



**The New Jersey Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis
#F102 - Psychoanalytic Theory of Early Development**

Via Zoom

Fall 2023
Instructor: Wilda Mesias, PhD

Course Description: This course emphasizes the psychoanalytic understanding of the structure and psychic development of the mind of the infant and young child. We will begin with an introduction to the traditional conceptualization of the developing child, using as a point of departure Freud, Anna Freud, and Spitz. We will proceed with an exploration of Klein's and Winnicott's ideas followed by Margaret Mahler's Symbiosis and Separation-Individuation Process. The contributions of Bowlby's attachment theory will provide the background to address the infant and mother dyad and the theoretical and clinical practices that have evolved from it. We will address the input of Erikson and Piaget on psychoanalytical developmental theory and will touch upon some infant and child research, as exemplified by the work of Beebe, Stern, and Fonagy.

At the conclusion of the course candidates should have developed a framework in which to conceptualize the trajectory of infant and early child development.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To present candidates with the classical psychoanalytic contributions to infant and child development.
- 2) To acquire a working understanding of psychosexual stages, developmental lines, intra-psychic conflict, defense, compromise formation, separation-individuation, object relations, gender and gender fluidity in the context of development, and attachment styles.
- 3) To explore the contributions of infant and child research to the field of psychoanalysis, with particular focus on empathic attunement, validation, and recognition.
- 4) To demonstrate how developmental issues manifest in the treatment of children and adults.

Course requirements: Candidates will conduct an observation of a child ages 0-3 and a child ages 3-7. For each observation candidates will apply the concepts discussed in class in

interpreting their observations. Each observation should be between 2-3 typed pages. **The assignment is due on the last day of class (no exceptions).**

Course etiquette and confidentiality: Given that we will be having our class discussions on Zoom, it is critical that we all be respectful and mindful of one another's time and space. As such, please keep your cameras on and mute yourselves while others are presenting their thoughts. Additionally, because our case discussions and other discussions may feature confidential clinical information (or other sensitive information not to be disclosed outside of the learning environment), **it is imperative that you (1) *find a place in which to log in to the class that is private and in which you and others cannot be overheard and (2) refrain from discussion of the above-mentioned confidential or sensitive information outside of our class time.***

Readings and material:

Readings will be found on a Dropbox folder I will make available to all of you.

Class and Reading List:

Class I: Early contributions. This class will present the classical contributions to conceptualizing infancy and early childhood development. Candidates will be able to describe Freud's psychosexual stages, Anna Freud's developmental lines, and the effects of maternal deprivation on infants.

Required readings:

- Freud, S. (1905). Three essays on the theory of sexuality. *Standard Edition*, 7, 123-246.
- Freud, A. (1963). The concept of developmental lines. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 18, 245-265.
- Spitz, R. A. (1950). Anxiety in infancy: A study of its manifestations in the first year of life. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 31, 138-143.

Optional Reading:

- Spitz, R. A. (1945). Hospitalism—An inquiry into the genesis of psychiatric conditions in early childhood. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1, 53-74.

Class II: Klein and Winnicott. We will analyze Klein’s extension of Freud’s ideas. We will discuss the paranoid and depressive positions and we will address Winnicott’s emphasis on the maternal environment.

Required readings:

- Klein, M. (1991). The emotional life and ego-development of the infant with special reference to the depressive position. In P. King & R. Steiner (Eds.), *The Freud–Klein Controversies 1941–45* (pp. 7-37). Routledge.
- Aguayo, J. & Salomonsson, B. (2017). The study and treatment of mothers and infants, then and now: Melanie Klein's “Notes on Baby” in a contemporary psychoanalytic context. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 86, 383-408.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1953). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena—A study of the first not-me possession. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 34, 89-97.
- Brogan, C. (2021). I am, a central concept of Winnicott. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 37, 208-222.

Optional Reading:

- Winnicott, D. W. (1945). Primitive emotional development. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 26, 137-143.

Class III. Attachment. Bowlby’s emphasis on the impact of the early bonds infants form with their caregivers will be analyzed from an evolutionary stance. Candidates will be able to differentiate between attachment styles.

