Syllabus
PT 75 Lacan: On Transference
W. Hurst       Fall 2016

Wed. 12:30-2:00
(Meets 9/21, 10/5, 10/19, 11/2, 11/16)
CMPS: 12.5 Clock Hours
NYGSP: 1 Credit

Course Description

This course will examine Lacan’s concept of transference, the subject of his eighth Seminar (1960 – 1961), explicating it as a core concept in the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. Lacan’s study begins with a commentary on the origin of the concept in Plato’s Symposium. The course will follow the development of the Seminar and will adhere to its structure and divisions. The Platonic dialogue will be studied not simply as providing the origin of a concept but also the original “clinical” material that supports and presupposes the concept.

Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

1) give an account of the flow of ideas in the Symposium and explain how “transference’ is a central, yet implicit, concept in that flow;
2) describe the relationship between Socrates and Alcibiades in relation to the place of the concept of “algama” in Lacan’s thinking about love and transference;
3) explain how the story of Psyche and Cupid shows how the “soul” comes into existence with the onset of the castration complex, and how the search for a beloved object aims to bring the metonymy of desire to an end;
4) identify some essential features of the mythic in the evolution of a transference within psychoanalytic experience by considering some literary examples of the Oedipus myth;
5) contrast the ideal-ego with the ego-ideal in the context of Lacan’s emerging concept of the “little a,” understood in part as what calls forth desire in the quest for true love, a quest made possible by the transference, i.e., by the presence of the past.

Method of Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on their understanding of course material demonstrated through participation in class discussion, logs, and a paper. There will be five logs, each one submitted after the class session, and each one addressing one concept as well as any other matter the student wishes to discuss. There will also be a final paper that attempts to create an overview of the topic of the course.
Required Readings

Plato. *Symposium*

**Students should read Plato’s *Symposium* before the course begins.** *Plato on Love: Lysis, Symposium, Phaedrus, Alcibiades, with Selections from Republic and Law.* Translated by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Edited by C. D. C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006. While there are many other translations available this is the one that Bruce Fink uses in his translation of Lacan’s Seminar.


Assigned Readings

**Class 1**
Introduction: “In the beginning was Love.” A Commentary on The *Symposium,* The Mainstream of Love”: Sessions I through VI of Lacan’s Seminar: pp. 11-94.

**Class 2**

**Class 3**

**Class 4**

**Class 5**