Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology  
The Graduate Center of the City University of New York  

Theory VI: Basic Science and Clinical Practice  
Course # 80103.14424  
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Course Description
This course is designed to serve as a bridge between the general psychology portion of the curriculum and the clinical practice portion. In the new curriculum, in accordance with APA guidelines, the basic science courses (biological bases of behavior, social psychology, cognitive and affective psychology, etc) are separate from the clinical courses and do not have a clinical focus. I was concerned that such a curricular structure could leave students not really seeing the relevance of those courses to their clinical training. Therefore, this course has been designed to explore how the kinds of research findings discussed in these courses can inform your clinical work and how the experience doing clinical work can more deeply illuminate the meaning and implications of the research studies you will read in those courses. I believe there are very exciting possibilities deriving from clinicians’ attention to research that is not originally “clinical” in its intent but that has important potential implications for what we do as clinicians. The research that is relevant for the psychotherapist goes well beyond psychotherapy outcome research (and even psychotherapy process research). It includes as well a wide range of studies that are not focused on psychotherapy at all but that help us better understand the factors that influence behavior and experience and are relevant to change in both realms.

However, although the primary focus of the course will be on research that was not conducted with a specifically clinical intent, we will begin with a direct examination of the scientific foundations of clinical practice and the nature of the evidence for what we do. We will thus begin with an examination of two chapters from the book Evidence-based practices in mental health: Debate and dialogue on the fundamental questions, edited by Norcross, Beutler, and Levant. The book features debates among prominent researchers with quite divergent views regarding the evidence base for the practice of psychotherapy. We will then, in the following week, read a set of journal articles that further elaborate and examine these issues.

Most of the readings for the course, however, will derive not from direct concern about clinical practice but from basic research in areas such as social psychology, social cognition,
cognition and affect, and cognitive and social neuroscience. The reading will be a bit heavier the first two weeks, because the material is more familiar to clinical students and more directly and obviously bears on issues of clinical practice. In the following weeks, we will mostly read just a few papers a week, both so that we can consider in detail the conceptual and methodological issues that are relevant to understanding and evaluating them and in order to examine closely their potential implications for clinical practice. We will also look at how observations from the practice setting suggest modifications in the conclusions drawn in the research laboratory. I anticipate a very lively exchange and a genuine sense of exploring cutting edge ideas in both directions.

**Overall Course Objectives:**
The aim is to facilitate you in becoming a true scholar-practitioner and thus both to advance your skills as a clinician and to enable you to feel more confident and prepared to be a contributor to the literature.

**Assignments and Grades:**
Students will alternate in presenting each week’s readings, summarizing the key points, offering critiques or highlighting potential implications as they see them, and raising questions for the class to discuss. Each student will present at least twice. It is expected that every student in the class will participate actively in the discussion, whether presenting that week or not. My aim is for each class session to consist of stimulating, challenging, and probing examination of a key body of research and its implications for your clinical practice. (I will, of course, share responsibility for the conduct of the class with the student presenting and I will especially attempt to contextualize the discussion by relating the topic under discussion to a broader set of findings and theoretical perspectives).

- Presentations will account for 75% of the grade
- Class participation will account for 25% of the grade

**Weekly Reading Assignments and Class Topics:**

(All readings will be distributed to the class via email)

**Week 1: Differing conceptions of evidence-based practice**

Week 2: Further conceptualizations and controversies regarding the appropriate evidence base for clinical practice


Week 3: Self-knowledge


Week 4: Self-deception


**Week 5: Self-concept and self-awareness**


**Week 6: Embodied cognition**


**Week 7: Automaticity and its implications**


**Week 8: Socially situated cognition**


**Week 9: Mood contagion and the chameleon effect**


**Week 10: Social neuroscience**


Cacioppo, J. T. (2002). Social neuroscience: Understanding the pieces fosters understanding the
whole and vice versa. American Psychologist, 57(11), 819-831.

**Week 11: Reflectivity, impulsivity, and affect regulation**


**Week 12: Relationship and context**


**Week 13: Nonverbal affective cues**


**Week 14: Self-in-relationship: Interactionism**


**Week 15: Transference and the relational self**