As a post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory, self psychology is continually undergoing changes and transformations. These changes have two major sources:

The first of these is related to the fact that the theory as it was originally articulated by Kohut over a period of less than two decades, contained ideas the meanings of which could only become clear with time and increasing clinical experience. The best example of this is the selfobject concept: originally a purely intrapsychic concept now includes intersubjective and relational perspectives.

The second major source of changes is related to the fact that there is a continuous, imperceptible influence that all psychoanalytic theories exert on each other. While each theory attempts to preserve its “purity,” discussions of clinical material reveal that analysts’ private theories (Sandler) have multiple sources.

This eight-session course can only be an overview in which we will focus on the most essential features of self psychology. We will aim for a systematic presentation recognizing that all psychoanalytic theories have to meet the criteria of inner consistency: the clinical theory based on clinical observations (transferences) has to be supported by a theory of development and a theory of psychopathology.

February 6, 2013

Why and how did Heinz Kohut develop a theory of the psychology of the self? What is the place of self psychology in the history of psychoanalysis?

February 13, 2014

The methodological underpinning of self psychology: empathy as a mode of observation and the definer of the field.


February 20, 2014

The basic concepts of self psychology; definitions and developmental considerations.


February 27, 2014

Self Psychology and the Oedipus Complex


March 6, 2014

The psychoanalytic process: the selfobject transferences and countertransference in an intersubjective perspective.

READING:


Commentary on the Thompson paper:


March 13, 2014

The Interpretive Process, the Process of Working Through and the influence of the analyst’s subjectivity on the analytic process.


OPTIONAL

March 20, 2014

Assertiveness, Anger, Rage and Destructive Aggression; the clinical and theoretical significance of narcissistic rage.

Kohut, H. (1972): Thoughts on Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage, Ps. S. Child 27L360-400, also in: The Search for the Self (ed,) Ornstein, P.H., 1978 PEP Web Link

March 27, 2013

TBD

Summary session, new directions, comparative readings