Course Description

The purpose of this course is to broaden and deepen participants’ mastery of several theories of development, personality, and behavior that have contributed to social work’s knowledge base across the decades and continue to inform clinical social work epistemology today. Drawing primarily from original sources, we will consider key assumptions, constructs, and propositions of each theory in terms of its congruence with social work’s principles, values, and mission and in relation to the profession’s person-in-environment perspective. In this first semester, we will study the evolution of theories central to psychodynamic thought, from Freud’s early biological model of the mind, through various relational perspectives, to contemporary work in the fields of attachment and interpersonal neurobiology. This examination will constitute a case study of the manner in which theories are socially constructed and will lay the foundation for critical inquiry into the social and political biases inherent in the Western European intellectual tradition from which most theories of human behavior have emerged.

Course Objectives

Through reading, writing, and class discussion, successful course participants will demonstrate a capacity to:

1. Consider the philosophical and epistemological bases of each theory studied;
2. Locate each theory in relation to its historical, cultural, and political contexts;
3. Critically appraise the assumptions, constructs, and propositions of each theory;
4. Evaluate each theory’s goodness-of-fit with social work values, principles, and mission and with the person-in-environment perspective;
5. Assess the nature and strength of research based on the theories covered;
6. Identify the extent to which these theories are equipped to address issues of sociocultural diversity.

Assignments

1. **Reading leadership.** Divided into pairs, participants will be responsible for developing three (3) questions derived from the required readings for a class of their choice and leading a discussion of said questions. The questions should be e-mailed to all classmates and the instructor no later than the Sunday evening before the class in which the questions are to be discussed. Questions should reflect attention to course objectives and should generate critical thinking and thoughtful discourse.
2. **Term paper proposal.** A **6 page maximum** (not including references), double-spaced mid-term proposal for a term paper based on one of the three topic options described below. This proposal should describe the topic of your paper, your plan for developing it, and an **outline** of your major foci. (A useful way to structure the proposal would be to employ the numbered sections I’ve proposed for each of the three options.) Due by midnight on **October 10th – class #6** (no extensions).

3. **Term paper**

Option 1: An investigation and critical appraisal of the work of a **psychodynamic** theorist whose work is not specifically examined in the course. Possibilities include, but are not limited to: Jung, Adler, Rank, Homey, Adorno, Fromm, Bion, Lacan, Bollas, Ferenczi, Balint, Casement, and Chodorow. In the paper, (1) consider biographical information that likely informed the theorist’s ideas; (2) describe the historical and cultural context in which the theory developed; (3) assess the adequacy with which the theorist’s work addresses the biopsychosocial dimensions of human functioning; (4) address the implicit cultural biases and assumptions in the theorist’s published record; (5) evaluate any empirical evidence in support (and/or refutation) of the explanatory and/or predictive power of the theorist’s work; and (6) discuss implications of the theorist’s conceptualizations for clinical social work practice.

Option 2: Begin by clearly stating a general research question you would like to investigate. (1) From theories studied this semester, choose one or two that best illuminate your question’s major issues and describe the rationale for your choice; (2) review the central constructs, assumptions and propositions of the theory/theories you choose; (3) review and critically appraise theoretical work and research findings pertinent to your question; (4) on the basis of this review, state a more focused research question and describe how the theory/theories you choose, along with associated research, assist you in narrowing your focus; (5) if appropriate, propose preliminary study hypotheses and identify the type of research methodology best suited to your inquiry.

Option 3: Choose a client/patient from your clinical practice whom you would like to write about in depth, using one or more of the theories we have covered during the semester. In the paper, (1) provide relevant identifying information, history, and presenting problem, using a pseudonym to protect confidentiality; (2) describe why you have chosen to write about this particular case; (3) choose a theory or theories that we have studied this semester and give specific examples of how the theory or theories have helped you to understand your client/patient and how theory has informed the treatment; (4) give specific examples, if applicable, of ways in which the theory or theories did not fully address the biopsychosocial issues that the client/patient is working on in psychotherapy; (5) summarize the ways in which the theory/theories you have chosen do and/or do not fit with the basic tenets of clinical social work practice. The term paper is due by midnight on **December 12th – final class** (no extensions). It is to be no longer than **15 pages** (not including references).
*All written work is to be submitted electronically through Canvas, double-spaced in 12-point, Times New Roman font and prepared according to the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.*

**Texts**

**Required**


**Note:** For those of you who read the Berzoff et al. text in your MSW programs, I suggest that you purchase the Palombo et al. text listed below as optional and read the chapters that correspond to the Berzoff readings.

