p0003>

Freud, S. (1964). Civilization and its discontents. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 21, pp 117-122). Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1930)

<http://www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=se.021.0000a>

### Procedure for the Paper:

Begin by choosing one of the topic-options from the following list and answer the three questions outlined below. The purpose of this rubric-based assignment is to have you analyze one or two of Freud's papers (depending on your choice); delineate its contents and your understanding of it; and finally, discuss it comparatively with another Freud scholar. That is the essence of the three questions below.

### Topics for Paper

1. Freud, On the psychical mechanism of hysterical phenomena; and The neuro-psychoses of defense.
2. Freud, The neuro-psychoses of defense and Further remarks on the neuro-psychoses of defence.
3. Freud, Three essays on the theory of sexuality —choose one of the three essays.
4. Freud, “Civilized” sexual morality and modern nervous illness; and The horror of incest.
5. Freud, Narcissism.
6. Freud, Instincts and their vicissitudes.
7. Freud, Beyond the pleasure principle —only the pages assigned in the syllabus.

**Question #1:** Provide a detailed summary of this/these papers as Freud argued it; i.e., for now leave your views or comments out of the summary. In picking your way through its contents, you may use transitional phrases such as “at this point Freud leaves off the discussion and moves to ...,” but otherwise leave yourself out. The main concern here is to summarize what Freud is saying in a complete and objective manner. Use complete sentences; i.e., do not itemize in single-sentence style. (6 pp.)

**Question #2:** What did you think/feel about this reading? This question is entirely about your response to the paper, so you may criticize, praise, or express ambivalence as long as you address the content of the paper/s. You may also say why you happened to choose this topic and how it helped you to understand psychoanalysis or its development. (5 pp.)

**Question #3:** This question asks you to put the paper/s into a critical and historical context by comparing your understanding of the work with **one** of the following scholars listed below. Your answer should include **a)** what the scholar argues about the specific paper/s you are analyzing; **b)** what

the scholar says about the historical/intellectual context of Freud's paper and what he says about Freud's significance; and **c**) whether you agree/disagree with the scholar and whether he was helpful in understanding the historical/intellectual context of Freud's paper. If you would like to make reference to a second or third piece from the critical literature outside of this list, you may do so, **but** this is not a substitute for addressing at least **one** of the scholars in the list below. (4 pp.)

**The critical literature to be used for answering #3:**

1. Alexander, F. G., and Selesnick, S. T. (1966). *The history of psychiatry: An evaluation of psychiatric thought and practice from prehistoric times to the present*. Harper & Row. Relevant passages are in Part III, chapters 11, 12, 13, and 14.
2. Gay, P. (1988). *Freud: A life for our time*. W.W. Norton & Company.
3. Lear, J. (1990). *Love and its place in nature: A philosophical interpretation of Freudian psychoanalysis*. Yale University Press.
4. Makari, G. (2008). *Revolution in mind: The creation of psychoanalysis*. Harper Collins. The chapter entitled "The unhappy marriage of Psyche and Eros" and particularly section VI (pp. 85-125) will be apt for the topic on *Three Essays*.
5. Quinodoz, J.-M. (2004). *Reading Freud: A chronological exploration of Freud's writings* (D. Alcorn, Trans.). Routledge.