

# Literature and Psychoanalysis

## BC3171-001 (CN 00690)

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Spring 2024

Tuesday and Thursday, 2:40 – 3:55

Location: 409 Barnard Hall

Professor: Nathan Gorelick

E-mail: [ngorelick@barnard.edu](mailto:ngorelick@barnard.edu)

Office: 415 Barnard Hall

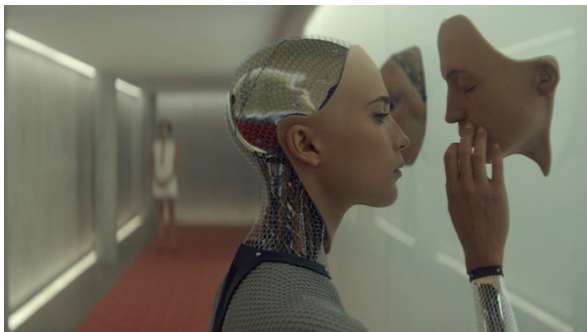
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 4:00 – 5:00 or by appointment

Grader: Srijia Umapathy, [su2265@columbia.edu](mailto:su2265@columbia.edu)

### Course Description:

Individually or collectively, from the deeply personal to the most broadly shared, the stories we tell make us who we are. They mediate our experiences, our fantasies, and our ideas, arranging them, organizing them, and giving them meaning. Just as importantly, our stories can hide us, not only from others but also, and more dangerously, from ourselves. Stories reveal and conceal, direct and mislead, enlighten and deceive.

Psychoanalysis is the science of this dangerous duality. This is why, from the beginning, psychoanalysis has been intimately related to literature, and why literary criticism and theory have found so much value and insight in psychoanalysis. Whatever their many differences, literature and psychoanalysis both occupy the gap between language and truth, where interpretation matters, meaning is contested, and stories become spaces of possibility and play. Between literature and psychoanalysis, our stories become important as much for what they are as for what they could be, if only they were read otherwise.



This course will articulate three aspects of this deep relationship between literature and psychoanalysis. The **first** aspect concerns literature's historical function as a means for illustrating and popularizing key psychoanalytic concepts. How, we will ask, has literature enabled the translation of clinical insights into broader, cultural and critical frames? What has been lost in this translation from the clinical to the cultural? What has psychoanalysis gained? What has it risked? The **second** aspect involves these same questions in reverse:

What has literature gained from psychoanalysis? How have some of its fundamental concepts—the unconscious, repression, libido, superego, the death drive—influenced literary form, subject matter, and theory from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present? The **third**, more ranging and exploratory aspect considers what literature and psychoanalysis can do together to decipher, interpret, critique, construct, and at times obscure the always singular, dynamic, unsettled and unsettling experience of being human. Throughout, we will place key psychoanalytic texts in conversation with literary works, including plays, poetry, short stories, novels, and films, and we will situate these conversations within a broader critical history including feminism, queer theory, Black studies, art history, and folk tales. In so doing, we will discover and practice new ways of reading the stories that make us who we are.

## Learning Outcomes

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

- Demonstrate broad factual knowledge of formative concepts, texts, and interpretive techniques in the clinical history of psychoanalysis
- Identify and describe the clinical psychoanalytic origins of key concepts in contemporary literary criticism and theory, as well as the transformations these concepts have undergone in their translation from clinical to critical contexts
- Apply both clinical and critical concepts to diverse literary texts and genres in order to construct interpretive arguments about the relations and differences between literature, literary criticism, and psychoanalysis
- Integrate clinical and critical psychoanalytic concepts into broader critiques of and histories of resistance against patterns and practices of social and political exclusion

## Required Texts:

Available at Book Culture (536 W 112<sup>th</sup> Street) or for purchase online. **Please be sure to acquire only the specified editions.** These texts will also be available on Barnard Library Reserves.

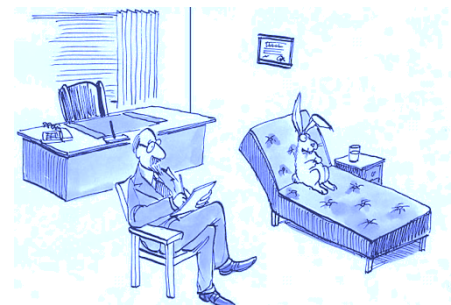
1. Josh Cohen, *How to Read Freud*. New York: Norton, 2005.
2. Sigmund Freud, *Three Case Histories*. New York: Touchstone, 1996.
3. Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*. San Diego: Harcourt, 1989.

