

Psychoanalytic Research & Writing 2019-2020

Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis

Instructor: Celeste Birkhofer, PhD, PsyD, MFT

Date & Time: Six Sundays, Sept 11th- May 2nd 11:30-2pm

Total hours of instruction: 15 hours

Course Description:

The single case study, which allows for a contextualized and in-depth examination of experience across time, has long been the standard method of research in the field of psychoanalysis. Yet psychoanalysts have been encouraged to broaden their research efforts, to include empirical methods to study psychoanalytic process and outcome. Competing ideologies, values and philosophies lead to ongoing debates about whether psychoanalysis should be considered a science or a hermeneutic - an interpretive discipline, concerned with meaning. Regardless of where you situate yourself in that debate, you should be familiar with the various kinds of research in psychoanalysis. In addition, it is essential to develop and practice the skills needed for effectively communicating one's knowledge of psychoanalytic theory and practice when writing up research, case reports, or journal articles.

Course Objectives:

In this course, we will analyze the debates about psychoanalysis as a hermeneutic or science, discuss the value of research, review important research studies, and review how to write comprehensive case reports and conduct research using the single case study method - formulate research questions, design a method of investigation, and use the literature to generate and substantiate ideas. We will consider both the practical and creative aspects of writing, as we learn what to include in research papers and comprehensive case reports, and how to bring the clinical experience of the patient, analyst, and the process alive for the reader.

Specific Course Objectives:

Week 1:

1. Describe the discrepant views toward research in the field of psychoanalysis.
2. Explain the difficulty of operationalizing the variables of interest when conducting research on psychoanalytic treatment.

Week 2:

3. Articulate why research is important to the field of psychoanalysis.
4. Cite research that validates the effectiveness of psychoanalysis, and the influence of unconscious processes.

Week 3:

5. Practice formulating a research question and use existing literature to generate and substantiate ideas.
6. Describe how to conduct research using the single case study method.

Week 4:

7. Explain what should be included in a comprehensive case write up.
8. Articulate the difference between a comprehensive case write up and a single case study.

Week 5:

9. Describe the importance of using core psychoanalytic competencies as a guideline for what to include in a comprehensive case write.
10. Begin writing about one control case, including a psychodynamic formulation and description of the analytic process.

Week 6:

11. Describe the professional ethics involved in conducting research with humans and writing about patients - including informed consent, anonymity, privacy, confidentiality,

and protection from harm. Know and apply the ethics of authorship and avoid plagiarism.

12. Discuss ways to balance the need for structure and APA format requirements with creativity in one's writing.

Class #1 September 13th: The Debate: Research & Psychoanalysis

We will explore the controversy over research in the field of psychoanalysis. People ask, "How come we don't have more outcome studies on analysis" and "How can we possibly reduce something so complex and subjective into operationalized variables?" The practice of psychoanalysis does not easily lend itself to standard versions of the scientific method. So should we even try? This week's articles expose the different ideologies, values, and philosophies analysts bring to this debate. Should we maintain a holistic, un-objectifying mindset, and resist breaking our patients and the process down into measurable variables? Is the case study method sufficient to obviate the need for more rigorous application of the scientific method? Does it need to be an either-or choice? We will examine concerns and arguments on both sides of this debate. Prepare 2-3 comments or questions for discussion for all assigned weekly reading.

Readings:

Hoffman, I. (2009). Doublethinking Our Way to 'Scientific' Legitimacy: The Desiccation of Human Experience. *Journal American Psychoanalysis*, 57:1043-1069.

Safran, J. (2012). Doublethinking or Dialectical Thinking: A Critical Appreciation of Hoffman's 'Doublethinking' Critique," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 22:710-720.

Hoffman, I. (2012). "Response to Safran: The Development of Critical Psychoanalytic Sensibility. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 22:721-731.

Optional Reading:

Aron, L. (2012). "Rethinking Doublethinking": Psychoanalysis and Scientific Research---An Introduction to a Series, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 22:704-709.

Class #2 Oct 25th: The Importance of Psychoanalytic Research

This week's class discussion will focus on the relevance and importance of empirical research in the field of psychoanalysis. An important meta-analysis will be reviewed that demonstrates the effectiveness of psychodynamic therapy, and we will review research findings that lend empirical evidence to the power of unconscious processes. The challenges of using empirical methods to investigate analytic process will be discussed.

Readings:

McWilliams, N. (2013). Psychoanalysis & Research: Some Reflections and Opinions. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 100:919-945.

Shedler, J. (2010). The Efficacy of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy. *American Psychologist*, 65, 2: 98-109.

<https://www.n-c-p.org/Research.html>

(please familiarize yourself with this resource, a website on research in psychoanalysis)

Optional Reading:

Weston D. (1998). The Scientific Legacy of Freud: Toward a Psychodynamically Informed Psychological Science. *Psychological Bulletin*, vol 124, 3: 333-371.

Waldron, S., Gazzillo, F., Genova, F., & Lingiardi, V. (2013). Relational and Classical Elements in Psychoanalysis: An Empirical Study with Case Illustrations. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, Vol 30, 4: 567-600.

