Course: Melanie Klein and the neo-Kleinians
Dates: 2/6; 2/13; 2/20; 2/27; 3/6; 3/13; 2/20; 3/27
Place: BPSI  Time: 5:00 to 6:30

Instructors: Harry Penn, MD
Sharon M. Roberts, PHD

Abstract/Purpose of seminar:

Melanie Klein wanted to continue to develop Freud’s theories with a focus on unconscious phantasy and object relations. As a consequence, she developed a different theory of the mind focusing on primitive anxieties, defenses and object relations. She conceptualized a psychic organization characterized by dynamic oscillations between the paranoid schizoid and depressive positions. Technically she focused on her view of transference as an expression of unconscious phantasy. Later followers of Klein would expand and elaborate her theories always grounding them in the clinical context. In this course, we will use a chronological approach with a balance of contemporary Kleinian literature. Our focus will be primarily on the London Kleinians and Bion. Included will be an exploration of envy and gratitude as expressions of death and life instincts. Also, we will acquaint ourselves with Kleinian technique. In particular we will give attention to the clinical use of the “here and now” transferences and the interplay between transference and countertransference phenomena in the therapeutic endeavor. The goal of the course will be to give candidates a theoretical understanding of the evolution of Kleinian theory and contemporary Kleinian practice.

Syllabus:

Week I: Introduction to Klein
Learning objective: To discuss the developmental model as illustrated in the schizoid position and crucial psychic role in the preservation of the good object.


Week II: Klein’s unconscious, an examination of unconscious phantasy
Learning objective: To demonstrate the place of unconscious phantasy in the composition of the unconscious, in object relations and in the transference.


Recommended:

Week III: The Death Instinct
Learning objective: To investigate the nature of the role of the death instinct in aggression, psychic integration, and in the constructive dimensions of relationships.


Week IV: Envy and Gratitude
Learning Objective: To be able to explain the relationship between envy and gratitude and the death and life instincts from a Kleinian perspective and to compare that perspective with a contemporary view of envy informed by current infant research.


Recommended:

Week V: Bion and Ogden
Learning Objective: To explain and discuss how Bion’s theories of mind articulate an intersubjective dimension that transforms and expands Klein’s ideas about symbol formation and the paranoid schizoid and depressive positions.


Week VI: Transference/ Countertransference
Learning Objective: To describe Klein’s concept of transference as it evolved from Freud’s and to assess the value it has for current psychoanalytic practice.


Week VII: Clinical applications of a theory
Learning Objective: To explain how the countertransference and the analyst’s mind can be used in the service of understanding the patient and the patient’s history and to describe how attention to the analyst’s mind has an impact on our way of viewing analytic observation and neutrality.


Week VIII: Synthesis and Bion
Learning Objective: To discuss what we have explored in our readings and to see how the later work of Bion moved very far Klein and the neo-Kleinians, especially with his thoughts on thinking and dreaming as possibilities for exploring the unconscious interaction with another’s mind.