

Gender and Sexuality
2nd Trimester 2017-18
Instructor: John Cardinali, PsyD

Course Description

This six-week course is designed to give participants an overview of contemporary psychoanalytic theory and practice in the broad field of gender and sexuality. The evolution of psychoanalytic thought in the context of changes in society over the past half century will be illuminated as the following topics are explored: developmental aspects of psychosexuality and gender identity; homosexuality; transgender identifications; sexuality as an embodied experience; and perversion.

Learning Objectives:

1. Through gaining an understanding of how psychoanalytic theory and practice regarding gender and sexuality have evolved over the past half century, clinical associates will be able to provide more sensitive and relevant treatment.
2. While gaining knowledge regarding contemporary theories of psychosexual development, homosexuality, transgender experience, perversion and sexuality as an embodied experience, students will have an opportunity to deepen their philosophical understanding of how individuals, groups and society at large determine what is considered normal versus what is considered pathological. Such an understanding will allow clinical associates to listen to patient material with sensitivity to cultural blind spots which will increase treatment effectiveness.
3. Readings represent a broad range of clinical approaches and theory. Students will be encouraged to discuss their own clinical experiences. As a result, students will be better able to respond flexibly and creatively to their patient's material regarding gender and sexuality. Specifically, class discussion will include a consideration of different types of intervention which is informed by our study of gender and sexuality.

Reading Assignments:

Readings are available on PEPWeb. Those marked 'Handout' will be provided to you.

Week 1: January 5, 2018

Introduction

This session will provide an introductory framework for the course. We will consider historical influences on the development of psychoanalytic theorizing on sexuality and gender identity. In addition, we will take time to determine individual learning objectives for members of the class.

Dimen, M. and Goldner, M. (2011). Gender and Sexuality, Chapter 10 in *Textbook of Psychoanalysis*, second edition, pp. 133-152. **Handout**

Chodorow, N. (2011). Freud's Three Essays on Sexuality, Chapter 4 of her book *Individualizing Gender and Sexuality*, pp. 27-39. **Handout**

Recommended:

Herzog, D. (2015). What happened to psychoanalysis in the wake of the sexual revolution? Chapter 1, pp. 19-40, in *Sexualities: Contemporary Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, edited by Alessandra Lemma and Paul E. Lynch. **Handout**

Week 2: January 12, 2018

Psychosexual Development and Gender Identity

The development of sexual and gender identities have played a prominent role in psychoanalytic theory. In this class, we will consider revisions in psychoanalytic conceptualizations of how these core components of identity develop. Chodorow suggests that because heterosexuality is taken for granted as the outcome of normal psychosexual development that it has been insufficiently theorized. She makes her case by contrasting this approach to sexual identity development with that of homosexuality which has largely been viewed a symptom and considers the symptomatic aspects of heterosexuality. Target builds on earlier work with Fonagy which suggested that sexuality is no longer the primary basis and driver of character development and psychopathology. Target asserts that conscious and unconscious attachment needs are not only central in personality development, but also set the stage for psychosexual identity, erotic fantasy, and pleasure.

Chodorow, N. (1992). Heterosexuality as a Compromise formation: Reflections on the Psychoanalytic Theory of sexual development. *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, 15:267-304. **PEPWeb**

Target, M. (2015). A developmental model of sexual excitement, desire and alienation. Chapter 2, pp. 43-62, in *Sexualities: Contemporary Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, edited by Alessandra Lemma and Paul E. Lynch. **Handout**

Recommended:

Harris, A. (2000). Gender as a Soft Assembly: Tomboys' Stories. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 1:223-250. **PEPWeb**

Week 3: January 19, 2018

Homosexuality

Psychoanalysis has had a difficult history with regard to the conceptualization and treatment of persons with same gender sexual object choice. Contemporary views of homosexuality emphasize the meanings and experience of desire rather than the psychopathological origins of homosexual desire. Consequently, we will consider some unique aspects of the pathway to and experience of same gender object choice. Elise operates from two primary assumptions: innate bisexuality and that the mother is the first love object for both girls and boys. Elise's ideas have implications for women

who identify as lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual. In a clinically oriented paper, Phillips provides an example of a nuanced theory regarding some unique dynamics of gay male development.

Elise, D. (2002). The primary maternal oedipal situation and female homoerotic desire. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 22(20):209-228. **PEPWeb**

Phillips, S.H. (2001). The overstimulation of everyday life: 1. New aspects of male homosexuality. *JAPA*, 49:1235-1267. **PEPWeb**

Recommended:

Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence. In *Feminism and Sexuality*, edited by Jackson and Scott, 1996. **Handout**

Roughton, R. (2000). Sometimes a desire is just a desire: Gay men and their analysts. *Gender and Sexuality*, 5(3):259-273. **PEPWeb**

Week 4: January 26, 2018

Transgender, Neo-Gender

For the non-transgender analyst, there are few subjective experiences more difficult to understand in the consulting room. In this session, we will look at a broad, social constructivist view of transgender phenomena provided by Goldner. To compliment this approach, Lemma provides a developmental model for understanding transgenderism which is rooted in attachment and object relations theory. In addition, she offers a clinical example for working with these issues in treatment.

Lemma, A. (2013). The body one has and the body one is: Understanding the transsexual's need to be seen. *IJP*, 94:277-292. **PEPWeb**

Silvers, L. (2011). Trans: Gender in Free Fall. Presenter Virginia Goldner. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 21:159-171. **PEPWeb**

Recommended:

Hansbury, G. (2011). King Kong & Goldilocks: Imagining Transmasculinities through the Trans–Trans Dyad. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 21:210-220. **PEPWeb**

Suchet, M. (2011). Crossing Over. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 21:172-191. **PEPWeb**

Week 5: February 2, 2018

Sexuality and Gender as an Embodied Experience

The focus of this session is on the manner in which the body mediates and influences our experience of our gender and sexuality. Benjamin and Atlas look at the relationship between sexual excitement and early affect regulation, showing how excitement becomes dangerous, thus impeding or distorting desire. Elliot addresses the question; how does one come to inhabit a sex? What cultural, psychological, or physical considerations should be taken into account in the process of learning to

inhabit one's sex? She addresses this question in the context of a psychoanalytic perspective on transsexual embodiment.

Benjamin, J. and Atlas, G. (2015). The 'too muchness' of excitement: Sexuality in light of excess, attachment and affect regulation. *IJP*, 96:39-63. **PEPWeb**

Elliot, P. (2001). A Psychoanalytic Reading of Transsexual Embodiment. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 2:295-325. **PEPWeb**

Recommended:

Balsam, R. (2013). (Re) membering the Female Body in Psychoanalysis: Childbirth. *JAPA*, 61/3:447-470. **PEPWeb**

Week 6: February 9, 2018

Perversion

How do we determine healthy from pathological sexuality when thinking about perversion? What do we do clinically when confronted with the sexuality of our patients that challenge our own beliefs and experiences? Both readings for this session will provide an opportunity to consider these questions in some depth.

Saketopoulou, A. (2015). On sexual perversions' capacity to act as portal to psychic states that have evaded representation. Chapter 11 in *Sexualities: Contemporary Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, edited by Alessandra Lemma and Paul E. Lynch, pp. 205-217. **Handout**

Dimen, M. (2001). Perversion is Us? Eight Notes. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 11:825-860. **PEPWeb**

Recommended:

Kernberg, O. (1991). Sadomasochism, Sexual Excitement, and Perversion. *JAPA*, 39:333-362. **PEPWeb**

McDougall, J. (1986). Identification, Neoneeds and Neosexualities. *IJP*, 67:19-30 **PEPWeb**.