Psychoanalysis is not what you think
Subjectivity, history and psychosocial studies

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Course dates: 23 - 27 July 2018

Main disciplines: Psychology, Psychoanalysis,
Critical Psychology, Social and Political Theory

Course Credits: 10 pts (ECTS)
Limitation: 25 participants

Objectives / learning outcome
This course explores the development and present-day practice of psychoanalysis through autobiographical narrative which illuminates the internal shape of a phenomenon over time. I trace a journey through psychoanalysis and my work as an analyst. In this case, the phenomenon, psychoanalysis, is treated as a series of theoretical frameworks and practices of language.

Psychoanalysis is one of the rhetorical disciplines in the human sciences, attending to the speech of the ‘analysand’ – the psychoanalytic patient – and opening a space in their lives in which they may speak well. The lectures travel through different versions of psychoanalysis, making an argument for the importance of language, culture and history in its theory and practice.

Course format
Each session will consist of a 35-minute lecture taking us through a stage in the process of encountering the psy-complex. After each lecture, students are invited to participate in a discussion focusing on the narrative and on the readings and to share their own experiences and reflections on the topic.
Readings
The course traces a narrative which will lead us to reflect on issues raised in the following sources which you should consult before the course:


Outline of lectures

Day 1, 23 July 2018, morning

PART I: AVOIDING

**Session 1: SCIENCE: AVOIDING ANALYSIS OF THE MIND**
In which we ask why psychoanalysis is much misunderstood, explore some of the reasons to avoid it, and discover that there are other good reasons to take it seriously. Is psychoanalysis scientific, and is the way that the discipline of psychology reconfigures it something that makes it possible to assess its value as a science of the mind? At the heart of these questions is the relationship between psychoanalysis, psychology, psychiatry and politics.

**Session 2: SEX: AVOIDING ANALYSIS OF THE BODY**
In which I describe how difficult it is to square the misrepresentation of Freud as some kind of psychologist with critical discussions of psychoanalysis from within feminism, in which there are many other good reasons to avoid analysis, and with alternative Marxist readings of Freud. Does psychoanalysis reduce everything to sex, and should it do so? Here we bring so-called ‘post-Freudians’ into the frame.
Day 1, 23 July 2018, afternoon

**Session 3: SCHISMS: AVOIDING ANALYTIC POLITICS**
In which we look at some of the institutions that attempted to oversee and guide how psychoanalysis should be put to work as a ‘talking cure’, and discover that there are deep divisions in the history of the psychoanalytic movement with Freud and since. Is psychoanalytic politics more than petty personal intrigues and bureaucratic manoeuvres? We examine such power-plays and attempts to conceptualise how they work.

**Session 4: TEACHING: AVOIDING ANALYTIC PRACTICE**
In which we look at how psychoanalysis is transmitted in the university, and at the way that rationalist models of the mind draw us too close to particular problematic versions of psychoanalytic theory. Can psychoanalysis be studied and taught in an academic context and if so, what is the best disciplinary home for it? We discover how psychoanalysis is repelled or neutralised and absorbed by other psychotherapeutic approaches.

Readings:
Day 2, 24 July 2018, morning

PART II: ENGAGING

Session 5: SOCIETY: ENGAGING WITH THE BRITISH TRADITION
In which we explore some of the attractions of psychoanalytic ideas, and the way they provide explanations for social processes, such as personal threat and institutional defence. We encounter psychoanalysis as a kind of practice of social-scientific and political critique which draws on clinical experience, and defends itself. Can and should psychoanalysis be used to account for resistance to its approach as a theoretical framework?

Session 6: CONVERSATIONS: TAKING CARE OF HEALTH
In which we try to make sense of competing approaches to group and individual psychotherapy in the British National Health Service, and show how psychoanalytic ideas have needed to adapt themselves to health institutions in order to survive. If psychoanalysis is to be genuinely social, does that mean that we should prioritise group or individual psychoanalytic clinical work?
Day 2, 24 July 2018, afternoon

Session 7: THERAPY: CLOSER ENCOUNTERS
In which we trace how people find psychoanalysts, explore what the process of discovering, and settling into psychoanalytic treatment might look like, and how we then account for it. If transference really exists, can you believe what someone says about their own analysis? We reflect on how our knowledge of psychoanalysis – suppositions about the theory and what analysis entails – leads us to certain kinds of analysts.

Session 8: RESEARCH: STUDYING AND EXPERIENCING
In which it becomes clear that psychoanalysis as clinical treatment is closely connected with psychoanalysis as a form of research, and equally clear that this raises a host of questions about how it should be taught and how its own practice should be studied. Is there any reliable way that those studying psychoanalysis in an academic context can have access the phenomena they are describing and evaluating?

Readings:
Day 3, 25 July 2018, morning

PART III: TRAINING

Session 9: TRAINING: IN GROUP ANALYSIS
In which we puzzle over Group Analysis, an approach to therapy in the group by the group that operates with many different competing theoretical frameworks, and ask whether it might provide the most thoroughly social approach to personal experience and treatment. Group Analysis draws attention to a more fundamental question; What does it mean to be ‘social’ in psychoanalysis?

