

Intersubjective Systems Theory/Phenomenological Contextualism

Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis - 2020-2021

Time: Saturdays 11:30 am – 2:00 pm, Sundays 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Dates: 9/12, 9/13; 10/30, 10/31; 12/5, 12/6. All 2020.

1/30,1/31, 3/20, 3/21, 5/1-5/2. All 2021.

Total Hours: 2.5 hours X 12 meetings = 30 hours

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**I. Course Description:**

Phenomenological Contextualism (formerly Intersubjective Systems Theory) developed by Stolorow, Atwood, and their collaborators, has evolved over the past 35 years into both a philosophically based understanding of the psychoanalytic process and a reconsideration of all the major themes in psychoanalytic treatment, such as unconsciousness, transference, embodiment, psychoanalytic action and affective experience.

In this course we will explore the theory itself and consider the practical implications for treatment of the concepts presented. Candidates will develop an ability to think in terms of the philosophical underpinnings of the theory and also be able to apply these ideas in specific, practical ways to the treatment process.

**Recommended book purchases:**

1. Stolorow,Atwood: Contexts of Being
2. Stolorow, Brandchaft & Atwood: Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach
3. Orange, Atwood & Stolorow: Working Intersubjectively: Contextualism in Psychoanalytic Practice

## **II. Course Objectives:**

- 1) Define what is meant by phenomenological contextualism.
- 2) Compare the concepts of phenomenological contextualism and intersubjective systems.
- 3) Describe transference from the perspective of phenomenological contextualism.
- 4) Describe unconsciousness from the perspective of phenomenological contextualism and contrast it to the idea of “the unconscious”.
- 5) Contrast the phenomenological contextualist viewpoint and the Relational viewpoint.

## **III. Specific Class Objectives:**

### *Class 1:*

1. Students will describe the foundational theories leading to the development of Intersubjective-systems Theory.
2. Students will describe the wider history of psychoanalysis which gave birth to Intersubjective-systems Theory.

### *Class 2:*

1. Students will explain the unique qualities of a phenomenological contextualist definition of transference.
2. Students will apply a phenomenological contextualist perspective of transference to specific clinical material.

### *Class 3:*

1. Students will cite specific characteristics of psychological development from a phenomenological contextualist perspective.
2. Students will compare and contrast contemporary notions of psychological development with more classical notions.

### *Class 4:*

1. Students will describe specific aspects of the clinical situation (eg: therapeutic alliances, impasses, interpretations) from within the context of phenomenological

contextualism.

2. Students will apply their understanding of the clinical situation from a phenomenological contextualism perspective to relevant clinical material.

1. Students will cite specific characteristics of psychopathology from a phenomenological contextualist perspective.

2. Students will compare and contrast contemporary notions of psychopathology with more classical notions.

*Class 5:*

1. Students will cite specific representations of the unconscious from a phenomenological contextualist perspective.

2. Students will compare and contrast contemporary notions of the unconscious with more classical notions.

*Class 6:*

1. Students will describe specific aspects of the clinical situation (eg: therapeutic alliances, impasses, interpretations) from within the context of phenomenological contextualism.

2. Students will apply their understanding of the clinical situation from a phenomenological contextualism perspective to relevant clinical material.

*Class 7:*

1. Students will describe emotions and emotional states from an Intersubjective-systems Theory and phenomenological perspective.

2. Students will apply their understanding of emotional states from an Intersubjective-systems Theory and phenomenological perspective to relevant clinical material.

*Class 8:*

1. Students will describe some of the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenological contextualism and Intersubjective-systems Theory.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of how the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenological contextualism and Intersubjective-systems Theory can be applied directly to the clinical situation.

*Class 9:*

1. Students will describe emotional trauma from an Intersubjective-systems Theory and phenomenological perspective.
2. Students will apply their understanding of emotional trauma from an Intersubjective-systems Theory and phenomenological perspective to relevant clinical material.

*Class 10:*

1. Students will describe extreme emotional states from the understanding of phenomenological contextualism and Intersubjective-systems Theory.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of how “annihilation states” can be understood from the perspective of phenomenological contextualism and Intersubjective-systems Theory.

*Class 11:*

1. Students will compare and contrast Relational and Self Psychology perspectives with a phenomenological contextualist approach to psychoanalysis.
2. Students will analyze the process of divergence of Relational and Intersubjective-systems Theory schools of thought over the past few decades.

*Class 12:*

1. Students will discuss the gradual transformation of Intersubjective-systems Theory over the past three decades to what is now called Phenomenological Contextualism.

2. Students will analyze their ability to apply concepts learned throughout this course to their clinical work.

## **WEEKEND 1**

### **Class 1**

#### **Friday, September 12th: Foundations**

##### *Readings:*

Stolorow, Stwood (1992) Contexts of Being, Chapter 1, The Myth of the Isolated Mind pp. 7 -28.

