

BIG IDEAS/GREAT THINKERS: SIGMUND FREUD

Fall Term 2022

Instructor: Dr. Cyril Levitt
Email: levittc@mcmaster.ca
Lecture: Wednesdays at
7:00-10 p.m. September 6-
December 8, 2021
Room: PGCLLM22

Office: KTH 604
Office Hours: TBA and by appointment
online

Course Description

The dominant tradition in the social sciences in social psychology stems from the work of Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead, William James, James Mark Baldwin, and others at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Others in the Chicago School such as Herbert Blumer, Everett Hughes, Howard S. Becker, and Anselm Strauss developed social psychology further. Blumer, assumed Mead's mantle, developing symbolic interactionism as an extension and outgrowth of Mead's social behaviorism.

However, at the margins, there are those who have worked within the psychoanalytic tradition which originated in Central Europe in the clinical and theoretical work of Sigmund Freud and his circle. Talcott Parsons, Philip Rieff, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Neil Smelser, Nancy Chodorow and others are among those whose work has been directly linked in various ways to psychoanalytic concepts and approaches. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that as famous as Freud is in world culture generally, his role within social psychology in the social sciences has been relatively marginal. Freud and psychoanalysis have sometimes been dismissed as having little interest for social psychology since, in this view, psychoanalysis is an individual psychology, and its foundation cannot be applied to social psychological problems.

In this course, we will examine some of the relevant works of Freud who himself argued that psychoanalysis is a social psychology at its very core. In his own words:

The contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology, which at a first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely. It is true that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well.

In this course we will focus on three works of Freud which are relevant to social psychology: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, *The Future of an Illusion* and *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Show an understanding of the fundamental ideas of psychoanalysis in relation to social psychology
- Understand Freud's view of the nature of group cohesion and solidarity
- Explain how Freud's understanding of phylogenetic development plays an important role in his theory of group psychology
- Demonstrate how Freud's views on social psychology explain the persistence of racism, ethnocentrism, in-group solidarity and out-group hostility
- Show how Freud's understanding of human nature both incites the demand for and militates against achieving equality in society and peace and harmony between various groups

Required Materials and Texts

- Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, John Strachey translator.
- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, John Strachey translator. These texts are widely available for ordering online through a variety of book sellers or through the McMaster University bookstore. Please make sure that you have the Strachey translations of the Freud since there are other translations on the market.
- If you have time and interest, please read Freud's *Future of an Illusion*. It's a small work which can be read in an afternoon. However, I will cover all you need to know about this work in a lecture.

Class Format

At the time of preparation of this course outline, this class is scheduled to meet in person on Wednesdays, at 7:00-10:00 from September 7, 2022, until the end of term. All examinations, however, will be taken online through zoom. Office hours will also be conducted on zoom, times to be announced. Please note, that should conditions associated with COVID 19 worsen, we may move to an online format. Please note that it is strongly urged that all members of the class wear a proper mask to respect the medical conditions of fellow members of the class and the vulnerable members of their families. Distanced seating will be attempted insofar as the structure of the room allows. Lectures will also be recorded and made available to students on Avenue to Learn.

If students have questions regarding the readings or lecture material after the lecture has

concluded, they are invited to contact the instructor via email. If these questions and issues require more lengthy treatment private zoom sessions can be arranged with the instructor. Additionally, students with specific issues that require a private discussion with the instructor may contact the instructor via email and if required may have a one-on-one zoom meeting with the instructor.

Avenue to Learn will be the access point for students to the recorded lectures, to communications with the instructor, to the mid-term and final examinations described below. Students are requested to access Avenue to Learn frequently for class announcements, recorded lectures, exams and the like.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. First mid-term exam on Avenue to Learn, date to be determined
2. Second mid-term exam on Avenue to Learn, date to be determined
3. Final exam, date to be determined by the Office of the Registrar

Course Evaluation – Details

The First Midterm will be taken online through Avenue, date and time to be announced. Two weeks' notice will be given prior to the date of the midterm. The first midterm will be based on the lectures concerning the fundamentals of psychoanalysis and the text of *Group Psychology* up to and including the end of chapter V.

