Psychoanalysis: Desire and Culture
MCC-UE 1009

Course Description

This seminar explores the subject of desire in modern media and culture. Freud’s ideas have had a profound influence on everything from the earliest manuals on public relations to the struggles of modern feminism. We will read a range of psychoanalytic theorists while studying how their insights have been put to work by both the culture industry and its critics.

Course Requirements

Please come to all seminars prepared to discuss the day’s readings in detail. Participation will constitute 30% of your final grade. Your absence makes it impossible to participate, and thus impossible to receive an “A” in the course even if you do everything else brilliantly.

In addition, there will be four essays. The first three must be single-spaced with half-inch margins and eleven-point roman type and take up no more or less than a single page. The final paper will be 5-7 pages double spaced. Topics and guidelines for these essays will be handed out in class. The first three essays will each constitute 15% of your final grade; the final paper will constitute 25%.

You should already be familiar with NYU’s policies and procedures concerning plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct. Violations will not be tolerated.

Readings

The books are expensive. Many can be found at local used bookstores or via www.bookfinder.com. NYU also provides access to the Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing database (www.pep-web.org), which has the complete text of all of Freud’s writings as well as many other articles and books relevant to the course. Please note, however, that you must come to class with hard copies of the readings, since we will be examining many of them very closely. Readings marked with an asterisk on the syllabus will be available on Blackboard.

Viewings

We will be watching several films in class. You should watch all four episodes of Adam Curtis’s documentary for the BBC, The Century of the Self, available at the Fischer Center at Bobst. Do so at your leisure, but before we begin Part III of the course on October 29.

Resources

Online resources abound. The most helpful, along with the PEP database mentioned above, is the International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis (www.answers.com/library/Psychoanalysis). This dictionary, with entries by some of the most important members of the profession, includes accurate and up-to-date discussions of all major concepts and figures. You should refer to it frequently.
**Introduction(s)**

Wednesday, Sept. 5  
Syllabus, requirements, etc.

Monday, Sept. 10  
Marie Langer, *From Vienna to Managua: Memoirs of a Psychoanalyst*  
Photographs of hysterics from Charcot’s clinic (in class)

**Part I – The discovery of the unconscious and the “talking cure”**

Wednesday, Sept. 12  
*Studies on Hysteria*: “Fraulein Anna O.” and “Miss Lucy R.”

Monday, Sept. 17  
*Interpretation of Dreams*, chapters 2-3

Wednesday, Sept. 19  
*Interpretation of Dreams*, chapter 4 and 5-D (“Typical Dreams”)

Monday, Sept. 24  
*Interpretation of Dreams*, 6-E (“Representation by Symbols”)

Wednesday, Sept. 26  
“Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria” (from *Freud on Women*)

**Part II – What troubles us**

Monday, Oct. 1  
*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (from *Freud on Women*) – FIRST PAPER DUE

Wednesday, Oct. 3  
“A Child is Being Beaten” (from *Freud on Women*)  
“Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinctions Between the Sexes” (ibid.)  
“Fetishism”*

Monday, Oct. 8  
University holiday – no class

Wednesday, Oct. 11  
“From the History of an Infantile Neurosis” (from *Three Case Histories*)

Monday, Oct. 15  
Class cancelled

Wednesday, Oct. 17  
*The Ego and the Id*
Monday, Oct. 22
_Civilization and its Discontents_

Wednesday, Oct. 24
_Civilization and its Discontents (cont’d)_

**Part III – The culture of psychoanalysis**

Monday, Oct. 29
André Breton, “Manifesto of Surrealism”*
Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, _Un Chien Andalou_ (in class) – **SECOND PAPER DUE**

Wednesday, Oct. 31
Edward Bernays, _Propaganda_, selections*
Ernst Dichter, _The Strategy of Desire_, selections*
David Bennett, “Getting the Id to Go Shopping: Psychoanalysis, Advertising, Barbie Dolls, and the Invention of the Consumer Unconscious,” _Public Culture_ vol 17 no 1 (2005)*

Monday, Nov 5
Nicholas Ray, _Rebel Without a Cause_ (in class)

Wednesday, Nov 7
Nicholas Ray, _Rebel Without a Cause_ (cont’d)
Heinz Hartman, _Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation_, selections*

Monday, Nov. 12
Hitchcock, _Marnie_ (in class)

Wednesday, Nov. 14
Hitchcock, _Marnie_ (in class)
Robin Wood, “Marnie” and “You Freud, Me Hitchcock?” in _Hitchcock’s Films Revisited_*

Monday, Nov. 19
Catherine Clément, _The Weary Sons of Freud_, selections*
Christopher Lasch, _The Culture of Narcissism_, selections*

**Part IV – The psychoanalysis of culture**

Wednesday, Nov. 21
Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, _Creativity and Perversion_, selections* – **THIRD PAPER DUE**

Monday, Nov. 26
Betty Friedan, “The Sexual Solipsism of Sigmund Freud,” from _The Feminine Mystique_*
Juliet Mitchell, _Psychoanalysis and Feminism_, selections*

Wednesday, Nov. 28
Jacqueline Rose, _The Case of Peter Pan_*
Monday, Dec. 3
Jacques Lacan, “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis”*

Wednesday, Dec. 5
Jacques Lacan, “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis” (cont’d)
Bruce Fink, *Fundamentals of Psychoanalytic Technique*, selections*

Monday, Dec. 10
Slavoj Zizek, selections TBD*

Wednesday, Dec. 12
Leo Bersani, introduction to *Civilization and its Discontents* *

**FINAL PAPER DUE BY 5 PM ON 12/17**