

PSYA- 300 Personality Psychopathology
Emory University Psychoanalytic Institute
Spring, 2021

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Course overview:

In the first course in this sequence (“Psychoanalytic Engagement”), I asserted that psychoanalysis happens in a vibrant, vital, relational field of mutuality, between patient and analyst both who happen to be “much more human than otherwise” (Sullivan, 1953), and have their own hardware (biologically informed strengths and limitations) and software (coded via learned experience throughout life) which influence their ways of feeling, behaving, and thinking moment-to-moment in the analytic situation . . . and elsewhere.

Throughout that course, I also asserted that psychoanalytic work is a collaborative, though asymmetrical relationship, where people who experience problems in living: want to be heard, understood, and feel healed; want to know why their troubles make sense; want a genuine and safe human connection with a well-trained and professionally endorsed person in order to learn new affective, behavioral, and cognitive patterns.

In this course, my goal is to expand and sharpen your focus on our patients’ problems in living using three thought vectors:

- Thinking about what clinicians (and non-clinicians) believe to be non-pathological or within normal limits interpersonal behavior and mental functioning;
- Using two empirically based conceptualizations of interpersonal behavior and motivation to sharpen your conceptualization of the difficulties our patients can bring us as they struggle to adapt to their hardware (biology) and software (learned experience);
- Studying the clinical (descriptive and developmental) characteristics of major categories of pathology from a psychoanalytic viewpoint.

Taken together, my goal is for you to have a heightened empathic understanding of why these conditions make sense, given each person’s unique predispositions and life experience.

Expectations:

What you can expect from me. I will come to class prepared to facilitate us exploring each topic from intellectual and experiential angles that may be new to you. The readings I chose draw from a wide range of post-modern perspectives in psychoanalysis, communications, and interpersonal theory, and reflect my clinical viewpoint as a self/relational psychoanalyst. I will also assign experiential exercises that I hope will be interesting, engaging, and bring “the white heat of relevance” to your study.

What I expect from you. My expectations are simple and straightforward:

1. Show up (EUPI requires that I take attendance, in accordance with your program’s training guidelines), **and leave the video screen on during the whole class so we can all see each other;**
2. Do the reading and assigned exercises.
3. Come to each class knowing what you want to get out of our time together (usually two-to-three questions that you want to explore), and how you will know when you have gotten what you want. N.B. This last part is a deceptively difficult expectation, but considering it seriously will greatly enhance the value you attribute to our time together.
4. Take at least one intellectual (or interpersonal) risk each class. Doing so, in the context of a safe, collaborative atmosphere we establish, will likely increase your personal sense of self-efficacy and enhance your enjoyment of the course.

Suggestion about how to approach the reading:

Research in learning and memory demonstrates that when people read to find an answer to questions, their ability to pick out, retain, and apply personally relevant information improves. Maybe you already know this. But note, this is a dramatically effective strategy (as in, big time or huge).

To help in this regard, as we finish each class, I will give you a preview and quick summary of the following week’s agenda, and attempt each time to place the upcoming reading in the evolving context of our course.

I suggest you use the objectives detailed below for each class to focus both your reading, as well as any experiential or writing exercises I assign. These objectives, which you could turn into questions, should help focus your reading and make it more time-efficient.

As best you can, please look ahead. I uploaded to BaseCamp PDFs in the original font size (not, when applicable, the smaller-print PEP-WEB hyperlinked versions, as experience tells me that

the single-spaced format can be hard to read at the end of a long day. But, if you want the hyperlinked version (when available) of an article, just let me know).

January 12, 2021: Normality, Character Development, and Case Formulation

Objectives:

At the end of this class period, you will be able to:

1. Identify the constructs that best organize your personal sense of psychological “normality.”
2. Understand how the concept of “character” emerged in the psychoanalytic literature.
3. Realize the practical importance for psychoanalytic intervention of theoretically driven case formulation v. clinical diagnosis.

Reading:

Normality

Blatt, S. J. (2006). A fundamental polarity in psychoanalysis: Implications for personality development, psychopathology, and the therapeutic process. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 26, 494-520.

Offer, D. (1971). Rebellion and anti-social behavior. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 31, 13-19.

Character

Baudry, F. (1990). Character in fiction and fiction in character. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 59, 370-397.

Liebert, R. S. (1989). The concept of character: A historical review. In R. E. Lax (Ed.), *Essential papers on character neurosis and treatment* (pp. 46-61). New York: New York University Press. **(Optional)**

Case Formulation

Sim, K., Gwee, K. P., & Bateman, A. (2005). Case formulation in psychotherapy: Revitalizing its usefulness as a clinical tool. *Academic Psychiatry*, 29, 289-292.

