



Ego Psychology Year III

Instructor: Fred Busch

Contemporary Ego Psychology has developed a method of how to uncover the patient's unconscious life (and the way it leads to ongoing enactments in life that interfere with the patient's capacities) and doing this in a way that keeps the patient's safety in mind. I hope this seminar will open some new vistas in your clinical work with patients. However, there is also an important historical component to Ego Psychology that will be useful for you to know about.

Ego Psychology was considered synonymous with American Psychoanalysis from the 1940's to the 1970's. Although it lost its predominant place, many of the basic underlying conceptions of ego psychology continue to inform contemporary Psychoanalytic thinking. In recent years, a major revision of psychoanalytic technique based on ego psychological principles (although not labeled as such) has become accepted as adding depth to many psychoanalytic perspectives.

Ego Psychology can be seen as the branch of psychoanalysis that fully elaborated and developed Freud's *Structural model* of the mind. It launched new ways of thinking about psychoanalytic theory and technique. Ego psychology represents an integrated view of the structure of the mind, psychopathology, development, and technique. Throughout the seminar, we will try to introduce this vast topic, recognizing that a thorough study would take a much longer period of time.

As Ego Psychology stands as a central link in the history of Psychoanalysis, and an important element in psychoanalytic technique, we will try to cover both aspects in readings and discussions of clinical material. I have tried to pare down the readings to the basics in the hope it will help you focus on the essentials.

As the clinical usefulness of Contemporary Ego Psychology is best shown via clinical material, I would ask you to work out a rotation so that we have a process note to go over for each session. We may not get to it, but I'd like us to have it available.

January 31 - A Clinical Perspective of Contemporary Ego Psychology

Busch, F. (2015). Our vital profession. *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 96, 553-568. [Available in the library: check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]
(In this article, I outline some principles of technique based on ego psychological principles, and their relationship to methods of working, especially in Europe. I don't mention ego psychology in the paper for reasons that will become clear in the seminar.)

Week 1: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to identify the clinical base of Ego Psychology.

February 14 - The Origins of Structural Theory and Overview of Ego Psychology

Busch, F. (1999). A brief history of ego psychology. In *Rethinking clinical technique* (pp. 111-122). Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson. [Available in the library: check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

Freud, S. (1933). The dissection of the psychical personality. In *S.E. XXII* (pp. 68-80 only). [PEP Web Link](#)

Freud, S. (1933). Anxiety and instinctual life. *S.E. XXII* (pp. 89 only). [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 2: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to identify Freud's original conceptualization of the structural model and explain his revised model of anxiety.

February 21 - The Hartmann Era

Bergman, M. (2000). *The Hartmann era* (Chapter 1, pp. 1-35, 35-58, 63-68 only). NY: Other Press. [Available in the library: check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

(In this section you may want to familiarize yourself with the prominent analysts who were part of the Hartmann era. Hartmann was considered by many as the heir apparent to Freud and was a giant in the Ego Psychology movement).

Week 3: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to analyze two of the most significant contributions and limitations to American Ego Psychology of Hartmann and his collaborators.

February 28 - The Beginnings of Contemporary Ego Psychological Technique

Gray, P. (1982). "Developmental lag" in the evolution of technique for psychoanalysis of neurotic conflict. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assoc.*, 30, 621-623, 626-629 only. [PEP Web Link](#)

Paniagua, C. (2001). The attraction of topographical technique. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 82(4), 671-684. [PEP Web Link](#)

These are central articles for understanding the importance of analyzing unconscious defenses, and the problems with (as well as the attraction of) interpretations of deep unconscious wishes.

Week 4: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to describe how a revised technique can facilitate id analysis as well.

March 7 - Charles Brenner, Jacob Arlow and Modern Conflict Theory

Brenner, C. (2003). Is the structural model still useful? *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 84(5), 1093-1096. [PEP Web Link](#)

(Central in this brief article is Brenner's idea that everything in the mind is a *compromise formation*. The technical suggestions that flow from this, are different from Gray's).

Busch, F. (1999). A diminished role for the ego. In *Rethinking clinical technique* (Chapter 2, pp. 20-31 only). Northvale, NJ: Aronson Press. [Available in the library: check the reading folder or request from library@bpsj.org]

Week 5: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to identify two unique features of Brenner's technique that differ from other Ego Psychologists.

March 14 - Contemporary Clinical Ego Psychology

Busch, F. (2013). Speaking to the preconscious & The transformative function of the analyst's words. In *Creating a psychoanalytic mind* (Chapter 3, pp. 20-32; Chapter 4, pp. 34-44). NY: Routledge. [Available in the library: check the reading folder or request from library@bpsj.org]

Week 6: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to identify one example of making interpretations that build representations via the patient's preconscious.

March 21 - Contemporary Clinical Ego Psychology (Continued)

Busch, F. (2013). How the unconscious speaks to us & Why do we ask questions? In *Creating a psychoanalytic mind* (Chapter 5, pp. 46-56; Chapter 8, pp. 78-87). NY: Routledge. [Available in the library: check the reading folder or request from library@bpsj.org]

Week 7: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to define language action as a form of how the unconscious speaks to us and identify one reason why common questions we ask may not be helpful.

March 28 - Summing Up

Kernberg, O.F. (2001). Recent developments in the technical approaches of English language psychoanalytic schools. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 70, 519-547. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 8: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to identify two ways in which Ego Psychology is like and unlike other psychoanalytic approaches.