CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title: Psychoanalysis and Society
Course code: PSYC 3005 PRAG
Programs offering course: Central European Studies, Communication, New Media, and Journalism
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Fall 2020

Course Description

What is psychoanalysis? What is the relation between psyche and society? This course seeks to understand crucial contemporary and historical issues in Central and Eastern Europe, mainly focusing on the Czech Republic, such as racism, sexuality and politics from the perspective of socially informed, in-depth psychology. The social is needed to contextualize the psyche but equally any explanation which leaves out a deep nuanced study of human subjectivity will be impoverished and unable to account for the richness of the reality investigated. The course explores this terrain from a multiplicity of psychodynamic perspectives, juxtaposing the stark reality of the regions, history and culture with various psychoanalytic tools for understanding. Competing intellectual traditions are not decided for and against but are seen as mutually enriching. Each individual is encouraged to take a stand on the issues involved and develop their own unique perspective. From the nuclear holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the holocaust of World War II, the 20th century has witnessed perhaps the most horrific events in the history of the human species. The loss of life has been estimated in the region of 187 million individuals, most of whom were not soldiers but innocent civilians. There has perhaps never been a more urgent time for humanity to turn inwards and also to one another. In the first half of the 20th century one individual was thinking deeply on these problems, his name was Sigmund Freud, and his ideas continue to provoke controversy and debate to this present day. In this course we will examine these ideas carefully and consider their implications, development, and relevance for the present and beyond.

Learning Objectives
By completing this course, students will:

- Apply definitions and main concepts of different psychoanalytic schools (Freudian, Jungian, Object Relations, Lacanian) to explain and interpret different political and cultural phenomena (including totalitarianism, group psychology, racism, sexuality, witchcraft, anorexia, and the internet);
- Compare and contrast differences between psychoanalytical theories, and identify the limits and controversies individual psychoanalytical theories imply when describing the same phenomena;
- Demonstrate and defend their individual critical evaluation of socio-cultural phenomena and critically review other fellow students' positions;
- Demonstrate attainment of interpretive psychoanalytic perspectives applicable toward future analyses of complex issues ranging from art and culture to politics, psychopathology and media.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

Lecture, class discussion, group activities.

Assessment and Final Grade

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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>Reflection Paper</td>
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<td>Final Essay</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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Course Requirements

Presentation

Over the semester, one formal presentation is required. Its aim is to share your research and facilitate discussion by provoking group dialogue and/or debate.
In groups of two or three psychoanalyse a film, documentary or other audio-visual media (e.g. website, radio broadcast), collectively interpret it through interactive commentary, and raise at least three questions for group discussion.

An outline of the presentation is to be submitted to the instructor at least 24 hours prior to its delivery. The outline should contain:

- Title of the presentation and names of presenters.
- Brief summary of the topic and any media that will be used (provide online links if any).
- How the student relates this media to psychoanalytic themes/concepts/theories discussed in class or discovered through his/her own research.
- What similar and contrasting opinions emerged through the student’s discussion of the media, on what points or lines of thought you converge and diverge, why you think it is interesting and insightful for the psychoanalysis of society (both individually and collectively).
- 3 questions for group discussion.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will assess students’ understanding of the covered material and ability to apply theoretical knowledge when interpreting works of art. Students are expected to demonstrate a solid grasp of the theoretical issues and make a good case to support their argument.

The midterm in-class exam will consist of three mini-essay questions from a choice of four or five topics related to the material covered in the first half of the course.

Reflection Paper

A short analysis (750 words) of an artifact (a text, film, video clip, etc.) of students’ choice in relation to the topics discussed in class and/or assigned reading.

Final Essay

A final essay (2250 – 2500) is due Class 2 of the Final Week. The essay can be on a topic and question of students’ choice. Students can turn an aspect of your
presentation or reflection paper into an essay. The essay will be graded on the basis of these basic requirements: (a) applying knowledge and ideas relevant to our classes, interpreting a socio-cultural phenomenon through psychoanalysis; (b) taking an independent position and developing students’ own analysis (not merely survey or restating views already taken by others) supported by reasons/evidence; (c) consideration of alternative views and examination of objections or counter-evidence to students’ main claim(s)/conclusion(s); (d) discussion of students’ view in relation to previous research and psychoanalytic interpretations; (e) reference to two or more of the articles discussed in class and showing evidence of students’ own independent research. Essays will be submitted via Canvas.

