



I am very much looking forward to our embarking on the Writing Seminar together. Our first meeting will be on April 12. **An important note: I will be out of the country on May 31, the date our last class meeting was scheduled to meet. To make up for the missed class, we will meet on May 10 from 5:30pm until 8pm.** I will provide dinner for us on that date! Please let me know if this presents a difficulty for either of you.

The goal of the course is to gain skill and confidence writing about analytic process using material from your analytic cases (or therapy cases if an analytic case can't be used.) In such writing, the challenge is how best to understand, frame and describe what happens in the course of an analysis, how to bring the work to life on the page.

I am hoping that, along the way, we can think about and take pleasure in reading and writing per se. To this end, before the first class meeting, I would like us to read a very short story by Jamaica Kinkaid, which consists of a set of instructions. Using that story as a model, please write a short piece yourselves (I will, as well). You could create a set of instructions that a particular patient might wish to give you or instructions you might give a patient. Or, if you want to take off from Kinkaid in a different way, please feel free to do so. During the first class meeting we will discuss the Kinkaid story and read what we have written in response to it. [Here is the link.](#) We will also, of course, discuss the course and what you both hope to gain from it.

For the second class meeting, on April 19, please read Stephen Bernstein's paper "Writing About the Psychoanalytic Process," *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 2008; 28: 433-449 ([PEP Web Link](#)). Thomas Ogden's paper "On Psychoanalytic Writing," *IJP* 2005; 86: 15-29 ([PEP Web Link](#)) is also useful in thinking about how to approach writing. Please read that for the third class meeting.

On April 19, we will begin the presentation of clinical writing. (We can decide on the order of presentations at our first meeting.) Consider this piece of writing as a first draft. It should be a two or three page report, double spaced (approximately 750 words) of an analytic segment. You may illustrate any aspect of analytic work you choose, e.g. the communication of a dream, the establishment of an alliance – or a moment of misattunement; a transference or counter-transference response; a patient's physical appearance or manner, if these are striking to you. Your segment can be taken from any phase of treatment. You may choose anything you like to capture the work. What's important is how you show yourself and the patient working together. Please bring copies of the draft for all of us.

Because the class is small, we will have considerable latitude to decide together what will be most helpful to you. A colleague suggested to me recently that you might use the course to write the bulk of a case report – working on and discussing a section each week. Or, following class discussion, you might want to rewrite a segment that you have read to us. We can read additional papers about psychoanalytic writing. Last year, one candidate requested that we read a psychoanalytic article he felt was pertinent to his work with a particular patient. We can also, if we choose, read short pieces of writing that have been meaningful to us from whatever genre. This may give us a sense of each other other’s literary “ego ideals” – useful to keep in mind when writing clinical material.

If you have questions about any aspect of this course description, eg., confidentiality concerns, please be in touch with me.

I look forward to seeing you both on April 12.
Frances Lang LICSW

Learning Objectives:

- 1) At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to identify the three components of Stephen Bernstein’s model for presenting analytic process in writing.
- 2) At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to demonstrate two ways of presenting clinical process in written form.
- 3) At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to demonstrate, with one example, a clinical moment actively described in writing.
- 4) At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to identify two ways to convey the process of change over time in writing.
- 5) At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to identify three strategies for selecting clinical moments that effectively convey the analytic process.
- 6) At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to demonstrate two ways of developing and articulating a clinician’s writing voice.
- 7) At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to identify two strategies for avoiding jargon and vague language.
- 8) At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to demonstrate how he or she has arrived at his or her writing preferences in terms of both style and content.