Syllabus

PT 152 Structural Theory: Madness in Literature
U. Gosmann
Fall 2017

Wed. 1:30-3:30
CMPS: 30 Clock Hours
NYGSP: 2 Credits

Course Description
We will read literature as a medium that allows us to swim in symbolic complexity. We will practice staying underwater with ambiguity. We will float with different currents of meaning. We will exercise our thinking and feeling capacities to fathom the depths.

Because of the similarities between literary narrative and patient narrative/analytic process, this is excellent practice for listening to, being and engaging with patients.

When in the early years of psychoanalysis Freud noticed the literary trends in his own writing and frequently drew on works of literature to develop his metapsychology, he had some qualms, however conquerable, about drifting off onto “unscientific” terrain. Yet starting with Freud and with intensified attention particularly in recent years, psychoanalysts have gone to literature to help them think about the vicissitudes of the human mind and the complexities of the analytic process. The two fields have mutually enriched each other because both lend form and expression to otherwise inchoate and elusive psychological experience. We will read myth, fairy tales, short stories, plays, film, novels, and poems as well as psychoanalytic studies of these texts to immerse ourselves in the process of thinking with feeling and to sample the history of how psychoanalysis has drawn on literature to promote its own growth and evolution.

Objectives
The student will be able to:
• Identify ambiguity and different layers of meaning in literary texts, analogous to layers of meaning in clinical material;
• Derive and articulate emotional information from linguistic style;
• Describe some unconscious dynamics revealed by different literary characters (Oedipus complex, defense mechanisms, dual drives, narcissism, mourning, melancholia);
• Describe different conceptualizations of the psychoanalytic process (making the unconscious conscious, models of psychic conflict, i.e. drive/defense and life drive/death drive, Ogden’s use of reverie, Bion’s theory of thinking); and
• Explain some ways in which psychoanalysis has drawn on literature to formulate its own concepts and process.

Teaching method
Discussion of weekly readings and class process. See also methods of evaluation.
Methods of evaluation
WEEKLY RESPONSE PAPERS:
Write a 2-page weekly response papers and submit it electronically (utagosmannphd@gmail.com) the day before the class (at the latest). Follow this method: First, read the primary text and write a personal and spontaneous response to it (equivalent to a counter-transference experience, objective and subjective, in a clinical setting). Then read the secondary text and integrate it with your response to the literary text.

SHORT 10-MINUTE PRESENTATION:
Choose a class topic and prepare a presentation on the readings for that class. Your presentation should provide an entry into the discussion and may include aspects of your response paper.

LOGS:
Logs are written in the final ten minutes of a class meeting (hand-written or written on your computer and submitted to utagosmannphd@gmail.com). Use the logs to reflect on your class experience.

FINAL PAPER:
Use your weekly response paper for week 9 to write about your project for the final paper and be prepared to discuss it in class 9. When in search of a topic, the learning objectives may (but do not have to) help you generate an idea. Include at least 3 references to the psychoanalytic literature in your paper. Submit the final paper (6-8 pages) electronically as early as possible but at the latest by December 31, 2017.

Please note: Students will need to purchase the required texts (Glück, Hoffmann, James, and Sophocles) or borrow them from another library.

Required Texts:

Assigned Readings
Class 1: The Uses of Metaphor in Psychoanalysis
Class 2: Encounters with the Unconscious: Oedipus

Class 3: Encounters with the Unconscious: The Uncanny 1

Class 4: Encounters with the Unconscious: The Uncanny 2

Class 5: Fairy Tales

Class 6: Narcissism and Narcissistic Doubles

Class 7: Mourning versus Melancholia

Class 8: The Capacity to Make Meaning 1
Class 9: The Capacity to Make Meaning 2

Discussion of writing projects for final paper.

Class 10: The Capacity to Make Meaning 3

Class 11: Thinking with Feeling 1

Class 12: Thinking with Feeling 2
Suggested Reading