



Year V
Winter I, 2019-2020

Freud III

Instructor: Julia Matthews

This seminar extends the exploration of Freud’s writing to the late phase in which Freud considers offers understandings of culture from within his theory and the intrinsic conflict of societal and individual needs. We will read one of Freud’s most famous case studies (“The Wolfman”). Freud began with a caution regarding the value of basing theory on one case study: “Naturally a single case does not give us all the information that we should like to have. Or, to put it more correctly, it might teach us everything, if we were only in a position to make everything out, and if we were not compelled by the inexperience of our own perception to content ourselves with a little” (S.E. XVII pp.10). Yet he clearly used the case to illustrate the transformation of unconscious fantasies and repressed desires into symptoms. Another central question to be considered in this case is the place and the validity of “reconstruction.”

We will then read two papers on the cultural implications of Freud’s theory – both psyche in culture and culture in psyche. *The Future of an Illusion*, a paper in which religion, “the universal obsessional neurosis,” is in conflict with the primacy of science, and Freud’s belief in the factors that allows for humankind’s evolution into maturity. *Civilization and its Discontents* focuses on the fragile equilibrium between drives and superego that people develop in order to live in a civilized society, an equilibrium designed to protect them but one which could also destroy them. We will end with a paper that is the correspondence between Einstein and Freud, as pertinent today as it was when it was written in 1933.

I look forward to diving into these works together!

Session 1: 11/21/2019

S.E. Vol. XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis (pp. 3-71). [PEP Web Link](#)

At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to explain the relationship between the symptom and unconscious fantasy and the role of the castration complex in this relationship.

Session 2: 12/5/2019

S.E. Vol. XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis (pp. 72-103). [PEP Web Link](#)

At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to explain the role of anal eroticism in unconscious life and the role of the castration complex in anal eroticism.

Session 3: 12/12/2019

S.E. Vol. XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis (pp. 104-122). [PEP Web Link](#)

At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to explain the role of drive representatives in symptom formation.

Session 4: 12/19/2019

S.E. Vol. XXI (1927-1931): The Future of an Illusion (pp. 3-29). [PEP Web Link](#)

At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to explain Freud's notion of 'infantile helplessness' and its role in religious beliefs.

Session 5: 1/2/2020

S.E. Vol. XXI (1927-1931): The Future of an Illusion (pp. 30-58). [PEP Web Link](#)

At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to explicate Freud's notion that religion represents the "universal obsessional neurosis."

Session 6: 1/9/2020

S.E. Vol. XXI (1927-1931): Civilization and its Discontents (pp. 64-107). [PEP Web Link](#)

At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to define Freud's concept of "the oceanic feeling" as a residue of an infantile wish.

Session 7: 1/23/2020

S.E. Vol. XXI (1927-1931): Civilization and its Discontents (pp. 108-145). [PEP Web Link](#)

At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to describe the connection between the individual's superego and sense of guilt vs. a 'cultural superego' and the potential for a 'neurotic' civilization.

Session 8: 1/30/2020

S.E. Vol XXII (1932-1936): Why War? (pp 197-215). [PEP Web Link](#)

At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to describe Freud's concept of the 'destructive instinct' and the inverse relationship between the growth of civilization and the inevitability of war.