



To: Candidates in Writing Seminar

From: Frances Lang, LICSW

Date: March 13, 2019

Re: Fourth Quarter Writing Seminar

Dear Class Participants,

I am looking forward to meeting you and beginning the Writing Seminar together. Our first meeting will be on April 11. 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 would like to design the course to best meet the needs of all six of you. If you would like to let me know before the class begins about particular goals you may have for the course, I would be very interested to hear these. **The following course framework is provisional** and can be changed if you are interested in additional or alternate readings to those assigned. (Two years ago, for instance, a candidate requested that we read a psychoanalytic paper he felt was pertinent to his work with a particular patient.) You might use the course to write a portion of a case report. You might, on the other hand, feel that your learning is best served by bringing in a piece of non-clinical writing. We can discuss this possibility, as well.

For the second class meeting on April 18, please read Stephen Bernstein's paper "Writing About the Psychoanalytic Process," *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* 2008; 28: 433-449 ([PEP Web Link](#)). On that date, 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.

For the third class meeting, please read Thomas Ogden's paper "On Psychoanalytic Writing," *IJP* 2005; 86: 15-29 29 ([PEP Web Link](#)). At that class, we will continue to read and discuss your writing.

To begin in a way that I hope gives pleasure, **please read before the first class meeting** a very short story *Girl* by Jamaica Kincaid ([linked here](#)), which creates a portrait of mother, daughter, culture, through a set of instructions. Using that story as a model, please write a short piece yourselves. You could write 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 Kincaid in an entirely different way, please feel free to do so. During the first class meeting we will discuss the Kincaid story and read what we have written in response to it. We will also, of course, discuss the course and what you hope to gain from it.

**An important note: I will be out of the country on Thursday, April 25. There are three dates when we could have a “double meeting” running from 5:30 to 8pm: May 2, May 16, and May 23. I would, of course, bring food and drink. Could you get back to me with a ‘reply all’ email about which, if any, of these evenings would work for you. The other alternative is to have a different faculty member teach the April 25 class, the date when I cannot be present. Please also let me know if you would prefer that.**

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

I look forward to seeing you on April 11.

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.