Contemporary Psychoanalytic Theory: Winnicott
Course # 80103.95718
Fall, 2010

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Day & Time: Wednesdays 9:30 – 11:20 a.m.
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:
I think that a respectful way to approach Winnicott's work is to think dynamically, in the literal sense of the word. That is, to see his ideas as a presentation of paradoxes, never fully resolvable by words alone, yet capable of stirring us to find greater and deeper meanings to even the simplest of gestures and symbols. I'd like us, therefore, to approach this course with paradox and dilemma solving/making as the frame of reference. I'd like us also to use this course simultaneously as didactic seminar/clinical child practicum, using both his work and our own to supplement our review of his theoretical contributions. We'll begin the course with a review of several of his most central theoretical paradoxes, go on to review some of his special terminology and then read some of his major technique papers. After the first class or two, we will always be reading cases from his Therapeutic Consultations in Child Psychiatry and attempting to blend theory and treatment as best as we can.

Beginning with the sixth week of class, we will be dividing the class into part theory/article discussion and part review of a consultation by Winnicott from his Therapeutic Consultations. I do not want this course to be solely a theory course, nor solely a practicum course, but to be, in the Winnicottian sense, some of both, some of neither and something we don't understand all of!

Course Objectives:
The goals of the course are: (1) to become competent in understanding the bulk of Winnicott’s theories on child development (2) to become equally competent in linking this theoretical knowledge to clinical work with children and their parents.

Requirements and Grading:
There will be two writing assignments for the course. I want you to take a 3-5 page transcript of a child or adolescent case of yours. I then will ask you to write a 3 to 5 page exercise on how Winnicott would describe the nature and quality of the interaction. This exercise is worth 40% of your grade. Your last assignment will be to analyze a transcript of another psychotherapy session I will provide from a Winnicottian perspective, both as it pertains to his manner of doing treatment and how you would assess what this girl struggles with from his theoretical perspective. This exercise is also worth 40% of your grade. The remaining 20% is based on class participation.
Grading will reflect the following scale:

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<th>Outstanding work</th>
<th>Quality work</th>
<th>Competent work</th>
<th>Not yet competent work</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>A, A-</td>
<td>B+, B, B-</td>
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**Required Texts:**
All of the readings will be handed out at the beginning of the semester and taken from the following works of Winnicott:


In addition, you will read my book, *Attachment, Play & Authenticity: A Winnicott Primer* (Jason Aronson, 2008) as a requirement for the course. Each of the book’s chapters are meant to be read to coincide with the week’s readings from Winnicott’s own work. Thus Chapter 1 of my book corresponds with Week 1 of the readings etc., throughout the semester.

**Weekly Reading Assignments and Class Topics:**

**Week One**

**Paradigm**
What mothers do naturally cannot be taught - a model for the skill of a psychoanalyst.

**Readings**


**Week Two**

**Paradigm**
Something essential about a person is
bound up with bodily aliveness and
is ultimately unknowable - yet therapy is primarily an interpretive practice.

Readings

Week Three
Paradigm
Precocious compliance = psychic death and False Self, yet child's utter dependence as infant promotes compliance.

Readings

Week Four
Infant as isolate who needs mother to protect the privacy of their isolation-isolated but not insulated as goal.

Readings

Week Five
Paradigm
An object only becomes real by being hated the world feels substantial if one's attempts at destruction are unsuccessful.

Readings

Week Six
Paradigm
Trauma is formative of a gap beyond our grasp, but what fills this gap and illness is all that inhibits spontaneity-pathology originates from breaks in continuity yet continuity
must be destroyed to create a Self.

**Readings**

**Week Seven**
Some essential terms:
- Playing
- Holding
- Using
- Ruth and ruthlessness

**Readings**

**Week eight**

**Paradigm**
DWW’s greatest contribution: The Intermediate Space

**Reading**

**Week nine**

**Paradigm**
Anti-social children and aggression – Hope betrayed?

**Winnicott (continued)**

**Readings**
Winnicott, D. (1950). The Deprived Child and how he can be compensated for loss of family life in *The Family and Individual Development*.

**Week Ten**
History taking and diagnosis

**Reading**
Winnicott, D. (1971). The case of Robert in *Therapeutic consultations in child psychiatry*

**Weeks eleven- fifteen**

**Paradigm:** Technique
Treatment as provision of a holding environment
when a child surprises himself -
a release from compliance
Mutuality of treatment relationship
a sign of health in the mind is the
ability of one individual to enter imaginatively and accurately into the thoughts and feelings and hopes and fears of another person; also to allow the other person to do the same to us...when we are faced with a man, woman or child in our speciality, we are reduced to two human beings of equal status.

**Readings:**

Winnicott, D. (1947). Hate in the countertransference in *Through pediatrics to psychoanalysis.*