**Optional**


Schwartz, C. (2015). *In the mind fields: Exploring the new science of*


COURSE OUTLINE

Required readings not in required textbooks are on Canvas. Optional readings are not on Canvas and can be found in the library.

Session 1: Introduction to Psychodynamic Theory and Theory Construction

Required


Berzoff et al. Chapter 1: Why psychodynamic theories, why a biopsychosocial context? (pp.1-17).


Optional


Session 2: Early Freud: Biologist of the Mind

Required


Cushman, Chapter 4: Healing through self-domination: Capitalism, the asylum, the untamed female body, and Freud, pp. 91-116.

Kuchuck, Chapter 13: Glassman, N. & Botticelli, S. Perspective on gay fatherhood: Emotional legacies and clinical reverberations. (pp.162-168)

Optional


**Session 3:** Late Freud: From Biology to Psychology, Brain to Mind

Required


Cushman, Chapter 6: Strange bedfellows: The Americanization of psychoanalysis in the early twentieth century (pp. 140-158).


Optional


Session 4: The Interpersonal School

Required


Cushman, Chapter 7: The road not taken (pp. 168-185 only).

Optional


Session 5: Ego Psychology and Psychosocial Theory

Required


Cushman, Chapter 7: Ego psychology’s depoliticized vision (pp. 186-192 only).

Optional


New York: Free Press.

Palombo et al. Chapter 2: Heinz Hartmann (pp. 49-60); Chapter 3: Anna Freud (pp. 61-80); Chapter 11: Erik Erikson (pp. 199-224).


**Session 6: British Object Relations Theory  TERM PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**

**Required**


Cushman, Chapter 7: Melanie Klein and the beginning of object relations theory (pp. 192-209 only).


**Optional**


**Session 7: Focus on Winnicott**

**Required**

Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 22, 510-518.


Optional


Palombo et al. Chapter 8: Donald Winnicott (pp. 147-162).


Session 8: American Object Relations Theory

Required


Kuchuck, Chapter 17: Pines, D. Stroke and the fracturing of the self: Rebuilding a life and a practice (pp. 224-236).

**Optional**


Palombo et al. Chapter 9: Margaret Mahler (pp. 163-180); Chapter 10: Otto Kernberg (pp. 181-196).

**Session 9: The Psychology of the Self**

**Required**


Cushman, Chapter 8: Heinz Kohut and the valorization of narcissism, pp. 261-278 only.

Kuchuck, Chapter 7: Ornstein, A. Reflections on the development of my analytic subjectivity (pp. 81-97).

**Optional**

Goldstein, E. (2001). *Object relations theory and self psychology in*

Palombo et al. Chapter 14: Heinz Kohut (pp. 257-281).


Session 10: Infancy Studies

Required


Optional


Palombo et al. Chapter 4: Rene Spitz (pp. 81-94). Chapter 13: Daniel Stern (pp. 243-256).

Session 11: Relational/Intersubjectivity Theory

Berzoff, et al. Chapter 10: Hadley, M., Relational and intersubjective theories (pp. 222-240); and Chapter 11: Berzoff, J., Psychodynamic theory and gender (pp. 241-257).


Kuchuck, Chapter 11: Kuchuck, S. Guess who’s going to dinner? On the arrival of the uninvited third (pp. 135-145).

Optional


Session 12: Attachment Theory

Required


Optional


Palombo et al. Chapter 15: John Bowlby (pp. 287-301); Chapter 16: Mary Salter Ainsworth (pp. 303-314); Chapter 18: Peter Fonagy (pp. 335-347).

Session 13: BrainMind: Neuroscience, Neuropsychoanalysis and Psychotherapy
Required


Optional


Palombo et al. Chapter 17: Allan N. Schore (pp. 319-333).


Session 14: Research on Effectiveness and Contemporary Applications
*Final Paper Due*

**Required**


**Optional**


Cushman, Chapter 10: The politics of the self (pp. 332-356).

**Note:** This syllabus is meant as a guide. Additional readings and exercises may be assigned as learning needs arise.