Required readings:

- Bowlby, J. (1958). The nature of the child's tie to his mother. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 39, 350-373.
- Abramis, M. (2020). Review of attachment in therapeutic practice: by Jeremy Holmes and Arietta Slade. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018. 240 pp. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 56, 661-673.
- Knafo, H. (2021). Attachment-informed interventions with the perinatal population. *Attachment: New Directions in Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, 15, 214-227.,

Optional Reading:

- Alexander, P. (2021). The antecedents and consequences of disorganised attachment and dissociation. *Attachment: New Directions in Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, 15, 181-197.

Class IV: Mahler's Symbiosis and Separation-Individuation. Mahler's stages, which primarily occur within the first three years of life, will be analyzed. Candidates will be able to understand the movement from symbiosis to individuation.

Required readings:

- Mahler, M. S. (1972). On the first three subphases of the separation-individuation process. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 53, 333-338.
- Blum, H.P. (2004). Separation individuation theory and attachment theory. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 52, 535-553.
- Gauthier, A. M. (2020). Why infant observation? Introduction to Michel Grignon. *Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 28, 6-10.
- Durban, J. (2021). The pipe child and the cork child: Infantile vulnerability and malignant symbiosis. *Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, 18, 43-67.

Class V: Erikson and Piaget. Candidates will engage with Erikson's stages of psychosocial development and Piaget's stages of cognitive development. In particular, we will analyze the relevance of Piaget's sensorimotor theory to psychoanalysis.

Required readings:

- Erikson, E. H. (1950). Eight Ages of Man. In *Childhood and Society* (pp. 247-274). W.W. Norton.
- Durrant, J. E. & Ensom, R. (2020). An Eriksonian perspective on physical punishment and its impacts on mental health. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 73, 30-45.
- Piaget, J. (1973). The affective unconscious and the cognitive unconscious. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 21, 249-261.
- Silber, L. M. (2020). Play for a change; therapeutic action in contemporary child psychotherapy, *Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy*, 19(2), 109-114.

Class VI. Gender and Self. Gender will be explored and critically analyzed from different points of view. The developmental impact of parental empathy, validation, and recognition (or the lack of any of the foregoing) will be approached from the perspective of self development.

Required readings:

- Loewald, H. W. (1985). Oedipus complex and development self. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 54, 435-443.
- Amir, D. (2021). Gender in movement: The emergent versus the continuous. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 22, 157-164.
- Ehrensaft, D. (2021). Psychoanalysis meets transgender children: The best of times and the worst of times. *Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, 18, 68-91.
- Fonagy, P., Allison, E., & Campbell, C. (2019). Commentary on “Trust Comes from a Sense of Feeling One’s Self Understood by Another Mind: An Interview with Peter Fonagy”. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 36(3), 228.
- Anderson, S. (2020). A child analysis from childhood into adolescence: Elements of therapeutic action at different developmental stages. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 73, 133-145.

Class VII. Child and Infant Research. Candidates will be able to identify the common ground between psychoanalysis and developmental science, and how this intersection influences theory and practice.

Required readings:

- Beebe, B. (2014). My journey in infant research and psychoanalysis: Microanalysis, a social microscope. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 31(1), 4-25.
- Beebe, B. & Lachmann, F. (2020). Infant research and adult treatment revisited: Co-creating self and interactive regulation. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 37, 313-323.
- Stern, D. N. (1988). Affect in the context of the infant’s lived experience. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 69, 233-238.
- Strathearn, L. (2019.) Exploring the neurobiology of attachment. In Mayes, L. Fonagy, P. & Target, M. (Eds.), *Developmental Science and Psychoanalysis* (pp. 117-140). Routledge.

Class VIII. The impact of development/concluding thoughts: In this final class, candidates will evaluate the course as a whole while broadening our focus on how developmental issues manifest themselves in the treatment of children and adults.

Required readings:

- Litowitz, B. E. (2021). Constructing the infantile. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 102, 588-594.
- Drisko, J. (2020). Narcissistic personality disorder in children: Applying a controversial diagnosis to guide treatment. *Psychoanalytic Social Work*, 27, 139-156.
- Rosenblitt, D. (2020). Discussion of Dr. Anderson's case with a focus on the child's use of the analyst at different developmental stages. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 73, 151-157.
- Harris, S. (2021). When it's OK not to think: Using the music of silence, sound and language to recover a live object for a child frozen into a 'robot' state of mind by trauma. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 47, 205-221.