Interpretation has been famously seen as a way for one human being to translate the language of the unconscious for the other. But this requires both the concept of a discrete ‘other’ as well as the concept of a pre-existing realm of hidden meanings—a realm of relatively impermeable psychic space in which, only with effort, are they able to be uncovered. Contained within this notion is the concept of a locus unconscious, inaccessible by rational means, which requires translation. In order to do this, two minds must operate syncretically with one another in a process of mutual work.

It has long been thought that interpretation was the central mutative event in psychoanalysis, but contemporary thinking has expanded our notion of what two human beings can accomplish together in a clinical psychoanalytic setting, leading not only to the possibility of uncovering hidden meanings, but also, in working with non-representational states of mind, creating an experience of meaning where none exists. And, indeed, creating a sense of self and other where previously little or no differentiation existed. Thus we simultaneously operate with the notions of revealing the unconscious meaning of something, creating the potential for symbolized or represented meaning where previously none existed, and also enhancing the development of an increasingly differentiated and regulated self. Much discussion exists in today’s psychoanalysis about how to best facilitate these processes and far more than what has traditionally been identified as “interpretation” is required. How do we assess the different contributions to the process of change: what is contingent on insight, what is based on developing the capacity to mentalize, and what portion of change is borne of the unconscious processes that are put into action only through the transference and countertransference engagement between patient and analyst?

How do we navigate this terrain? What is the role of technique in today’s psychoanalytic world? What do you say and when do you say it? What is the role of speech and what is the role of relationship? This course will look at the models of conflict and deficit, uncovering meaning and creating meaning, structured interpretations and containing interpretations, as well as the role of relational support and other non-verbal or silent factors which facilitate growth and development.

We will read historical sources that spell out the basic structure of drive/defense interpretations, which tell us from whence we have come and what continues to be useful in working with conflict driven material. We will understand what is meant by the point of urgency from the vantage points of Freudian, Kleinian, Field Theory and contemporary Bionian theory. What is a genetic interpretation and what purpose does it serve and why might we anchor an interpretation by its reality oriented triggers? How do we interpret when trauma exists? And how are these different from interpreting in the here and now?
We will look at what goes on inside the mind of the analyst as she formulates an interpretation, and why.

We will examine how the notion of analytic engagement has shifted radically over time from the original position of the omniscient analyst who offers one-person interpretations to the contemporary version of the fully engaged inter-subjectivist who swims in the psychic ocean co-created by both participants.

In addition to extensive readings, this course is a clinical case seminar where we will use a method of frame by frame analysis and, using the group mind, create a matrix of associations which will help us to gain a close understanding of the material we are listening to as well as to formulate interventions. During the course of twelve meetings, several candidates will have the opportunity to present their material for sequential sessions.

**Class One: Introduction**


**Learning Objective**: Students will learn to identify that neurotic structures are conflict based, while borderline and narcissistic structures may be marked by the absence of representation, each requiring different kinds of interpretive techniques.

**Class Two: The Container Model**


Mawson, C. (2017) Interpretation as Freud’s specific action, and Bion’s container-contained. IJP, 98:1519-1532

**Learning Objective**: Candidates will develop a complex understanding of the concept container/contained, the nature of its therapeutic action, and contemporary ideas about its mechanism.

**Class Three: The Analytic Attitude**


Learning Objective: Candidates will develop an understanding of what is meant by an analytic attitude, its developmental and therapeutic implications, and how this facilitates the analytic relationship.

Class Four: What prompts the Analyst to speak? What is meant by the point of urgency?


Learning Objective: Candidates will be able to identify what is meant by the technical concept ‘point of urgency’.


Baranger, Baranger and Mom


Learning Objective: Candidates will develop familiarity with different theoretical approaches to interpretive work.

Class Six: Establishing Links


Optional:

**Learning Objective**: Candidates will be able to identify moments of meaning created by interpretation which clarifies internal links, external links and historical links.

**Class Seven**: What goes on in the analyst’s mind: formulating an interpretation.


**Learning Objective**: The candidate will be able to reflect upon the internal process of the analyst in formulating an interpretation.

**Class Eight**: How much can a patient absorb? How to work with conflicts, deficits and non-mentalized states.


**Learning Objective**: Candidates will develop familiarity with an array of non-traditional interpretive techniques and will recognize when clinical conditions dictate their use.

**Class Nine**: Shifting States / Unintegrated States / Developmental Deficits


**Learning Objective:** Candidates will be able to identify how communications from different sectors of development may emerge in the analytic session and require different kinds of adapted interpretive techniques.

**Class Ten:** Birthing Meaning


Optional:

**Learning Objectives:** Candidates will recognize when change takes place through a close analysis of clinical process rather than reliance on verbal material alone.

**Class Eleven:** Interpreting Action and the Action of Interpretation


**Learning objective:** Words and tone can serve as containers and give rise to new meaning.

**Class Twelve:** Lost at Sea or Learning to Swim in the Analytic Process. Working in the realm of Intersubjectivity.


**Learning Objective:** Candidates will deepen their understanding about how both parties’ immersion in the analytic process leads to growth.