The first midterm will consist of some 25-30 multiple choice questions. The midterm will be written at the same time on the same day by all students on Avenue to Learn. Each student will be given a unique set of questions. Students who have been granted specific dispensations by Student Accessibility Services in terms of extra time or specific times will be accommodated. The same kind of accommodation will be made for students with constraints due to employment matters. The grade for this midterm will constitute 30% of the final grade in the course.

The Second Midterm will be taken online through Avenue, date and time to be announced. Two weeks' notice will be given prior to the date of the midterm. The second midterm will be based on the lectures concerning the text of *Group Psychology* from the beginning of Chapter VI to the end of the book and the first four chapters of *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

The second midterm will consist of some 25-30 multiple choice questions. The midterm will be written at the same time on the same day by all students on Avenue to Learn. Each student will be given a unique set of questions. Students who have been granted specific dispensations by Student Accessibility Services in terms of extra time or specific times will be accommodated. The same kind of accommodation will be made for students with constraints due to employment matters. The grade for this midterm will constitute 30% of the final grade in the course.

The Final Examination will be taken online through Avenue, date and time to be determined by the Office of the Registrar. The final examination will be based on all the lectures concerning the entire text of *Group Psychology* and all of *Civilization and Its Discontents*. A disproportionately larger number of questions on the final examination will be based on Chapters V to the end of *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

The final examination will consist of some 60 multiple choice questions. The final examination will be written at the same time on the same day by all students on Avenue to Learn. Each student will be given a unique set of questions. Students who have been granted specific dispensations by Student Accessibility Services in terms of extra time or specific times will be accommodated. The grade for this midterm will constitute 40% of the final grade in the course.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

THE LECTURES WILL BE RECORDED AND MADE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS FOR REVIEW ON AVENUE TO LEARN. PLEASE ACCEPT THIS TENTATIVE SCHEDULE AS AN APPROXIMATE GUIDE RATHER THAN A TIMETABLE ETCHED IN STONE.

Week 1 – Introduction

The first two lectures will present the students with an introduction to the fundamentals of Freud's psychoanalytic concepts of the mind, psychic topography, psychic structure, psychic conflict, psychic development, the importance of dreams and parapraxes in understanding the unconscious mind, the theory of the drives, the psycho-sexual stages of development, Freud's clinical work and the development of his understanding of the mind.

**No Readings

Week 2 – Introduction continued

The first two lectures will present the students with an introduction to the fundamentals of Freud's psychoanalytic concepts of the mind, psychic topography, psychic structure, psychic conflict, psychic development, the importance of dreams and parapraxes in understanding the unconscious mind, the theory of the drives, the development of Freud's theory, Freud's clinical work and the development of his understanding of the

mind.

**No Readings

Week 3 – Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego

Readings: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Introduction (Chapter I), Chapter II Le Bon's Description of the Group Mind, Chapter III Other Accounts of Collective Mental Life, Chapter IV Suggestion and Libido.

Week 4 – Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego

Readings: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Chapter V Two Artificial Groups: The Church and the Army. Chapter VI Further Problems and Lines of Work, Chapter VII Identification, Chapter VIII Being in Love and Hypnosis.

Week 5 – Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego

Readings: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Chapter IX The Herd Instinct, Chapter X The Group and the Primal Horde, Chapter XI A Differentiating Grade in the Ego, Chapter XII Postscript.

Week 6 – Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego

No Readings: Semester Break

Week 7

No Readings: First mid-term in class exam

Week 8 – Civilization and Its Discontents

Take up first mid-term exam

Readings: *Civilization and Its Discontents* Editor's Introduction, Chapter I
Civilization and Its Discontents, Chapter II, Chapter III.

Week 9 – Civilization and Its Discontents

Readings: *Civilization and Its Discontents* Chapter IV, Chapter V, Chapter VI

Week 10 – Civilization and Its Discontents

Readings: *Civilization and Its Discontents* Chapter VII, Chapter VIII

Week 11 – Civilization and Its Discontents

Second Mid-term exam in Class

Week 12 – Civilization and Its Discontents

Take up the second mid-term exam and assessment of the course

Week 13 – Civilization and Its Discontents

Summary and Discussion

Final Examination on Avenue date and time to be set by the Registrars Office.

Course Policies

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for

In the case of illness and missed exams, students will have an opportunity to rewrite.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by university instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F