

**2015-2016 ATP II**  
**Neuroses and Neurotic Character**

Instructors: Deborah Shilkoff, LICSW and Jack Beinashowitz, Ph.D.

This seminar will examine the concepts of neurosis and neurotic character: their etiology and clinical manifestations. We will start with a review of the basic psychoanalytic understanding of neurosis, character and character organization at neurotic, borderline and psychotic levels. We will then discuss several types of characteristic defenses and character types. The course will be organized around Nancy McWilliams' book as a basic text. For each of the categories of neurosis and neurotic character, we will read a chapter of this book. It is an excellent synthesis of analytic thought and clinical material and is readable without being simplistic. Participants are encouraged to bring in clinical examples.

Basic Text: McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press. [Available on Reserve in the [Library](#)]

Week 1: Introduction. What is meant by neurosis and neurotic character? We will discuss developmental fixation vs. adaptive capacities and defensive organization, and the distinction between neurosis and character disorder.

1. Liebert, Robert. The Concept Of Character: A Historical Review pp. 46-61 from *Essential Papers on Character Neurosis and Treatment*, Lax, Ruth, Editor, (1989) NYU Press. [Available in [Library](#)]
2. McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press, pp. 55-66 & pp. 96-150. [Available in [Library](#)]

Learning objective: To examine the concept of character and its clinical relevance. To review the different levels of psychopathology: neurotic, borderline and psychotic and how they fit into psychoanalytic diagnosis.

Week 2: Hysterical Character

1. McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press, pp. 311-331. [Available in [Library](#)]
2. Easser BR, Lesser SR. (1965). Hysterical Personality: A Re-Evaluation. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 34:390-405. [PEP Link](#)

Learning objective: To review the manifestations of hysterical character.

Week 3: Schizoid Character

1. McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press, pp. 196-213. [Available in [Library](#)]
2. Guntrip, Harry. Chapter 2 in *Schizoid Phenomena, Object Relations and the Self*. (1992) London: Karnak Books. [Available in [Library](#)]

Learning objective: To review the manifestations of schizoid character.

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Week 4: Obsessive and Compulsive Characters

1. McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press, pp. 289-310. [Available in [Library](#)]
2. Shengold, Leonard. Defensive Anality and Anal Narcissism. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 66, pp. 47-73. [PEP Link](#)

Learning objective: To review the manifestations of obsessive/compulsive character.

Week 5: Depressive Neurosis. We will discuss different types of depression; mania vs. manic defenses.

1. McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press, pp 235-266. [Available in [Library](#)]
2. Freud, Sigmund. (1917) *Mourning and Melancholia*. S.E. XIV: pp 243-258. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning objective: To review the manifestations of depressive character.

Week 6: Narcissistic Personalities and the conflict-deficit controversy.

1. McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press, pp 176-195. [Available in [Library](#)]
2. Modell, Arnold (1975) A Narcissistic Defense against Affects and the Illusion of Self-sufficiency. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 56. pp 275-282. [PEP Link](#)

Learning objective: To review the manifestations of the narcissistic character and narcissistic disorder.

Week 7: Sadomasochistic Character

1. McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press, pp 267-288. [Available in [Library](#)]
2. Kernberg, Otto (1991) Sadomasochism, Sexual Excitement, and Perversion. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 39: 333-362. [PEP Link](#)

Learning objective: To review the manifestations of the sadomasochistic character.

Week 8: Paranoid conditions and the paranoid personality

1. McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press, pp 214-234. [Available in [Library](#)]
2. Shapiro, David (1965) Paranoid Style. Chapter 3 in *Neurotic Styles*, NY Basic Books. pp 54-107. [Available in [Library](#)]

Learning objective: To review the manifestations of the paranoid character.

Week 9: Dissociative Psychologies

1. McWilliams, Nancy, *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Edition* (2011) NY: Guilford Press, pp 332-357. [Available in [Library](#)]
2. Howell, Elizabeth, F. "Dissociation: A Model of the Psyche" Chapter 1 in *The Dissociative Mind*, (2005) New Jersey: The Analytic Press. [Available in [Library](#)]

Learning objective: To review the manifestations of dissociative disorders.

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Week 10: Clinical/Theoretical Synthesis; Developmental Perspective.

1. Blatt S, Levy, K. (2003) Attachment Theory, Psychoanalysis, Personality Development and Psychopathology, *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 23 pp 102-150. [PEP Link](#)

Learning objective: To review the various character disorders that we have discussed in the course and examine attempts at a theoretical synthesis.

The seminar is relevant for clinicians in that it provides a review of the psychoanalytic understanding of neurotic character and character pathology. Participants will learn about the various different type of neurotic character, their theoretical underpinnings and clinical manifestations. The seminar will cover both theory and clinical practice and the discussion will be closely tied to clinical observations. Students will be encouraged to relate the theories to their clinical practice.