Class Participation

Assessment of students’ participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. Students are required to actively, meaningfully and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and all types of in-class activities throughout the duration of the class.

Students are responsible for following the course content and are expected to ask clarification questions if they cannot follow the instructor's or other students' line of thought or argumentation.

The use of electronic devices is only allowed for computer-based in-class tests, assignments and other tasks specifically assigned by the course instructor. Students are expected to take notes by hand unless the student is entitled to the use of computer due to his/her academic accommodations. In such cases the student is required to submit an official letter issued by his/her home institution specifying the extent of academic accommodations.

Class participation also includes students’ active participation in Canvas discussions and other additional tasks related to the course content as specified by the instructor. If missing a class, the student is expected to catch up on the class content and to submit well-reflected and in-depth contributions to Canvas discussions on the particular topic or reflections to the instructor to ensure that his/her absence from the class will not significantly affect his/her participation grade.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.
Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for short-term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences will lead to the following penalties:

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<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
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<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; grade penalty &amp; written warning</td>
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<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion</td>
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N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1
Class
Introduction to the course.

The outline of the course and mutual expectations. Getting to know each other.

Background to Freudian psychoanalysis.


Reading:

Freud, S. (1925)

Week 2
Class
Theoretical Aspects of Freudian Psychoanalysis

Key concepts in psychoanalysis: the structure of the psychical apparatus. Id, Ego, Super-ego. Eros and Thanatos.

Reading:

Freud, S. (1925)

Week 3
Class
Psychoanalysis of Civilization I

Analysis of Freud’s Civilization and Its Discontents. Freud on religion

Reading:

Freud, S. (1962)
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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Psychoanalysis of Civilization II</th>
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<td>Analysis of Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents. Eros and Thanatos</td>
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<td>Freud, Einstein, and Jung on War.</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
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<td>Freud, S./Einstein (1962)</td>
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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Psychoanalysis of authoritarian society I</th>
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<td>Psychoanalysis of authoritarian society II</td>
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<td>Bruno Bettelheim’s experiences in the concentration camps.</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
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<td>Bettelheim, B. (1943)</td>
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<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Midterm Exam</th>
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<td>Field Trip</td>
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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Psychoanalysis of Groups</th>
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<td>Close-reading of Freud’s “Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego”. Principles of group formation from Le Bon’s Psychology of Crowds and MacDougall’s The Group Mind.</td>
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Reading

Freud, S. (1975)

Week 8
Class Psychoanalysis of Communism

Guest speaker: Olga Marlin

Politics, Psychoanalysis & Art

Nazi propaganda I: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany. The Scapegoat complex.

Reading

Hitler’s Speech at the Opening of the House of German Art in Munich (July 18, 1937).

Week 9
Class Psychoanalysis and Propaganda

Nazi propaganda II: The mythology of the Third Reich.

Screening

Leni Riefenstahl’s Triumph of the Will.

Happiness-Machines

Edward Bernays: propaganda and advertising.

Screening

The Century of the Self.

Week 10
Class Contemporary Interpretations of Psychoanalysis

Reading

Fromm, E. The Sane Society.

Reflection Paper due by Class 1

Contemporary Interpretations of Psychoanalysis II

R.D. Laing and phenomenological-existential psychoanalysis. Inter-generational trauma. Psychoanalysis and survivors.

Reading

Laing, R. (1967).

Week 11

Class The Asylum and the Society

The history of Irish mental institutions: documentary and discussion.

Presentation outline due for Group Presentations 1

Applied Psychoanalysis: Group Presentations 1

Group presentations and discussion

Presentation outline due for Group Presentations 2

Week 12

Class Applied Psychoanalysis: Group Presentations 2

Group presentations and discussion

Presentation outline due for Group Presentations 3
Applied Psychoanalysis: Group Presentations 3

Group presentations and discussion

Week 13
Class Final Exam Week

Discussion summarizing group presentations, their findings, concepts and relevance to course topics.

End-of-course discussion and course evaluation

Final Paper due by Class 2

Course Materials
Readings

Primary readings


Further readings