*Additional readings may be accessed on CourseWorks or will be provided in class.*

## Course Requirements:

### Grading:

Attendance and Participation	10 %
Reading Quizzes	15 %
Online Discussions	15 %
Critical Dream Journal	15 %
Midterm Exam	20 %
Final Exam	25 %



"It goes back to being pulled out of the hat."

### Attendance and Participation:

This course takes place entirely in person, with no supplemental live-streaming option. Lectures are not one-directional; I count on your active input and questions to help guide the presentation of ideas. For these reasons, your attendance is expected and required. This means more than being physically present. Complete all the assigned readings by the day they are listed on the course schedule and arrive prepared to contribute to our collective conversation. Take notes throughout, and contribute to our shared experience. If you are unable

to speak up in front of a large group, there will be other opportunities to demonstrate your involvement. Occasionally, we may split into smaller working groups or teams, or you can ask me questions in my office hours or via email.

Unless you have an Attendance Accommodation Agreement from CARDS, you will not be able to make up missed quizzes, exams, or assignments. If you have to miss class due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, it is your responsibility to keep up with any content you may have missed. Fill in the "Course Contacts" list at the bottom of this syllabus and reach out to your peers. And please do not be late to class. If you find yourself unable to attend regularly or to arrive on time, please talk to me. I am here to help!

#### Reading Quizzes:

Periodically, and without warning, you will be tested on reading assignments so I can give you due credit for keeping up with the course schedule. These quizzes are not difficult, and in general will require only that you have read the day's assignments carefully and attentively. If you show consistently high performance on these pop quizzes, I will exclude your lowest quiz grade when calculating your final grade at the end of the semester. You're welcome!

#### Online Discussions (x5)

We will occasionally prepare for our in-class conversation through written discussions on CourseWorks. For each online discussion, you will provide one original post of **200-300 words** and respond to *at least* two other posts in **100 words each**. Your responses should be substantive and constructive, not simply polite and encouraging. All posts should be completed by the beginning of class and should make effective use of assigned readings whenever possible and appropriate. The due dates for each discussion are indicated below on the Course Schedule.

#### Critical Dream Journal

This is an opportunity for self-exploration and experimentation with key concepts from course readings and lectures. Here you are treating your own inner experience as an object of critical analysis. **Each week, you will write down at least one dream.** (*What if I don't remember my dreams?*, you ask. That will not be a problem. Or if it is, you can record a daydream instead.) **Every two weeks, you will write one paragraph interpreting these dream texts.** Use the interpretive techniques and concepts we have been studying in class. By the end of the semester, your journal should include at least 12 dreams and six analytical paragraphs. The dream texts may be any length. **Your analytical paragraphs should each be at least 300 words.** There are obviously no right or wrong interpretations here! I only want to see you grappling with the practical, experiential dimensions of our core concepts and texts. This should be fun!

#### Midterm Exam

The midterm will take place just prior to Spring Break and will include multiple choice questions, a section on passage identification from assigned readings, short answer essay questions, and one longer essay question. We will review all necessary content in the class period prior to the date of the exam.

#### Final Exam

The Final is cumulative, covering the whole semester. It will follow a similar format to the Midterm. There will be a review on the last scheduled day of class.

Honor Code:\*

*We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.*

\* established 1912, updated 2016

Accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources and Disability Services (CARDS):

If you anticipate barriers to your academic experience due to a documented disability or emerging health challenge, please feel free to contact me and/or the Center for Accessibility Resources & Disability Services (CARDS) as early as possible. If you have questions regarding registering a disability or receiving accommodations for the semester, please contact CARDS at (212) 854-4634, [cards@barnard.edu](mailto:cards@barnard.edu), or learn more at [barnard.edu/disabilityservices](http://barnard.edu/disabilityservices). CARDS is located in 101 Altschul Hall.

