CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON DREAMING:  
THEORY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

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NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychoanalysis, Relational Track  
Course Offered Every Fourth Year-Next Offering, Fall, 2018

Wednesdays: 8:30 AM – 10:10 AM

"A dream which is not explained is like a letter which has not been read." Talmud

Course Description

Dreaming, in my view, is best considered to be the continuation of thinking during sleep. Accenting the imagistic-symbolic encoding and processing of the right-brain, dreaming, especially REM dreaming, continues the organizing, affect regulating, conflict resolving processes necessary to maintain our psychological balance and developmental trajectory.

Our models of dream formation substantially shape our exploration and understanding of dreams. In this course, we will compare models of dream formation and dream interpretation, providing a historical perspective on the evolution of thought and practice within the various psychoanalytic approaches. We will then focus on the organizing functions of dreaming, and, specifically, on what I have formulated as the organizing model of dreams and corresponding guidelines for working with dreams. We will review ongoing contributions of REM sleep, dream content and neuroscience research. Through theoretical explorations and clinical presentations by candidates and
instructor, the central aim of the course is to facilitate candidates’ competence and confidence in exploring and understanding dreams within the clinical encounter.

**Class Schedule and Readings**

Those readings that have an asterisk in front of its listing I will email to you. Where articles are available on PEP, I so indicate. You will need to buy a used copy (very cheap on Amazon) of my book, Fosshage, J. and Loew, C. (1987). *Dream Interpretation: A Comparative Study, Revised Edition*. Costa Mesa, CA: PMA Publications. I have listed many optional readings just for you to have. The full references begin on page 6.

**Class One: Introduction to Dreams and Freud’s Model**

We will begin with a discussion of your operating assumptions about dreams. This is not a test and there is not a right and wrong answer. I want each of you to reflect on how you think about and work with dreams. Some of the questions you might focus on are: What functions do you believe dreams serve? How is dreaming similar to and different from waking thought? How do you approach a dreamer and his/her dream in the analytic arena to understand the meanings of a dream?

Freud (1900): *The Interpretation of Dreams*. James Strachey translation. Read Freud’s Irma dream and his interpretation of it. (PEP)


**Optional Readings:**

Freud (1900): Chapters II, III, IV (I am sure you have read this. if you have time, you might wish to re-read some of this material.)

Sloane (1979): Chapter 2
Sharpe (1961): Chapter IV
Altman (1969): Chapter 9
Rycroft (1979): Chapter I

**Class Two: Freud’s Theory and Implications of Structural Theory for Dreams**

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Optional Readings:


Arlow and Brenner (1964): Chapter 9
Blanck and Blanck (1974): Chapter 13

Class Three: Jung’s Theory of Dream Formation and Technique of Dream Interpretation


Optional Readings:

Jung (1960)
Whitmont and Perera (1989)

Class Four: Neo-Freudian or Culturalist and Contemporary Interpersonal Perspectives: First Clinical Presentation


Optional Readings:

Bonime (1962): Foreword by Ullman, Introduction and Chapter 7
French and Fromm (1964)
Fromm (1951)
Lippman (2000)
Bleckner (2001)

Class Five: Object Relational and Phenomenological Approaches; and Comparison and Synthesis: Second Clinical Presentation


Optional Readings:

Fairbairn (1944)

Class Six: Conceptual Revisions and The Organizing Model of Dreaming


Optional Readings:

Holt (1967)
Noy (1969)
Erikson (1954) (Also in Lansky, 1992)
Breger (1980)

Class Seven: The Organizing Model of Dreaming


Optional Readings:

Ornstein (1987)

Class Eight: The Interpretation of Dreams: A Centennial Celebration and Third Clinical Presentation


Class Nine: REM and Dream Content Research and Fourth Clinical Presentation


Optional Readings:
Class Ten: Continuation of the Organizing Model, and Fifth Clinical Presentation


Class Eleven: Neuroscience and Dreaming; and Sixth Clinical Presentation


Optional Readings

Winson (1985): Chapters 1, 2, 9 & 10
Reiser (1990): Chapter 11
Solms (1997): Chapter 26

Class Twelve: Additional Contemporary View and Seventh Clinical Presentation


Class Thirteen: Additional Contemporary View and Eighth Clinical Presentation


Class Fourteen: Dream Symposium Series

**Class Fifteen: A Constructivist Perspective of the Unconscious and Discussion**


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### Guidelines for Case Presentation

The guidelines for the clinical presentation are as follow:

1) Brief description of the patient including reasons for seeking treatment, personal history, and present life context.
2) Brief summary of treatment and of the session preceding the session with the dream.
3) Process notes of the session with the dream.
4) Brief summary of the session following the dream.

### References


Ellman, S. (in press), A contemporary Freudian perspective. In Fosshage, J. and Loew, C. *Variations on a Dream*


Jason Aronson.


