Writing Psychoanalytically  
New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis  

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COURSE SYLLABUS  
This 8-session, 1-credit course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to write about a psychoanalytically informed topic for presentation or publication as an independent writing project. Each class will begin with a brief didactic portion addressing the subject matter of the assigned readings; the remainder (majority) of the class will be used for students to workshop their writing projects with the group. Students will discuss their ideas for a paper, refine them, and develop them in class. Students will take turns bringing in three to five pages of writing to the class every week, with the goal of each student having at least two opportunities to present during the duration of the class. It is expected that (with the exception of the first class), in each session, at least two and at most three, students will be given the opportunity to present their writing. Students will receive constructive feedback from the instructor and class members regarding form, style, and other aspects of paper structure. The focus of the class will be on developing voice, formulating clinical narrative, and integrating research and past contributions from the field to the writer’s topic. The emphasis will be on providing a supportive atmosphere in which students feel comfortable presenting their work and are encouraged to give and receive constructive feedback.

As an adjunct to developing their writing project in class, students will have the option of choosing from a pool of faculty writing mentors affiliated with the different tracks to help them develop their paper during and/or after the class, for a total of up to four meetings at the current supervisory rate (additional sessions may be scheduled at the discretion of the writing mentor and student). Each of these writing mentors is a faculty member who has published in a psychoanalytic journal, written a psychoanalytic book, or served in an editorial capacity for a psychoanalytic journal. The provisional list of faculty members who have agreed to serve as writing mentors is provided at the end of the syllabus. Additional writing mentors may be added.

Class 1: The Process of Psychoanalytic Writing  

Learning Objective: In this class, we will discuss the process of writing psychoanalytically. Where does one begin? What can one write about? How does the writing process work? Students will use this initial class as a starting point for discussing their ideas for a writing project with the group, with the goal of refining their topic. Students who have already begun a writing project may bring in 3-5 pages of writing to class in order to receive feedback from the group (limited to 2 students).
Readings:


Class 2: The Action of Psychoanalytic Writing

**Learning Objective:** In this class, we will examine the *action* of writing psychoanalytically. We will explore the ways in which writing may be a means for the author to retrospectively process a clinical experience; a form of self-supervision; and/or an enactment. Students will bring in 3-5 pages of writing in order to receive feedback from the group (limited to 3 students).

Readings:
Altstein, R. (2016), Finding words: How the process and products of psychoanalytic writing can channel the therapeutic action of the very treatment it sets out to describe. *Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, 13:1, 51-70.


Class 3: Experimenting with Language, Rhythm, and Style

**Learning Objective:** In this class, we will examine how language, rhythm, and style may be used to evoke experience. Students will bring in 3-5 pages of writing in order to receive feedback from the group (limited to 3 students).

Readings:


Class 4: Structure and Form: Journal Articles

**Learning Objective:** We will begin a brief review of the variety of forms of psychoanalytic writing. In this class, we will examine traditional and non-traditional ways of structuring a psychoanalytic journal article. Students will bring in 3-5 pages of writing in order to receive feedback from the group (limited to 3 students).
Readings:


**Class 5: Structure and Form: Literary Approaches**

**Learning Objective:** We continue our review of the variety of forms of psychoanalytic writing. In this class, we will examine more literary approaches to clinical writing, including the short story form and autobiographical narrative. Students will bring in 3-5 pages of writing in order to receive feedback from the group (limited to 3 students).

**Readings:**


**Class 6: Beyond the Consulting Room: Writing Psychoanalytically for a Non-Psychoanalytic Audience**

**Learning Objective:** We continue our review of the variety of forms of psychoanalytic writing. In this class, we how psychoanalytic writers can bring psychoanalytic ideas to the world outside the consulting room. Students will bring in 3-5 pages of writing in order to receive feedback from the group (limited to 3 students).

**Readings:**


Class 7: Overcoming Obstacles to Writing

Learning Objective: In this class we will examine the anxieties and conflicts that often arise during the writing process and explore ways of understanding and overcoming them. Students will bring in 3-5 pages of writing in order to receive feedback from the group (limited to 3 students).

Readings:


Class 8: The Ethics of Psychoanalytic Writing: Consent, Disclosure, and Disguise

Learning Objective: In this class, we will examine the ethical issues that arise in writing about our patients. We will discuss the pros, cons, and clinical implications of consent, disclosure, and disguise. Students will bring in 3-5 pages of writing in order to receive feedback from the group (limited to 3 students).

Readings:


Writing Mentors:

**Interpersonal Track**
- Chris Bonovitz
- Sarah Schoen
- Shelley Itzkowitz

**Contemporary Freudian Track**
- Andrew Druck
- Marsha Levy-Warren
- Isaac Tylim

**Relational Track**
- Joyce Slochower
- Jill Salberg
- Velleda Ceccoli
- Lisa Director
- Lauren Levine

**Independent Track**
- Leanne Domash
- Jill Gentile
- Steven Botticelli