Wellness Statement:

It is important for you as undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. As a community, we urge you to prioritize yourself—your health, sanity, and wellness—throughout your career on campus. Sleep, exercise, and eating well are all part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you, and we encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

<http://barnard.edu/primarycare>

<https://barnard.edu/about-counseling>

<https://barnard.edu/TheWellnessSpot/about>

Affordable Access to Course Texts & Materials:

All students deserve to be able to study and make use of course texts and materials regardless of cost. Barnard librarians have partnered with students, faculty, and staff to find ways to increase student access to textbooks. By the first day of advance registration for each term, faculty are expected to provide information about required texts for each course on CourseWorks (including ISBN or author, title, publisher, copyright date, and price), which can be viewed by students. A number of cost-free or low-cost methods for accessing some types of courses texts are detailed in the Barnard Library Textbook Affordability Guide ([library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability](http://library.barnard.edu/textbook-affordability)). Undergraduate students who identify as first-generation and/or low-income may check out items from the FLIP lending libraries in the Barnard Library ([library.barnard.edu/flip](http://library.barnard.edu/flip)) and in Butler Library for an entire semester. Students may also consult with their professors, librarians, the Dean of Studies, and the Financial Aid Office about additional affordable alternatives for access to course texts.

**Additional Student Resources and Support**

Furman Counseling Center: <http://barnard.edu/rosemary-furman-counseling-center>

Health & Wellness: <http://barnard.edu/health-wellness>

Nondiscrimination and Title IX: [barnard.edu/cares/nondiscrimination-and-title-ix](http://barnard.edu/cares/nondiscrimination-and-title-ix)

The Wellness Spot: <https://barnard.edu/TheWellnessSpot>

IT and Tech Support: <https://barnard.service-now.com/sp> (login required) or 212-854-7172 (on-campus extension 4-7172), or 307 Diana.

### **Course Schedule:**

Readings from outside our required textbooks can be found in the “Files” section of our CourseWorks page or will be provided in class. All assigned films should be viewed before class and will be made available online or at the Barnard Library. **All assignments are due on the day they are listed.**

## **WEEK 1 — Reading Otherwise**

### **January 16**

Course introduction, syllabus questions, expectations, community agreements

### **January 18**

#### READINGS:

Shoshana Felman, “To Open the Question,” from *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, pp. 5-10

Josh Cohen, *How to Read Freud*, pp. 1-20

The Editors of *Parapraxis Magazine*, “A Tragedy of Errors, A Comedy of Terrors,” pp. 1-6

Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo* excerpt, pp. 208-214

#### ASSIGNMENT:

Online Discussion: Course Introduction

## **WEEK 2 — Anxieties of Influence**

### **January 23**

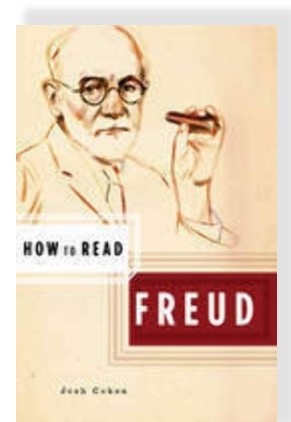
#### READINGS:

Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, excerpt from “The Dream-Work,” *Standard Edition* vol. 4, pp. 277-318

Josh Cohen, *How To Read Freud*, pp. 21-44

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Kubla Khan, Or, A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment”

William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, excerpt from Book V, “Books,” pp. 239-247



**January 25**

READINGS:

Arthur Schnitzler, "A Farewell," from *Night Games*, pp. 125-140

Arthur Schnitzler, "The Widower," from *Night Games*, pp. 179-189

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**WEEK 3 — Desire and Sublimation**

**January 30**

READINGS:

Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Part II, "Infantile Sexuality," *Standard Ed.* vol. 7, pp. 173-206

Josh Cohen, *How to Read Freud*, "The Obscure Object of Desire," pp. 76-89

**February 1**

READINGS:

Franz Kafka, "A Hunger Artist," *The Complete Stories*, pp. 268-277

Franz Kafka, "A Report to an Academy," *The Complete Stories*, 250-262

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**WEEK 4 — The Pleasure Principle**

**February 6**

READINGS:

Sigmund Freud, "Repression," *Standard Ed.* vol. 14, pp. 146-158

Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*, pp. 3-54

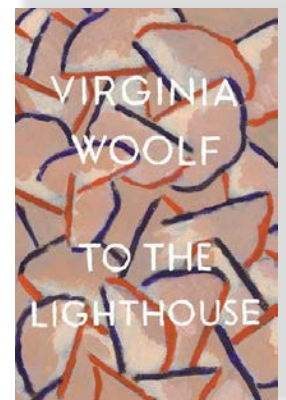
ASSIGNMENT:

Online Discussion: Desire and Displacement with Freud and Woolf

**February 8**

READING:

Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*, pp. 54-124





## WEEK 5 — Negation

February 13

READINGS:

Sigmund Freud, "On Negation,"  
*Standard Ed.* vol. 19, pp. 234-239.

