GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Object relations theory addresses the observation that people live in two worlds simultaneously—the external world and the internal world with a co-mingling between the two. Individuals tend to act and react not only with an actual other but also an internal other, a psychic representation of a person which in itself has the power to influence both the individual's affective states and his or her behavioral reactions.

The evolution of object relations theory has been subject to divergent theoretical perspectives which are complex and often difficult to integrate. This theoretical dissension has caused continued confusion and ambiguity with regard to the meaning and formation of objects in both the mental and psychological development of the individual. How does our internal world evolve? What motivates the person to seek an object—the gratification of instinctual wishes or the desire for relationships? How does the child's important early relationships become internalized and impact the person's ongoing relational patterns? These are just three of the numerous questions discussed by the different authors who have contributed to the development of object relations theory.

This course will compare and integrate the nature of the object, its origins and qualities, in the context of the formulations of these different theorists with a focus on their clinical applications.

To further help in your understanding of the ideas being developed in this course I am including the following supplemental readings from Greenberg and Mitchell. These readings are not required.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:


Part One: Origins:
Chapter 1: Object Relations and Psychoanalytic Models, (pp. 9-20).
Chapter 2: Sigmund Freud: The Drive/Structure Model, (pp. 21-49)

Part Two: Alternatives
Chapter 5 Melanie Klein (pp. 119 – 150).
Chapter 6: W.R.D. Fairbairn (pp. 151 – 187).
Chapter 7: D.W. Winnicott and Harry Guntrip (pp. 188 – 230).

Part Three: Accommodation
Chapter 10: Edith Jacobson & Otto Kernberg (pp. 304 – 348).