Emory University Psychoanalytic Institute  
COURSE SYLLABUS: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Race and Racism  
Instructor: Beverly J. Stoute, M.D.  
Course Assistant: Nisha Shah, M.D.

Spring 2021 Course Dates: March 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13, 20, 2021  
TIME: 7:00-8:15pm (Tuesdays)

Race, a biological fiction, is a social, cultural and political construct. Yet in American culture race is a sober reality that affects private and public discourse. Recent cases in the news incite public outrage at police brutality and remind us that racism is very much a differentiating factor in American life. In this course, we will review psychoanalytic formulations on the processes involved in maintaining racist attitudes intrapsychically. We will discuss the issue of silence and reluctance in our field of psychoanalysts to explore racial issues and attitudes in clinical work. Finally, we will review the basic concepts in understanding racist thinking and working with race in the consultation room. How do we become more sensitive and increase our comfort level in working analytically in understanding the manifestations of race and racism in psychoanalytic work?

March 16, 2018

Session #1. The Social and Historical Context of Race in Psychoanalysis

Opening questions:
- Is racism embedded in our social attitudes?
- Is racism embedded in psychoanalytic theory?
- Why is race difficult to talk about?

The Race Dialogue Exercise


Optional:

March 23, 2021

Session #2. Conceptualizations of Racism (Baldwin video)

Questions to consider:
- Define the basic defense mechanisms of splitting, dissociation, projection, projective identification?
- Are there developmental determinants of how we become aware of racial difference?
- In racist thinking, how do these mechanisms operate on an individual level? And a group level?
- Define the dynamic process of “othering.”
- Define the construct of dignity.

Psychoanalytic Quarterly 75: 131-161.
2) Lowe, F. Thinking Space, pp. 21-23
March 30, 2021

Session # 3. Conceptualizations of Racism – Southern determinants of collective unconscious race fantasies

Questions to consider:
Discuss the universal race fantasies outlined by Kovel.
Is the oedipal theory of racism a helpful framework?
Are there different kinds of racists?
Think about the way that racist thinking and unconscious fantasies about race can present in clinical situations.


April 6, 2021

Session # 4 Silence and Resistance

Questions to consider:
What is the most common racial enactment in the clinical situation?
How do we think about culturally imposed racism from the point of view of trauma?
What are some of the factors that play a role in the clinician’s difficulty talking about race?


Optional:

April 13, 2021
**Session # 5. The concepts of Whiteness and Racial Melancholia**

Questions to understand:

Define the construct of “whiteness” and “white privilege.”
In what ways do “whiteness” and “white privilege” function defensively?
Define “racial melancholia” and how it relates to “whiteness?”

2) DiAngelo, R. “White Fragility” Chapter 8. White Fragility, pp. 107-114

Optional


*(The Color of Fear Film)*

**April 20, 2021**

**Session # 6. Hate and Intergenerational Trauma and the Conversation on Race**

(Mystery: Who is this story?)

Questions to consider:

How does Kathy we think about hate: hating, internalize hate and re-externalized hate.
How might the issue of transgenerational trauma be relevant to clinical formulation?


Optional