G894582 Selected Issues in Trauma Studies


**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Because of the University Calendar and the Jewish Holidays, the class on Dec. 15 will meet in two parts. From 12:30 - 2:20 and from 2:20 - 3:30

**Location:** NYU

**Synopsis:**

Virulent xenophobia, terrorist attacks, devastating natural disasters or wide-ranging wars, violence and sexual trauma. The ubiquity of trauma in everyday life – whether we are talking about our patients, ourselves, or our society - has become glaringly evident particularly in the aftermath of recent political events around the world including our own country. We are aware of how much need there is for psychoanalysts working with traumatized individuals to be well versed in the multiple manifestations, reverberations and consequences of traumatic events for the psychic life of patient and analyst alike.

The four instructors of this course represent the four tracks within Post Doc. They will present their psychoanalytic perspectives on trauma that arise out of his/her understanding of the subject in its individual as well as socio-cultural meanings. In each of the course blocks there will be overlapping themes, particularly that of the legacy of trauma across generations as well as the effects on the analyst of working with trauma. The impact of countertransference on the analyst and on the work itself will be considered through the theoretical lens of the individual instructors who represent the four theoretical orientations of the Post Doctoral Program.

**Week 1. Sept. 8, 2017 12:30 - 2:20**

**Introduction and overview of the scope of the course. All four instructors – Alpert, Prince, Thomas, Tylim.**

This session will focus on an introduction to trauma – an event or a reaction to an event? The various forms of trauma will be discussed – chronic illness, poverty, racism, political repression, war, disaster – as well as their psychic and developmental consequences and differences and the differing theoretical perspectives on what constitutes “trauma.”
Week 2.
BLOCK I.: INSTRUCTOR-JUDIE ALPERT

IMPACT OF SEXUAL TRAUMA

This section will focus on the impact of sexual trauma on the patient and the analyst. Issues around memory for traumatic events, defensive consequences, and transgenerational transmission of trauma are some of the issues to be of focus. Treatment of adults who were sexually abused will also be considered.

Required Readings:


In class, instructor will discuss her work with children who were sexually abused and its impact on the behavior and memory of the children. We will also discuss assigned readings.

Objectives:
At the end of this class you will be able to:

1. Identify the short and long term impact of child sexual abuse.
2. Explain what happens to memory when there is traumatic abuse.
3. Demonstrate understanding of various forms of knowing.

Week 3  Sept. 22, 2017: EFFECTS OF SEXUAL TRAUMA ON ANALYST AND TRANSGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF TRAUMA

Required Readings:


In class, instructor will discuss “her story about transgenerational transmission”. We will also discuss assigned readings.

**Objectives:**
At the end of this class you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of transgenerational transmission of trauma.
2. Explain the concept of transgenerational transmission of trauma.
3. Explain the concepts of vicarious traumatization and countertrauma.


In addition to discussion of assigned readings, instructor will discuss treatment issues and case material.

**Objectives:**
At the end of this class you will be able to:

1. Identify limits of interpretations.
2. Assess the veridicality of memories.

**BLOCK II: INSTRUCTOR: ISAAC TYLIM**

This section will explore the working through processes following traumatic events. I shall delve into Freud’s and Melanie Klein’s conceptualization of normative and pathological mourning, the part played by the repetition
compulsion, and the tension between libidinal and destructive forces as manifested in reparation and creativity.

**WEEK 5: Oct. 6, 2017**

Trauma and Mourning. Normal and Pathological Mourning. Memory and the repetition compulsion. The dead third. Resentment, pain, terror, and splendor as forms of memory.

**Required Readings:**

Freud, S. (1917), Mourning and Melancholia. SE. 14


Kancyper, L. Resentimento Terminable e Interminable (paper presented at FEPAL)

**Objectives:**

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. assess and differentiate psychological states following traumatic losses.
2. describe the role of memory in facilitating or impeding elaboration of traumatic events.
3. identify technical problems when dealing with the failure of symbolization

**WEEK 6: Oct. 20, 2017, Dreams, art, and creativity as facilitators of mourning.**

**Required Readings:**


**Objectives:**

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. link creative endeavors to psychological work in mourning.
2. identify political dimensions of artistic productions that foster the need to remember.
3. describe different types of memories and the tensions between the need to remember and the need to forget

**Week 7: Oct. 27, 2017: Memorialization. Technology, virtuality, and the culture of desire. The building of memorials.**

**Required Readings:**


**Objectives:**

At the completion of this session participants will be able to:

1. identify the means by which individuals, groups, and communities attempt to mourn.
2. identify the contemporary forces that overtly or covertly minimize space and time for mourning processes to occur.
3. list the factors that interfere with the timing of memorials.

