COURSE OVERVIEW: This 3rd year weekend course will focus on a relational psychoanalytic model of conjoint psychotherapy along with the influence of improvisational theory in both individual and couple’s treatment. Of the six sessions, the first four will be dedicated to the study of the manuscript of my forthcoming book on a Relational Model of Conjoint Psychotherapy. The last two sessions will focus on the adoption of an improvisatory stance in all modes of psychoanalytic treatment. Since ideas from improvisation are also included in the conjoint treatment manuscript, the dual foci will blend seamlessly into one another. Meanwhile, all theoretical material will be fleshed out through case material presented by the candidates.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The first four sessions of this course will study the instructor’s six-step model for practicing a relational approach to conjoint therapy, which is organized around three themes: self-actualization in an intimate relationship, mutual recognition and the “relationship having a mind of its own.” A brief historical context for the model’s creation will be shared along with the salient concepts underpinning it. Each step will be illustrated with case material including case consultations with class participants.

The final two sessions will be devoted to the study of an improvisatory mode of engagement in psychoanalytic treatment embodied in a) an improvisatory “stance” (attitude), b) an improvisatory “process” in contrast to constrained versions of play such as “mutual inductive identification” and c) “turning point” moments in the treatment understood as “I”improvisational moments in the treatment. The first class on improvisation will be linked to an ICP conference on that day March 24th, 2012 titled “A Serious Look at Play” featuring Darlene Ehrenberg and Phil Ringstrom and yet to be specified discussants.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Re: Conjoint Psychotherapy

1) To learn about how the three organizing themes: self-actualization in an intimate relationship, mutual recognition, and the “relationship having a mind of its own” bridge important elements of contemporary psychoanalysis, namely self-experiencing in a complex nonlinear system lending to the principle of “thirdness” in long-term intimate relationships – marital and otherwise.
2) To learn how these three themes are practiced in terms of the model’s six steps.
3) To investigate modifications in psychoanalytic technique in conjoint therapy in light of this perspective shift.
4) To discern both the advantages and limitations that may arise from this perspective.

**Re: An Improvisational Mode of Treatment**

1) To learn what is meant by assuming an Improvisational stance, that is assuming and practicing a treatment attitude infused with playfulness and possibility.

2) To learn how to engage in an improvisational mode of treatment.

3) To learn what is involved in enactments and episodes of “mutual inductive identification.”

4) To learn how “I”mprovisational moments arise from working through the elements listed in #3.

**SESSIONS SYLLABUS**

**September 26, 2015**

This session will focus an overall theoretical view of the conjoint therapy model. The bibliography for this session will include an “in press” article in an upcoming edition of *IJPSP*, which provides an updated overview of the model since its original publication in 1994. This session will also cover the first three chapters of the manuscript, including the Prologue, the Introductory chapter and the Theoretical Overview. (All of this course material will be distributed by the instructor directly to the candidates).

**October 24, 2015**

This session will focus on the first three steps of the conjoint treatment model with Step One focusing primarily on attunement to the couple’s partner’s bi-dimensional transferences as well as vicious circles of engagement between these transference dimensions. Step Two emphasizes the development of “perspectival realism” a lynchpin concept to this model of treatment. And Step Three involves how to gather and how to utilize background data germane to the couple’s relational styles, i.e., what each brings to their relationship including multi-generational transmission processes, the influence of such elements as cultural attitudes (collectivist versus individualism), racial, gender, and finally immigration issues. These first three steps are embodied respectively in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. (All of this manuscript material will be distributed by the instructor directly to the candidates).
December 5, 2015:

This session will focus on the last three steps of the conjoint treatment model. Step Four involves enactments and their resolution. Step Five focuses on the enrichment of each partner’s self-actualization through an increased capacity to self-reflect. Step Six involves each partner’s increased capacity to attune to and support each other’s self-actualization. Steps Five and Six converge under the axiom that *It is impossible to negotiate between two people, that which has not been negotiated within each one.* These three steps are embodied respectively in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. (All of this manuscript material will be distributed by the instructor directly to the candidates).

January 29, 2016:

This session will focus on the last two chapters of the book. One chapter is devoted to taking a single case illustration through all six steps of the model. The last chapter is titled “FAQ’s” or “frequently asked questions” that have arisen from years of presenting this model in class’, workshops, and conferences. These last two chapters are chapters 10 and 11. (All of this manuscript material will be distributed by the instructor directly to the candidates).

March 26, 2016:

The final session of this class will summarize all of the elements of this weekend course as well as cover the most recent updates in thinking regarding an improvisatory mode of treatment in psychoanalytic practice. The bibliography will include the instructor’s chapters from Aron and Harris’ *Relational Psychoanalysis, Volume Five, 2011* entitled “Principles of Improvisation in Relational Psychoanalysis” and “Afterword” as well as more recent articles “in press.” (All of this manuscript material will be distributed by the instructor directly to the candidates).

May 7, 2016:

To be announced on basis of more up to date papers and publications.

Bibliography:

Required:


Optional:


---------- (2001b) ‘‘Yes, and... ’ – How Improvisation is the Essence of Good Psychoanalytic Dialogue: Reply to Commentaries.” *Psychoanal. Dial.* Vol. 11, No. 5, 797-806.


SYLLABUS – A Relational Approach to Couples and Improvisational TX