

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

- 1) Stoute, B. (2017). Race and Racism: Ghost in our Nursery, *The American Psychoanalyst*, 51(1).
- 2) Altman, N. (2006b). How Psychoanalysis Became White in the United States and How That Might Change. *Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, 3:65-72

Optional:

- 1) Prince, R. (2009). Psychoanalysis Traumatized: The Legacy of the Holocaust
American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 69: 179-194.

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.

- 1) Dalal, F. (2006). Racism: Processes of Detachment Dehumanization and Hate.
Psychoanalytic Quarterly 75: 131-161.
- 2) Lowe, F. Thinking Space, pp. 21-23

3) Holmes, Dorothy (2016). "I Knew My Mind Could Take Me Anywhere: Psychoanalytic Reflections on the Dignity of African Americans Living in a Racist Society." In *Dignity Matters: Psychoanalytic and Psychosocial Perspectives*. Ed. By. Susan Levine. Karnac: Great Britain, 119-139. Pay attention to these sections for now: Define dignity, pp. 119-120. Define Othering, pp. 126-127

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.

1) Rodgers, Terry (1960). The Evolution of an Anti-Negro Racist. *The Psychoanalytic Study of Society*. (1): 237-247.

2) Kovel, J. (1970). "Chapter 4. Fantasies of Race" in *White Racism: A Psychohistory*. New York: Columbia University Press. (If you make it to p. 82, consider the journey a success; Just focus on the questions above).

3) Holmes, Dorothy (2016). "I Knew My Mind Could Take Me Anywhere: Psychoanalytic Reflections on the Dignity of African Americans Living in a Racist Society." In *Dignity Matters: Psychoanalytic and Psychosocial Perspectives*. Ed. By. Susan Levine. Karnac: Great Britain. 119-139. Review the case example, pp. 132-135

4) Lillian Smith. Chapter from *Killers of the Dream*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc. (If you read this, focus on pp. 2 (second paragraph)-11, pp. 15-20.

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?

1) Powell, D. (2018). Race, African Americans and Collective Silence. *JAPA*. 66(6): 1021-1049.

2) Hart, A. (2019) The Discriminatory Gesture: A Psychoanalytic Consideration of Posttraumatic Reactions to Incident of Racial Discrimination. *Psychoanalytic Social Work*. 201, vol. 26 Nol. 1, 6-24; <https://doi.org/10.1080/15228878.2019.1604241>

Optional:

Leary, K. (2000). Racial Enactments in Dynamic Treatment. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*. 10(4): 639-654.

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?”

- 1) Reread Suchet, M. (2007). Unraveling Whiteness. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*. 17(6): 876-886.
- 2) DiAngelo, R. “White Fragility” Chapter 8. *White Fragility*, pp. 107-114
- 3) Eng, D. and S. Han (2000). A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 10:667-700

Optional

- 1) Moskowitz, M. (2016). How I Came to Understand White Privilege. *The American Psychoanalyst*. 50 (3) Fall 2016.
- 2) Reichbart, R. (2016). On Racism and Being White: The Journey to Henry’s Restaurant. 50(3) Fall 2016.
- 3) DiAngelo, R. (2012) “Chapter 9: How Race Shapes the Lives of White People; *Chapter 10: What Makes Racism So Hard for Whites to See? and Chapter 12: Common Patterns of Well-Intentioned White People, In DiAngelo, R. *What Does it Mean to be White*. Peter Lang Publishing: New York.

(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?

- 1) White K.P. (2002). Surviving hate and being hated: some personal thoughts about racism from a psychoanalytic perspective. *Contemp. Psa.*, 38:401-422.
- 2) Gump, J.P. (2010). Reality matters: The Shadow of Trauma on African American Subjectivity. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*. 27 (1): 42-54.

Optional

- 1) Vaughans, K. (2016). African-American Boys and Adolescents under the Shadow of Slavery’s Legacy. *The American Psychoanalyst*. 50(3): Fall 2016. (4page pdf)
- 2) Jones, Annie Lee, (2016). Relational Dynamics of Loss, Grief and Fear in Everyday Lives of African-American Women. *The American Psychoanalyst*. 50(3): Fall 2016. (9 pages df)
- 3) Vaughans, K.D and L.H. Harris (2016). The Police, Black and Hispanic Boys: A Dangerous Inability to Mentalize. *Journal o Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy*. 12(3): 171-178.