January 19, 2021: Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB)

Objectives:

At the end of this class period, you will be able to:

1. Explain the historical and ethological underpinnings of Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB).
2. Begin to apply the model to understanding the origins and maintenance of problematic characterological styles.

Reading:

Benjamin, L. S., Rothweiler, J. C., & Critchfield, K. L. (2006). Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB) as an assessment tool. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 2, 83-109.

Benjamin, L. S. (1993). Every psychopathology is a gift of love. *Psychotherapy Research*, 3, 1-24.

January 26, 2021: Motivational Systems Theory (MST)

Objectives:

At the end of this class period, you will be able to:

1. Expand your understanding of human motivation from affiliation/individuation to seven systems that observational and experimental research with infants has determined to underlie human interpersonal behavior.
2. Begin to identify manifestations of motivational systems in non-clinical material.

Reading:

Lichtenberg, J. D., Lachmann, F. M., & Fosshage, J. L. (2011). *Psychoanalysis and motivational systems: A new look*. New York: Routledge (pp. 1-44).

February 2, 2021: Narcissism (“His/Her Majesty the Baby”)

Objectives:

At the end of this class period, you will be able to:

1. Identify the clinical characteristics of pathological and malignant narcissism.
2. Using SASB, describe the likely developmental conditions that gave rise to this character structure.
3. Use MST to describe more comprehensively the motivational systems most likely activated or thwarted developmentally that may result in manifestations of this maladaptive overt and perceptual interpersonal style.
4. Articulate the ways that empathic mal-attunement during development fosters narcissistic character.

Reading:

Benjamin, L. S. (1987). Use of the SASB dimensional model to develop treatment plans for personality disorders. I: Narcissism. *Journal of Personality Disorders, 1*, 43-70.

Kohut, H. (1966). Forms and transformations of narcissism. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 14*, 243-272.

Reich, A. (1960). Pathologic forms of self-esteem regulation. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 15*, 215-232.

February 16, 2021: Masochism/Self-defeating-ness (“Analysis is not helping”)

Objectives:

1. Identify the clinical characteristics of pathological masochism and self-defeating-ness.
2. Using SASB, describe the likely developmental conditions that gave rise to this character structure.
3. Use MST to describe more comprehensively the motivational systems more likely activated or thwarted developmentally that may result in manifestations of this maladaptive overt and perceptual interpersonal style.

Reading/Viewing:

Békés, V., Perry, J. C., & Robertson, B. M. (2017). MASOCHISM: A mixed-method analysis of its development, psychological function, and conceptual evolution. *Psychoanalytic Review, 104*, 33-63.

Mullin, E. (2004). Who is this really for?: Masochism in relation to the narcissistic object. *Fort Da*, 13, 45-54.

Novick, K.K. and Novick, J. (2017). Kerry Kelly Novick and Jack Novick on "The Essence of Masochism". *PEP/UCL Top Authors Project*, 1, 20. (Access via www.pep-web)

February 23, 2021: Borderline-ness (“My misery is your command”)

Objectives:

At the end of this class period, you will be able to:

1. Identify the clinical characteristics of borderline-ness.
2. Using SASB, describe the likely developmental conditions that gave rise to this character structure.
3. Use MST to describe more comprehensively the motivational systems more likely activated or thwarted developmentally that may result in manifestations of this maladaptive overt and perceptual interpersonal style.

Reading:

Kernberg, O. (1970). A psychoanalytic classification of character pathology. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 18, 800-822.

Fonagy, P., Target, M., Gergely, G., Allen, J. G., & Bateman, A. W. (2003). The developmental roots of Borderline Personality Disorder in early attachment relationships: A theory and some evidence. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 23, 412-459.

March 2, 2021: Dysphoria

Objectives:

At the end of this class period, you will be able to:

1. Identify the clinical characteristics of various intensities of dysphoria
2. Using SASB, describe the likely developmental conditions (diatheses) that may make one vulnerable to dysphoria.
3. Use MST to describe more comprehensively the motivational systems more likely activated or thwarted that may result in manifestations of this problem in living.

Reading:

Blatt, S. J. (1998). Contributions of psychoanalysis to the understanding and treatment of depression. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 46, 722-52.

Gerhardt, J. (2020). The traumatic no man's land of psychic devastation: Beyond mourning and melancholia. *Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, 17, 84-106.