**Block III - Instructor Nina Thomas - The phenomenology of trauma**

This section of the course will expressly focus on the phenomenology of traumatic experience and its relational consequences. Traumatized individuals have especial difficulty in modulating their experience whether as a result of the psychic numbing to which they can become subject or the degree to which they may be launched into intense reliving of their original traumatic moments. The intensity of experience coupled with the failure of symbolic function create particular dilemmas for the therapist in finding ways to navigate the turmoil and to sustain him/herself through the patient’s maelstroms. Psychoanalytic treatment can be a rich resource for accompanying the patient in reshaping experience as an object of narrative and symbolized memory as opposed to re-enactment.

**Week 8: Nov. 3, 2017.** Affect regulation or dysregulation is a familiar concern in work with patients who have experienced traumatic events. This "being in the midst of a storm" has significant implications for patient, analyst and the analytic dyad. This class will focus on the challenges to the analytic task involved in the patient and analyst withstanding such affect storms and working through the enactments that accompany them.
Required Readings:


Thomas, N.K. (2013) “I've got you under my skin: Revenge as an attempt at affect regulation.” In V. Caretti, G Craparo, & A. Schimmenti (Eds) *Trauma psichico. Teoria, Clinica, Ricerca* (Psychic Trauma. Theory, Research and Clinical Issues) Rome, Italy: Astroblabio. (I will provide this in electronic form)

Suggested Reading:


Objectives:

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Identify two ways in which affect regulation figures in the response to traumatic events.
2. Describe the linkages between attachment disorders and affect regulation dysfunction.

Week 9: Nov. 10, 2017. On witnessing

The analytic undertaking depends on the symbolic representation of experience. As such, the patient and analyst share the function of being witness to what the patient has lived through. This session will focus on the demands for both participants of “witnessing” in its multiple dimensions.

Required Readings:


Objectives: At the end of this session participants will:

1. List two challenges for the analyst in serving as witness to the patient’s trauma.
2. Describe the work involved in developing the patient’s witnessing capacity to her/himself.

Week 10: Nov. 17, 2017. The Transgenerational Transmission of Racial Trauma

This session will focus on the legacy of historical racial trauma from slavery, through “Jim Crow” to contemporary experiences of race discrimination and the effect on the experience of identity, marginalization, self representation and interpersonal interactions.

Required Readings:


Objectives:

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. describe the processes involved in the transmission of prior generations’ experiences of being defined by race.
2. list the ways in which such racialized experience enters the analytic space.

Block IV: Instructor: Robert Prince
In these 3 weeks we will explore the general idea of History as integral to psychoanalysis and the more specific idea of Historical trauma. There will be an interdisciplinary focus, references to important thinkers from specialties outside of psychoanalysis who have been informed by psychoanalysis but may not be widely known within psychoanalysis. We will consider the presence of the Historical in the unconscious, its role in identity and self experience, and the construction of the Historical fact and its relationship to psychological memory. Reciprocity of past and present, individual and collective memory, commemoration and transmission and embedded trauma will be threads running through the discussion. The specific Historical reference will be the Holocaust but you will be sensitized to the Historical and be asked to bring clinical examples of the role of History from your own clinical work.


**Objectives:**
At the end of this class you will be able to:

1. Define “sublime historical event” and its role in personal experience.
2. Conceptualize “transmission of trauma” as a Historical concept.
3. Evaluate Kohut’s assertion that Psychoanalysis itself is Historically conditioned.

**Week 12 Dec. 8, 2017 Presence and post-memory**


**Objectives:**
At the end of this class you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of Runia’s integration of psychoanalytic and historiographical thinking and particularly his formulations of “presence” and “commemoration.”
2. Explain the concept of “presence” with appreciation of its psychoanalytic referents.
3. Explain the concept of post-memory and distinguish it from individual and collective memory.

**Week 13: Part 1. 12:30 - 2:20** The fate of Historical trauma


Objectives:
At the end of this class you will be able to:

1. Discuss the evolution of adaptation after trauma in the context of cultural change.
2. Assess the stability of post traumatic rupture and the possibility of healing.

**Week 12 Part 2: 2:20-3:30.**

**Block V: Integrating the theoretical perspectives – Instructors Alpert, Prince, Thomas and Tylim.**

Dec. 15, 2017... This final session of the course will provide a Coda to the discussion that was begun in the introduction. That is, the four perspectives on what constitutes trauma and the approaches to treatment that emerge from these conceptualizations will be examined in detail.