This seminar will focus on distinctive features of contemporary French psychoanalysis. It will concentrate on a number of seminal thinkers, including Lacan, while studying representative writings produced by the French school of psychoanalysis. My goals are to situate the French movement historically, beginning in the post-war period. We will investigate aspects of Lacan's theoretical contributions, beginning with the mirror stage; candidates will become familiar with the concepts of the imaginary, symbolic, and real, the linguistic unconscious, the decentered subject, as well as his own powerful insights into literature and applied psychoanalysis. Lacan will be approached as a philosopher of psychoanalysis in addition to a deep reader of Freud's texts. We will read his theory of technique, his approach to transference and countertransference, and his perspectives on feminine sexuality.

We will investigate the contributions of Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, particularly their approach to sexuality, fantasy, transference, and their own scholarly and clinical understanding of the vocabulary of analytic concepts.

This will be followed by a session on the writings of Didier Anzieu. We will read his work on the skin ego, his brilliant writings on the history of psychoanalysis, including his understanding of Freud's continuous self-analysis. Examining his writings on the analytic relationship between Samuel Beckett and Wilfred Bion, we will see how this relationship influenced both figures in their subsequent work. We will sample the perspectives of the philosopher Paul Ricoeur, one of the most gifted hermeneutic psychoanalytic thinkers; we will explore how he applied hermeneutic strategies in interpreting Freud's major texts and in developing a rigorous approach to the uses and abuses of interpretation.

Finally, we will study Andre Green's conceptual breakthroughs, specifically his work on the "dead mother," his thoughts about negativity and negative narcissism, the death drive, and the ways in which he integrated the ideas of Lacan, Winnicott, and Bion.

Session I  Lacan


Session II  Lacan continued


Session III  Lacan continued


Session IV  Laplanche and Pontalis


   b) “Mirror Phase (or Stage),” pp. 250-252.
   d) “Transference,” pp. 455-462

Session V  Anzieu & Ricoeur

1) Didier Anzieu, “Functions of the Skin Ego (1985),” in *RFP*, pp. 477-495


Session VI  Andre Green


