

Steven D. Axelrod, Ph.D.  
Psychologist/Psychoanalyst  
60 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite LC  
New York, N.Y. 10011  
(212) 633-0077  
steveaxelrod5@gmail.com

## NYU Postdoctoral Program Course PDPSA.4588.002 Thinking Psychoanalytically about Leadership and Organizations

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### Introduction

Participants in this class will develop a framework for understanding the key aspects of organizational functioning – leadership, organization dynamics, organizational culture, and interventions for organizational change. We will draw equally on participants’ experiences in organizations, key (usually but not always psychoanalytic) readings, and the course leader’s extensive experience consulting to organizations. Participants will be encouraged to think of themselves as potential organizational consultants, and to evaluate their motivation and fitness for such a role as well as the path to its achievement.

### Course Schedule (all classes meet at 60 W. 13<sup>th</sup> St., LC)

Saturday, March 26	9AM to 1PM
Saturday, April 9	9AM to 1PM
Saturday, April 23	9AM to 1:30 PM

## **Session 1 – Leadership**

*Psychoanalytic clinicians are ill-prepared to consult to organizations in large part because of a limited understanding of the value and functions of leadership. The very act of thinking carefully together about leadership will elevate the group's understanding of leadership and their own relationship to this all-important aspect of our experience.*

- Introductions
  - Your background
    - Current experience with leadership and organizations
    - Why are you taking this course? What do you hope to learn?
- The function of leadership
  - Leadership vs. management
- Group discussion – what makes a good leader? Describe personal experiences
- The Psychodynamics of leadership
  - Relationship leaders and followers
  - The psychic tasks of a leader
  - The inner experience of leadership – vulnerability, stress, loneliness
  - Leadership style and personality types
    - Malignant personality traits

### Readings

Zaleznick, A. (1992). Managers and leaders: Are they different? HBR, March-April 1992.

Freud, S. (1921). *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*.

Maccoby, M. (2004). Why people follow the leader: The power of transference. HBR, Sept. 2004.

Maccoby, M. (2000). Narcissistic leaders: The incredible pros, the inevitable cons. HBR, Jan/Feb 2000.

Zaretsky, E. (2018). The mass psychology of Trumpism. London Review of Books, Sept. 18, 2018. <https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2018/09/18/eli-zaretsky/the-mass-psychology-of-trumpism/>

### **Special Topics in Leadership**

- Challenges for women and BIPOC leaders
- Leadership of psychoanalytic organization
- Leadership transitions and succession
- Leadership growth and development
  - Can personality growth and development occur as a function of a leadership role.

### **Readings**

Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2013). Why do so many incompetent men become leaders? HBR, August, 2013

Wolfe, H. (2021). Female leadership: Difficulties and gifts. Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 69(1), pp. 136-156

Sulkowicz, K.J. (2018). The neglect of leadership in psychoanalysis. In Axelrod, S.D., Naso, R., and Rosenberg, L.M. Progress in Psychoanalysis: Envisioning the Future of the Profession. London: Routledge.

## **Session 2 – The Psychodynamics of Organizations - Psychodynamic Systems Theory, Organizational Culture, Organizational Change**

### **Psychodynamic Systems Theory**

*Psychodynamic systems theories of organizations developed out of Klein's and Bion's theories and their later elaboration and application at the Tavistock Institute. Our focus will be on American versions of this approach, though the influence of the Group Relations concepts will be evident throughout. This section will require the most reading.*

- Concepts
  - Define and discuss
  - Inter-relationship of affect, defense, and organizational functioning
  - Boundary, authority, role, and task
  - Group discussion – applying theory to your experiences of organizational function and dysfunction

### Readings

Shapiro, E.R. Psychodynamic systems theory: From the individual to the group, to the institution. . <http://www.austenriggs.org/resource/psychodynamic-systems>.

Obholzer, A. (2001). The leader, the unconscious, and the management of the organization. In, L. J. Gould, L.F. Stapley, and M. Stein (eds.), *The Systems Psychodynamics of Organizations*. London and New York: Karnac.

Shapiro, E.R. & Carr, A.W. (1991). *Lost in Familiar Places*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 6.

Hirschhorn, L. (1990). *The Workplace Within*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Introduction and Chapters 1-4.

### **Organizational Culture**

*Organizational culture is a critically important though rather elusive concept. There are a number of different ways of thinking about organizational culture – both psychoanalytic and non-psychoanalytic. We will compare and contrast the different approaches and will use participants' informal field work to gain a working knowledge of organizational culture.*

- Group discussion – experiences of organizational culture
- Different ways of conceptualizing organizational culture
- Assessing organizational culture

### Readings

Groysberg, B., Lee, J., Price, J., Cheng, Y-J (2018). The leaders guide to corporate culture. HBR, Jan-Feb 2018.

## **Organizational Change**

*Intervening to promote organizational change is both challenging and exciting. It requires skills in collaboration, managing resistance, and overall leadership. Organizational change takes place in many forms and we will discuss different kinds of intervention and typical success (and failure) factors.*

- How organizations change
  - Impetus for change
  - Resistance to change
  - Cultural change
- The “Adaptive Leadership” model
- Candidate and instructor cases

## **Readings**

Krantz, J. (2001). Dilemmas of organizational change: A systems psychodynamic perspective. In L.J. Gould, L.F. Stapley, and M. Stein (eds.), *The Systems Psychodynamics of Organizations*. London and New York: Karnac.

Heifetz, R., Glashow, A., Linsky, M. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Chapters 4-7) Boston: Harvard Business Press.

## **Session 3 – Consulting to Organizations**

*Our discussion of different forms of organizational interventions continues with a focus on the role of the consultant (or consultant-in-the-making). We will reprise the different forms of intervention for organizational change but focus on advising and coaching executives. We will spend much of the final class discussing candidates’ interest in becoming psychoanalytically-oriented organizational consultants, including both motivating and inhibiting factors. We will also discuss how to go about building a practice in this area.*

- The value of a psychodynamic approach – what do we see and do that’s different and distinctive?

- Advising and coaching executives
  - Case examples from my practice
- A model of psychodynamic executive coaching
- Do you want to be an organizational consultant?
  - Motivating and inhibiting factors; dreams and fears
  - How to build a consulting practice

### Readings

Eisold, K. (2012). Psychoanalysis at work. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 22, 517-518.

Sulkowicz, K.J. (2021). What psychoanalysts can offer leaders. Talk given May 25, 2021 at the Institute of Psychoanalysis, London.

Diamond, M.A. (2007). *Discovering Organizational Identity*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press – chapter on psychoanalytic executive coaching.

Wasylyshyn, K.M. (2005). The reluctant president. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 57, 57-70.