Course Description and Course Objectives

Interestingly, relatively little attention has been given in the psychoanalytic literature to the beginning phases of psychoanalysis, proper – the treatment, and associated technique. Principally, the treating clinician needs to establish a working relationship with the analysand. The importance of the early communications, on the part of both the psychoanalyst and the analysand, carry enormous valence. Particular errors of omission or commission on the psychoanalyst’s part, as well as attitudinal variables (respect, trust, positive regard, confidence, etc) can impact the analysand’s capacity to engage at a point where a “relationship” cannot be taken for granted in assisting them in bearing the particular strains attendant to embarking upon psychoanalytic psychotherapy or psychoanalysis.

This course will review some of the provisions attendant to establishing a psychoanalytic frame. Issues will include how to structuralise the early treatment sessions, communicating understanding, assessing suitability for psychoanalytically-informed treatment, answering the analysand’s questions, and so forth. Additionally, issues pertaining to the psychoanalyst’s own potential interferences, such as anxiety, character style, and counter-transference will be discussed. Freud’s seminal papers on technique will be central to the course. Additionally, audio-tapes of the first four sessions of a psychoanalysis will be reviewed.

Office Hours

Office hours are by appointment. Candidates are encouraged to avail themselves of the instructor’s office hour availability. The Instructor is in the office Monday through Friday, and available for assuring student access, as needed.

Course Expectations

1. It is anticipated that all readings be completed prior to the class session so as to permit a seminar-like style, ambiance, and dialogue. Classroom discussion, including Question & Answer, struggling creatively with the ambiguities often inherent in such work will be a principle way in which the course will proceed; and provide the instructor with a basis for assessing each member’s internalisation of course content.

2. It is the responsibility of students with special needs to bring these to the attention of the Instructor.

Course Readings

Required readings will be provided by the Instructor.
Class One

The “Early Phase” of the “Early Phase of Psychoanalysis”. Introduction to the course and general overview. Some conceptual, phenomenological, and philosophical considerations. On beginning the treatment. Brief comments regarding Freud and his treatment recommendations.


Class Two

The Early Phase of Psychoanalysis, Continued. Issues pertaining to the transference.


Class Three

Class three, continued.


Class Four

Dream Interpretation


Class Five

A fragment of the early phase of Joseph Wortis’s psychoanalysis with Freud.


Class Six

Other Perspectives of importance and consideration upon the beginnings of a psychoanalysis. Reflectivity and anxiety states in the psychoanalyst. Further considerations on establishing a psychoanalytical space.


Class Seven

Class six, continued. Additional attention to counter-transferential elements within the psychoanalyst.


Class Eight

Cautionary notes: transference and counter-transference as revealed in the case of Dora.


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Required Readings:

