Psychodynamic Approaches to Difference: Special Topics

Institute for Clinical Social Work: Jennifer Tolleson PhD
CL 661: Spring 2014

Jennifer Tolleson, PhD, Lead Instructor

Phone: 312-935-4244 or 312-342-3184
Email: jtolleson@icsw.edu

Course Description and Goals

This course explores categories of race, gender, class, and sexuality as these emerge in contemporary social work discourse and the psychotherapeutic context. This course has four primary goals: 1) to locate the clinician and client—and the identity categories within which they are embedded—within a greater historic and socio-cultural context; 2) to stimulate the interrogation of socially constituted notions of “difference; 3) to encourage self awareness of bias, implicit prejudice, and reification as these shape therapeutic process; and 4) to understand multiple frameworks for thinking about race, class, gender, and sexuality. The course will be taught as a seminar organized around special topics using multiple instructors.

Course Requirements

Final Paper: Due the last class day, students should submit a journal of personal and professional reflections on the readings and class material. Each class topic and its readings should be discussed within the journal. Therefore students need to write as the course progresses. The journal will be evaluated on complexity of analysis, sincerity, independence of mind, critical thinking, and quality of writing. Students should devote at least two pages to each class session, with a final journal length of no more than 20 pages. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and you must use proper citations.

I do not give Incompletes, so turning in your work on time is essential.

Your performance in this class will be evaluated based on the following: Attendance and participation: 50%; Final Paper 50%
**Required Texts**


All other articles are available on the PEP archive, have been scanned and placed on the ICSW web site, or will be provided by the instructor electronically or in hard copy.

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**Weekly Course Schedule**

**Class 1 – January 31:  *Psychoanalysis, Politics, and the Problem of Social Justice, Jennifer Tolleson PhD***


**Class 2 – February 14: The Social Construction of Difference, Brenda Solomon PhD***


**Class 3 – February 28: Group Psychology and Prejudice, Scott Rose PhD**


**Class 4 – March 14: Race: Transference & Countertransference in the Clinical Encounter I: Ida Roldan PhD**

Racist attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions often stem from therapist and client’s respective histories. The analytic encounter becomes more complicated when we consider the interaction between the therapist’s and the client’s disavowed racist attitudes that emerge in transference-countertransference enactments.

**Learning Objectives:** Students will learn that unconscious racism/prejudice is to be expected in our clinical work. Students will also learn that in order to usefully engage racism in the therapeutic process, the clinician must accept her/his own racism in the transference-countertransference matrix.

**Readings Assignments & Expectations:** I expect all students to come in prepared to share their reactions, questions, and comments to the papers. I appreciate that talking about race can arouse powerful reactions in most of us. My responsibility will be to make certain we establish a level of safety so that all can feel comfortable sharing their reactions and associations to the papers.


**Class 5 – March 28: Race: Transference & Countertransference in the Clinical Encounter II: Ida Roldan PhD**


**Class 6 – April 4: LGBTQ Scott Rose PhD**


**Class 7 – April 25: Gender Melancholy, Jennifer Tolleson PhD**


**Class 8 – May 9: Changing the World: Psychotherapy as Revolutionary Practice, Jennifer Tolleson PhD**


Cushman, P. (2009). Empathy – What one hand giveth the other taketh away: Commentary on paper by Lynne Layton, Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 19, 121-137. PEP
