CONTEMPORARY THEORY IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

Independent Study Course Proposal, Fall 2006-Spring 2007

General Description:

This is a course I taught as an Independent Study to several students based on the constructivistic focus of the Contemporary Theory course that I co-taught with Barbara Okun at Northeastern University.

This course provides an introduction to contemporary theories in psychotherapy, with a focus on constructivist and cognitive-constructivist theory. To provide some background, we begin by reviewing some basic theory in psychotherapy, including Object Relations, Humanistic, and Experiential theory with particular attention to their implications for relationship building to enable later analysis of how contemporary constructivistic theories integrate these foundations. Contemporary theory emphasizes constructivist perspectives in psychotherapy and also include feminist and multicultural/liberation theories with an emphasis on their connections to constructivism.

Goals and Objectives:

The aim of this course is to provide the student with a wide-range of basic and contemporary theory in psychotherapy, with the goal of fostering the student's own clinical development and theoretical understanding of therapeutic change and interventions. Basic theory will provide the student with an historical context for understanding the development of more contemporary theoretical perspectives. Both basic and contemporary theories are expected to foster the student's understanding of how the therapist can facilitate positive and healthy change in clients, while maintaining a standard of cultural sensitivity.

Students complete two papers: The first paper is a short (7-10 pages) paper in which the student will critically reflect on basic theories and their meaning for clinical practice. The second paper is a longer paper (15-20 pages) in which the student will be asked to integrate their learning about constructivist or cognitive-constructivist theory into a personal theoretical understanding of the change process in therapy.
Required Texts and Additional Readings:

Books:


Basic Theory:


**Contemporary Theory:**

**Introduction:**


**Introduction to constructivism:**


**Criticism and response:**


Types and connections:


Constructivism and psychopathology:


Cognitive therapy and constructivism:


Cognitive-constructivism:


Connecting cognitive and narrative therapies:

Narrative Therapy:

Applications:

Metaphors:
Feminism and culture:


Alternative Reading: