



## **Gender and Sexuality: Contemporary Psychoanalytic Perspectives BPSI Spring Semester, 2021**

**Instructors: Donna Fromberg, PsyD and Paul Lynch, MD**

This course will explore, from clinical and theoretical vantage points, the evolution of ideas about the development and expression of gender and sexuality within classical and contemporary psychoanalysis. We will discuss the effect of caretakers and culture on unconscious psychosexual development in infants, and the effects of cultural gender idealizations in childhood and adulthood. We will also review the categorization and pathologization of gender and sexuality, and approaches to countertransference that avoid objectification of patients. Finally, we will return to the unconscious roots of gender and sexuality as they shape Desire in its many vicissitudes.

**NOTE:** We invite you to watch two films that will be discussed on weeks 4 & 5: Susan Streitfeld's film, *Female Perversions*, and David Lynch's film, *Blue Velvet*. Viewing the films is not mandatory and the accompanying articles speak for themselves. These films do, however, illustrate certain conscious and unconscious analytic concepts that we will be addressing during class, and we believe that viewing them will enhance your experience of reading and discussing the material. *Blue Velvet* includes a rape scene which is relevant to the concepts to be discussed, but it can be skipped over for those uncomfortable seeing such violent content. Both films are available on streaming services. Be in touch with us if you are having trouble accessing them.

Please plan ahead and consider watching these two films at any time between now and weeks 4 & 5, so as not to lose the opportunity due to time constraints during those particular weeks.

## **Week 1 - Course Overview and History of Gender and Sexuality in Psychoanalysis**

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to describe two influences on gender and sexuality in psychoanalytic theorizing.

**Dimen, M., & Goldner, V.** (2011). Gender and sexuality. In *Textbook of psychoanalysis* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 133-152). American Psychiatric Publishing. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bps.org](mailto:library@bps.org)].

### **Suggested Readings:**

Freud, S. (1905). Three essays on the theory of sexuality (1905) [Parts II-III]. *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, volume VII (1901-1905): A case of hysteria, three essays on sexuality and other works* (pp. 173-243). [PEP Web Link](#)

Fonagy, P. (2006). Psychosexuality and psychoanalysis: An overview. In *Identity, gender and sexuality: 150 years after Freud* (pp. 1-19). Karnac. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bps.org](mailto:library@bps.org)].

Lemma, A., & Lynch, P. E. (2015). Introduction: Let's talk about sex or...maybe not... In A. Lemma & P. E. Lynch (Eds.), *Sexualities: Contemporary psychoanalytic perspectives* (pp. 1-16). Routledge. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bps.org](mailto:library@bps.org)].

## **Week 2 - Enigmatic messages and the shaping of the unconscious**

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to describe Laplanche's concept of Enigmatic Messages.

**Evzonas, N.** (2020). Gender and "race" enigmatic signifiers: How the social colonizes the unconscious. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 40(8), 636-656. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bps.org](mailto:library@bps.org)].

## Suggested Readings:

Laplanche, J. (1995). Seduction, persecution, revelation. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 76, 663-682. [PEP Web Link](#)

Leavitt, J., & Harris, A. (2020). Intersectionality encountering Laplanche: Models of otherness and the incomprehensibility of perpetration. In M. Belkin & C. White (Eds.), *Intersectionality and relational psychoanalysis: New perspectives on race, gender, and sexuality* (pp. 192-217). Routledge. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)].

## Week 3 – Developmental Theory of Gender and Sexuality

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to explain the role of mentalization in the development of gender and sexuality.

**Target, M.** (2015). A developmental model of sexual excitement, desire and alienation. In A. Lemma & P. E. Lynch (Eds.), *Sexualities: Contemporary psychoanalytic perspectives* (pp. 43-62). Routledge. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)].

## Suggested Readings:

Scarfone, D. (2019). The sexual and psychological reality. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 100(6), 1248-1255. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)].

Stoller, R. J. (1976). Sexual excitement. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 33, 899-909. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)].

## Week 4 - The Perverse Strategies of Gender? Female Development and its Discontents

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to define Kaplan's concept of "The Perverse Strategy."

**Kaplan, L. J.** (2000). Further thoughts on *Female Perversions*. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 1(4), 349-370. [PEP Web Link](#)

## Suggested Readings:

View: Streitfeld, S. (Director). (1996). *Female perversions* [Film].

Kaplan, L. J. (1991). What is a Perversion? In *Female perversions* (pp. 7-21). Aronson. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bps.org](mailto:library@bps.org)]

Harris, A. (2000). Gender as a soft assembly: Tomboys' stories. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 1(3), 223-250. [PEP Web Link](#)

## Week 5 - Male Development and its Discontents

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to describe one feature of traditional psychoanalytic theory of male development and identify one potential problem arising from socialization of boys and men that could lead to fragile and defensive masculinity.

**Layton, L.** (1998). Blue velvet: A parable of male development. In *Who's that girl? Who's that boy?: Clinical practice meets postmodern gender theory* (pp. 141-167). Aronson. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bps.org](mailto:library@bps.org)]

## Suggested Readings:

View: Lynch, D. (Director). (1986). *Blue velvet* [Film].

Butler, J. (1995). Melancholy gender—Refused identification. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 5(2), 165-180. [PEP Web Link](#)

Knafo, D., & Feiner, K. (2002). Film review essay *Blue Velvet*: David Lynch's primal scene. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 83(6), 1445-1451. [PEP Web Link](#)

## **Week 6 - The Question of Perversion — What does sexuality have to do with mental health?**

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to describe two ways anxiety and disgust affect psychoanalytic discourse on sexuality.

**Dimen, M.** (2001). Perversion is us? Eight notes. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 11(6), 825-860. [PEP Web Link](#)

### **Suggested Reading:**

Moss, D. (2015). Sexual aberrations: Do we still need the concept? If so, when and why? If not, why not? In A. Lemma & P. E. Lynch (Eds.), *Sexualities: Contemporary psychoanalytic perspectives* (pp. 177-188). Routledge. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)].

## **Week 7 - Meeting the Challenges of Countertransference**

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to describe one countertransference challenge of working with patients of diverse genders and sexualities.

**Evzonas, N., & Laufer, L.** (2019). The therapist's transition. *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 106(5), 385-416. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)].

### **Suggested Reading:**

**Belkin, M.** (2020). Who is queer around here?: Overcoming rigid thinking and relating in patient and analyst. In M. Belkin & C. White (Eds.), *Intersectionality and relational psychoanalysis: New perspectives on race, gender, and sexuality* (pp. 7-32). Routledge. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)].

## Week 8 - Desire

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to define two aspects of desire from a psychoanalytic perspective.

**Stein, R.** (2008). The otherness of sexuality: Excess. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 56(1), 43-71. [PEP Web Link](#)

### Suggested Readings:

Stein, R. A. (2006). Unforgetting and excess, the re-creation and re-finding of suppressed sexuality. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 16(6), 763-778. [PEP Web Link](#)

Aisenstein, M., & Moss, D. (2015). Desire and its discontents. In A. Lemma & P. E. Lynch (Eds.), *Sexualities: Contemporary psychoanalytic perspectives* (pp. 63-80). Routledge. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)].