Stolorow, Brandchaft, Atwood, (1987) Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach , Chapter 1, Principles of Psychoanalytic Exploration, pp. 1-14.

##### *Additional Recommended Readings:*

Stolorow, Atwood & Brandchaft (1994). The Intersubjective Perspective – Chapter 2: Toward a Science of Human Experience (Stolorow & Atwood) (pp. 15-30).

Orange, Atwood & Stolorow (1997). Working Intersubjectively: Contextualism in Psychoanalytic Practice - Chapter 5: Thinking and Working Contextually (pp. 67-90).

##### *Recommended:*

Stolorow (2011). *From Mind to World, From Drive to Affectivity: A Phenomenological-Contextualist Psychoanalytic Perspective*. Attachment: New Directions in Psychotherapy and Relational Psychoanalysis, 5(1):1-14.

### **Class 2**

#### **Sunday, September 13th: Transference from an Intersubjective Perspective**

*Readings:*

Stolorow, Brandchaft & Atwood (1987). Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach - Chapter 3: Transference: The Organization of Experience (pp. 28-46).

Stolorow, Atwood & Brandchaft (1994). The Intersubjective Perspective – Chapter 13: Countertransference, Empathy and the Hermeneutical Circle (Orange) (pp. 177-186).

Orange & Stolorow (1998). *Self-Disclosure from the Perspective of Intersubjectivity Theory*. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 18: 530-537.

*Additional Recommended Readings:*

Orange, Atwood & Stolorow (1997). Working Intersubjectively: Contextualism in Psychoanalytic Practice, Chapter 3: The Myth of Neutrality (pp. 35-44).

Gill, Merton. *Psychoanalysis in Transition*, 1994, The Analytic Press, Hillsdale, NJ. pp. 101-106.

Greenson, R., *The Technique and Practice of Psychoanalysis, Vol 1*, 1967, International Universities Press. pp.151-155.

**Weekend 2**

**Class 3**

**Saturday, October 30th: Psychological Development & Psychopathology**

*Readings:*

Atwood & Stolorow (1984). Structures of Subjectivity, Chapter 3: Development and Pathogenesis (pp. 65-79 **only**).

Stolorow, Brandchaft & Atwood (1987). Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach, Chapter 6: Developmental Failure and Psychic Conflict (pp. 88-99).

Stolorow, Brandchaft & Atwood (1987). Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach - Chapter 4: Bonds That Shackle, Ties That Free (pp. 47-65).

Brandchaft (2007). *Systems of Pathological Accommodation and Change in Psychoanalysis*. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 24:667-687.

**Class 4**

**Sunday, November 1st: Psychological Development & Psychopathology (cont.)**

*Readings:*

Atwood & Stolorow (1984). Structures of Subjectivity, Chapter 2: The Therapeutic Situation-Psychopathology (pp. 55-59 **only**).

Stolorow & Atwood (1992). Contexts of Being: The Intersubjective Foundations of Psychological Life, Chapter 4: Trauma and Pathogenesis (pp. 51-59).

Stolorow & Atwood (1992). Contexts of Being: The Intersubjective Foundations of Psychological Life, Chapter 3: The Mind and The Body (pp. 41-50).

Atwood & Stolorow (1984). Structures of Subjectivity, Chapter 4: Pathways of Concretization (pp. 85-117).

### **Weekend 3**

#### **Class 5.**

#### **Saturday, December 5th: Forms of Unconsciousness**

##### *Readings:*

Stolorow & Atwood (1992). Contexts of Being: The Intersubjective Foundations of Psychological Life, Chapter 2: Three Realms of the Unconscious (pp. 29-40).

Stolorow, Orange & Atwood (2001). *World Horizons: A Post-Cartesian Alternative to the Freudian Unconscious*, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 37:1 (43-61).

Stolorow (2006). *The Relevance of Freud's Concept of Danger-Situation for an Intersubjective Systems Perspective*, *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 23:2, 417-419.

Stolorow (2007). Trauma and Human Existence: Autobiographical, Psychoanalytic, and Philosophical Reflections, Chapter 5: Trauma and the "Ontological Unconscious" (pp. 23-31).

#### **Class 6**

#### **Sunday, December 6th: The Clinical Situation**

##### *Readings:*

Stolorow & Atwood (1992). Contexts of Being: The Intersubjective Foundations of Psychological Life, Chapter 6: Varieties of Therapeutic Alliance *and* Chapter 7: Varieties of Therapeutic Impasse, (pp. 87-122).

Stolorow (1994). The Intersubjective Perspective, Chapter 4: The Nature and Therapeutic Action of Psychoanalytic Interpretation (eds: Stolorow, Atwood & Brandchaft), (pp. 43-55).