Session 10: PERSONAL: TRAINING ANALYSIS
In which we find Lacan and Lacanians, apply for training, and go deeper into analysis, as a prerequisite for beginning the course, making sense of the relationship between institutional requirements and the demand for analysis, between the desire to become an analyst and the need to undergo treatment. Do we really need personal training analysis in order to become psychoanalysts?
Day 3, 25 July 2018, afternoon

**Session 11: DIAGNOSIS: CLINICAL STRUCTURES**
In which we join CFAR and trace the development of Freud’s differential diagnosis of neuroses, psychosis and perversion from psychiatry through to present-day psychoanalytic practice, and explore some of the dilemmas this poses for those who turn to analysis as an alternative to mainstream ‘labels’ for behaviour and experience. Do we really need differential diagnosis in order to listen to people speak?

**Session 12: SUPERVISION: CONFESSION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**
In which we describe the institutional processes that must be navigated in order for the psychoanalyst to find ‘analysands’, first patients who might thereby function for training purposes and provide experience of what it is to listen to another person speak and what it is to reflect on what happens in supervision of the practice. If all the details must be changed, can you ever believe what a psychoanalyst says about their patients?

**Readings:**
Day 4, 26 July 2018, morning

PART IV: APPLYING

Session 13: ENLIGHTENMENT: SECOND NATURE IN BRAZIL
In which look at attempts to contextualise and ‘apply’ psychoanalysis, with Brazil as one country that has taken a different path through tom modernity with different competing conceptions of the relationship between culture and nature, and we encounter many competing schools of psychoanalysis glued together by the narcissism of minor differences. What is the ‘dialectic’ in the dialectic of Enlightenment, and what could it be?

Session 14: TRAUMA: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
In which we explore the question as to whether psychoanalysis as a treatment of individuals can be ‘applied’ to collectives, institutions and societies in relation to conceptions of trauma and the ‘chosen trauma’ of particular social groups. This putative application of clinical theory to social issues raises a deeper clinical and political question; is psychoanalysis a practice of reconciliation or one of bearing unending conflict?
Day 4, 26 July 2018, afternoon

Session 15: THEORY: ŽIŽEK, CULTURE AND THE CLINIC
In which we go deeper into some of the theoretical underpinnings of contemporary psychoanalytic work, but do this by examining Slavoj Žižek and his psychoanalytic social theory. One question is whether this social theory which claims to link Lacan with Hegel and Marx is a help or hindrance to what psychoanalysts do in practice. Is Žižek progressive or reactionary, and what would that characterisation of him mean in this context?

Session 16: IDENTIFICATION: LAIBACH AND THE STATE
In which we examine the way that psychoanalytic ideas have been put into practice outside the clinic, focusing on the cultural-political work of art collectives in Slovenia that employed notions of transference and ‘overidentification’ to challenge the regime, a challenge that then inspired some of the new theoretical movements inside psychoanalysis. Is the application of psychoanalysis always subversive, and is that always a good thing?

Readings

Day 5, 27 July 2018, morning

PART V: LIMITING

Session 17 JAPAN: A LIMIT CASE FOR ANALYSIS
In which we trace the cultural-historical conditions for psychoanalysis to exist, looking at underlying assumptions about the self and others in central and Western Europe, and describing the ways in which different versions of psychoanalysis have taken root in Japan, throwing into relief the ideas about subjectivity that make it possible for this clinical practice to take and work. Is psychoanalytic culture quintessentially European?

Session 18: QUEER: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE
In which we expand the scope of our study of psychoanalysis and its limits to describe some contemporary debates and tensions inside theory and practice over the role of the family, gender and sexuality and recent connections between psychoanalysis and queer theory, visiting Russia to see how it works out there. Is psychoanalysis ‘queer’, and if so, in what sense of the term?
Day 5, 27 July 2018, afternoon

Session 19: ISLAM: FAITH IN FREUD
In which we home in on one particular manifestation of psychoanalysis as a worldview, its commitment to secular democracy and scientific reason. We explore the role of Judaism and antisemitism in the history of psychoanalysis, of its place in Christian culture and of attempts to acknowledge the impact of a ‘third wave’ of cultural adaptation, to Islam. Is psychoanalysis a spiritual exercise or the antithesis of it?

Session 20: TRANSFERENCE: ETHICS IN ACTION
In which we focus on the current crisis of ethics and abuse in professional training institutions, including in psychoanalysis, reviewing the recent attempts by system-survivor and service-user activists to connect with professionals in order to provide versions of psychoanalysis that are free rather than restricted to the realm of private treatment. Should members of the public be protected from the psychoanalysts?

Readings:
Bibliography


The lecturer
Ian Parker is Honorary Professorial Research Fellow in the Manchester Institute of Education at the University of Manchester, UK. He is a practising psychoanalyst, and is currently President of the College of Psychoanalysts - UK. He is Secretary of Manchester Psychoanalytic Matrix. He is Emeritus Professor of Management at the University of Leicester, and has visiting professorial posts in Belgium, Brazil, South Africa, Spain and the UK. His research and writing has been in the field of psychoanalysis, psychology and social theory, with a particular focus on discourse, critical psychology, mental health and political practice. He is Managing Editor of the Annual Review of Critical Psychology. He is a Fellow of the BPS and the RSA.

His research and writing has been in the field of psychoanalysis, psychology and social theory, with a particular focus on discourse, critical psychology, mental health and political practice. These fields of work each bear on how subjectivity is formed and managed in contemporary culture, and on the way organisational forms reproduce social relationships. He was co-founder, and he is currently co-director (with Professor Erica Burman), of the Discourse Unit (www.discourseunit.com), and details of his publications in different languages can be found at his personal website at www.parkerian.com