Course Description and Goals: Debate, dissent, and argumentation have characterized the history of psychodynamic thinking, interrogating how we think over time and revolutionizing what we do. Drawing primarily from contemporary American psychoanalytic scholarship, this seminar will focus on the examination of critical texts and controversies within psychoanalysis as these are reconstituting how we understand the work we do.

The goals for each student are:
To become familiar with certain ongoing debates and divergences as these continue to shape the development of psychoanalytic thought
To understand the implications of these controversies and innovations for contemporary practice
To become more critically aware of one’s implicit identifications with particular theoretical and clinical assumptions (which are, in turn, rooted in particular sociopolitical-historical moments), and to locate one’s thinking within the broader context of theoretical history.

Required Texts: Most readings are on the PEP archive. All other texts will be provided.

Attendance and Late Policy: The course is taught in a seminar/discussion format. Therefore, class attendance is required. For students who miss more than one class session (excepting a personal emergency), the overall course grade will be lowered one level. Students who miss more than two class sessions will automatically fail the course (in cases of personal emergency, the student will be asked to withdraw from the course and retake it the following year).

Course Requirements and Assignments: All readings are required. I am aware that there are many readings listed for this course; they will serve as the basis for our work in the classroom. For each class session, please study thoughtfully and critically each assigned article, taking notes and organizing your reflections as you go (please read the papers in the order listed on the course outline). Come to class prepared to articulate an argument rooted in your encounter with the material. Based on the readings in combination with your own personal and clinical experience, what position might you take in the context of each debate? Where do you agree, and where do you think particular positions fall short? What are the challenges raised by the various writers? How are you moved by the readings, and where do you remain unconvinced? How is each controversy significant to your clinical work, to your learning, and to the field more broadly? It is expected that you will present an argument of your own, and that you also be able to interact with your classmates in a rigorous and scholarly (and always respectful) way about their thinking.

To facilitate the study of the texts, we will maintain an ongoing “listserv” for the class, in which you can interact with one another (and with me) with questions and reactions to the material. It is expected that you will each participate in the “conversation” at least weekly with substantive critique, argument, queries, challenges, etc. This will also help prepare you for each class session.
Grading is based on the following: Quality of class participation: 100%. I will be evaluating your work in the classroom and on the listserv based on rigor, effort, engagement with the texts and with each other, and willingness to take intellectual risks.

Except in cases of extreme personal emergency (requiring permission from the instructor before the last class day), there will be no “incompletes” given for the class.

Instructor: Students can contact me at jentolleson@comcast.net or jtolleson@icsw.edu, or at 802-651-7670.

COURSE OUTLINE

Class 1: Shifting Paradigms

Class 2: Countertransference

Class 3: Aggression

Class 4: Self Disclosure

**Class 5: The Therapist's Interpretive Authority**

**Class 6: Hermeneutics v Empiricism**

**Class 7: Social Justice, Politics, and Psychoanalysis**

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