Stolorow (1994). The Intersubjective Perspective, Chapter 11: Converting Psychotherapy to Psychoanalysis (eds: Stolorow, Atwood & Brandchaft), (pp. 145-154).

*Recommended:*

Orange, Atwood, & Stolorow (1997). Working Intersubjectively: Contextualism in Psychoanalytic Practice, Chapter 2: Beyond Technique (pp. 19-34).

Stolorow (2019). *Emotional Phenomenology and Relationality: Forever the Twain Shall Meet*. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 39:2, 123-126.

#### **WEEKEND 4**

##### **Class 7**

##### **Saturday, January 29th: : Trauma and Existence.**

*Readings:*

Stolorow (2007). Trauma and Human Existence: Autobiographical, Psychoanalytic, and Philosophical Reflections, Chapters 1-4, and Chapter 7 (pp. 1-21, 48-51).

Atwood (2012). The Abyss of Madness, Chapter 5: The Unbearable and the Unsayable (pp. 107-132).

Stolorow (2015). *A Phenomenological-Contextual, Existential, and Ethical Perspective on Emotional Trauma*, *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 102(1): 123-138.

## **Class 8**

### **Sunday, January 30th: Philosophical Underpinnings**

*Readings:*

Atwood & Stolorow (1984). Structures of Subjectivity, Chapter 1: Philosophical Context and Basic Concepts (pp. 1-30 **only**).

Stolorow (2007). Trauma and Human Existence: Autobiographical, Psychoanalytic, and Philosophical Reflections, Chapter 6: Anxiety, Authenticity, and Trauma (pp. 34-46).

## **WEEKEND 5**

## **Class 9**

### **Saturday, March 20th: The Phenomenology of Emotional Trauma**

*Readings:*

Orange, Atwood & Stolorow (1997). Working Intersubjectively: Contextualism in Psychoanalytic Practice, Chapter 4: Contexts of Nonbeing (pp. 45-66).

Atwood (2012). The Abyss of Madness, Chapter 5: The Unbearable and the Unsayable (pp. 107-132).

Stolorow (2015). *A Phenomenological-Contextual, Existential, and Ethical Perspective on Emotional Trauma*, *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 102(1): 123-138.

Stolorow & Atwood (2019). The Power of Phenomenology: Psychoanalytic and Philosophical Perspectives, Chapter 10: Walking the Tightrope of Emotional Dwelling (pp. 113-126).

## **Class 10**

### **Sunday, March 21st: The Phenomenology of Emotional Trauma, Part Two**

#### *Readings:*

Stolorow, Brandchaft & Atwood, (1987). Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach, Chapter 5: Affects and Selfobjects (pp. 66-87).

Stolorow, Brandchaft & Atwood (1987). Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach - Chapter 8: Treatment of Borderline States (pp. 106-131).

Worlds of Experience: Interweaving Philosophical and Clinical Dimensions in Psychoanalysis, Chapter 8: Shattered Worlds/Psychotic States: The Experience of Personal Annihilation (pp. 139-175).

#### Recommended:

Brandchaft & Stolorow (1994). The Intersubjective Perspective, Chapter 7: The Difficult Patient, (eds: Stolorow, Atwood & Brandchaft), (pp. 93-112).

## **WEEKEND 6**

### **Class 11**

### **Saturday, May 1st: Comparison with Relational and Self Psychology**

#### **Perspectives**

#### *Readings:*

Shane (2015). *Multiplicity and Unity Within Relational Psychoanalysis: Convergences, Controversies, and Creative Tensions*. Opening Panel Address, Toronto, 2015.

Magid & Shane (2017). *Relational Self Psychology*. *Psychoanalysis, Self and Context*, 12(1):3-19.

Stolorow, Atwood & Orange (2002). Worlds of Experience: Interweaving Philosophical and Clinical Dimensions in Psychoanalysis, Chapter 5: Cartesian trends in Psychoanalysis (pp. 77-97).

## **Class 12**

### **Sunday, May 3rd: Review/Summary**

*Readings:*

Atwood & Stolorow (2014). Structures of Subjectivity: Explorations in Psychoanalytic Phenomenology and Contextualism, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Chapter 6: Legacies of the Golden Age: A Memoir of a Collaboration (17 pgs.).

Stolorow & Atwood (2019). The Power of Phenomenology: Psychoanalytic and Philosophical Perspectives, Chapter 4: CREDO-Intersubjective-systems theory: A phenomenological-contextualist perspective (pp. 57-69).

Stolorow & Atwood (2019). The Power of Phenomenology: Psychoanalytic and Philosophical Perspectives, Chapter 12: Concluding dialogue (pp. 127-130).