Class #3 December 6th: Conducting a Single Case Study

The single case study, *a narrative account of treatment that aims to address a theoretical or clinical question*, has been the primary method for contributing to psychoanalytic knowledge. We will review how to conduct research using this method and discuss the strengths and limitations of the method. The PsyD dissertation at ICP should be the application of the single case study method, integrating theory and clinical practice, *or* a well-researched investigation or exposition of a subject relevant to the practice of psychoanalysis or relevant to the application of psychoanalytic knowledge in other contexts. A dissertation should include a review of relevant psychoanalytic literature in order to contextualize and substantiate your ideas and hypotheses, make a scholarly contribution to psychoanalytic knowledge, and be publishable by a peer reviewed journal. The articles and discussion will provide some guidelines for developing a research question, and conducting your own research. We will review other previous ICP research papers and projects to stimulate your thinking.

Writing Assignment: After this class, choose a psychoanalytic topics of interest and/or a control case patient, and develop a question(s) you could use as the focus of your dissertation. Begin reviewing the literature on that topic. Write a 1-2 page summary of your initial ideas (topic & question), and include a list of at least 3-5 relevant resources (articles & books). Be prepared to discuss what you have written during the next class (10- 15 min presentation).

Readings:

Willemsen, J., Della Rosa, E., Kegerreis, S. (2017). Clinical Case Studies in Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Treatment. *Frontiers of Psychology*, 8(108): 1-7.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00108>

Optional Reading:

Mackey, N., & Poser, S. (2004). The Case Study in Psychoanalytic Education. *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 29: 171-192.

Midgley, N. (2006). Re-reading "Little Hans": Freud's Case Study and the Question of Competing Paradigms in Psychoanalysis. *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, 54(2): 537-559.

Tracy, S. J., (2010). Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16: 837. <http://qix.sagepub.com/content/16/10/837>

Class #4 January 31st: Writing about Clinical Process: Comprehensive Case Reports

We will use the first half of class for brief (10 minute) presentations from each candidate on a research topic of interest. We will review how to write comprehensive case reports. ICP does not limit candidates to one way of organizing the comprehensive case report, but the final write up should reflect the acquisition of psychoanalytic core competencies - capacities to make a psychoanalytic formulation, listen and think analytically, facilitate an analytic process, work in the transference, address unconscious processes, be self-reflective, deal with countertransference, and discuss outcome. We will review what to include in a psychoanalytic formulation and offer guidelines for writing about clinical work in a way that brings the experience of the patient, the analyst, and the process alive for the reader.

Writing Assignment: After this class, write a brief (2-3 pages) psychoanalytic case formulation of one of your control case patients to present in Class #5. This write up should include a brief history, salient unconscious organizing principles and dynamics, and a few examples of important themes and T/CT issues that were/are a focus of treatment (2-6 pages). This is not meant to be thorough and all inclusive, but instead, provide an opportunity to practice thinking and writing about patients in this way. (refer to the Comprehensive Case Report Guidelines and Core Psychoanalytic Competencies in the candidate progression manual available on website)

Readings:

Bernstein, S. B., (2008). Writing about psychoanalytic process. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 28: 433-449.

McWilliams, N. (2011). *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis: Understanding Personality Structure in the Clinical Process*. The Guilford Press, London. (chps 1 & 2 pgs 7-42). Optional: chps 3-6 pgs 43-155, & 359-361. (Pdf's provided)

Additional Resources:

Naiburg, S. (2015). *Structure and spontaneity in Clinical Prose*. Taylor & Francis. New York, NY. (pgs 104-107, 145-146, 157, 160, 162, 174-176, 196, 226, 241-247).

McWilliams, N. (1999). *Psychoanalytic Case Formulation*. The Guilford Press. NY, NY.

Class # 5 March 21st: Candidate Presentations of Psychoanalytic Case Formulations

Candidates will present brief psychoanalytic case formulations of one of their control cases (2-3 pages). We will discuss the importance of incorporating descriptions of actual clinical moments, "showing" the reader what transpired in the treatment by providing examples of dialogue and interactions. Instructions will be given for a final writing assignment that will present in the last class - a 2-3 page description of a clinical moment(s) with a control case patient.

Optional Reading:

Scharff, J.S. (2000). On Writing from Clinical Experience. *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, 48:421-447.

Class #6 May 2nd: Practical & Creative Aspects of Writing

Candidates will present their clinical moment descriptions (approximately 10-15 minutes each) and we will discuss some of the common challenges of writing quality dissertations, comprehensive case reports, and journal articles – such as writers block, procrastination,

and insecurity. Ideas will be explored to help balance the need for structure, coherence, and proper formatting in your writing, with freedom of creative expression.

Readings:

Aron, L. (2016). Ethical Considerations in Psychoanalytic Writing Revisited. *Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, 13: 267-290.

Gabbard, G.O. (2000). Disguise or Consent: Problems and Recommendations Concerning the Publication and Presentation of Clinical Material. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81(6): 1071-1086.

Optional Reading:

Aron, L. (2000). Ethical Considerations in the Writing of Psychoanalytic Case Histories. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 10:231-245.

Resource:

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (1995). American Psychological Association. Washington, D.C.