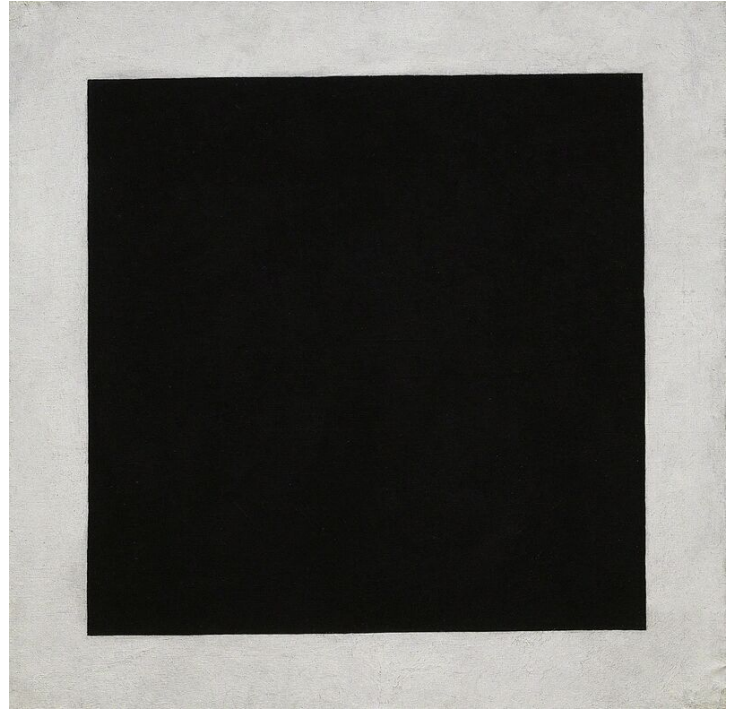
Josh Cohen, *How To Read Freud*,  
"No," pp. 56-65

Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*,  
pp. 125-143

February 15

READING:

Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*,  
pp. 145-209



## WEEK 6 — Memory and Forgetting

February 20

READINGS:

Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents,"  
*Standard Ed.* Vol. 21, excerpt, pp. 64-73

Sigmund Freud, "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad,'" *Standard Ed.* Vol. 19, pp. 226-232

Jorge Luis Borges, "Funes, His Memory," *Collected Fictions* pp. 131-137



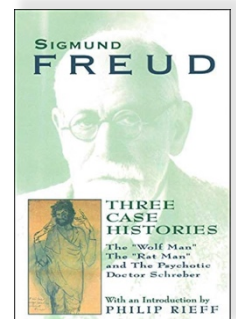
ASSIGNMENT:

Online Discussion: Total recall?

February 22

READING:

Sigmund Freud, *Three Case Histories*, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," pp. 161-204



## WEEK 7 – On the Case

February 27

READING:

Sigmund Freud, *Three Case Histories*, “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” pp. 204-280



February 29

READING:

Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* excerpt, “Fictions of the Wolf Man: Freud and Narrative Understanding,” pp. 264-285

ASSIGNMENT:

Bring your Critical Dream Journal to class

## WEEK 8 – Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through

March 5

MIDTERM REVIEW – Bring all notes and readings to class

March 7

**MIDTERM EXAM – In Class**

SPRING BREAK — MARCH 11-15

## WEEK 9 – Identity and Otherness

March 19

READING:

Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,” *Écrits*, pp. 75-81

March 21

READING:

Philip K. Dick, “We Can Remember It For You Wholesale,” *Selected Stories*, pp. 325-346





## WEEK 10 – Ambivalence

March 26

READINGS:

Adam Phillips, “Against Self-Criticism”

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, scene 1, and Act III, scenes 1-3

ASSIGNMENT:

Online Discussion: What’s Hamlet’s problem?!



March 28

READINGS:

Sigmund Freud, “Family Romances,” *Standard Ed.*, vol. 9, pp. 235-242

Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, “Introduction,” pp. 3-19

ASSIGNMENT:

Online Discussion: Little Monsters

## WEEK 11 – Un...

April 2

READINGS:

E.T.A. Hoffman, “The Sandman,” *Tales of Hoffman*, pp. 85-125

Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny,” *Standard Ed.* vol. 17, pp. 219-253



April 4

READINGS:

Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, “Something To Be Scared Of,” pp. 32-55

Josh Cohen, *How to Read Freud*, “Doubly Uncanny,” pp. 66-75

Film: *Ex Machina*, dir. Alex Garland

## WEEK 12 — Psychoanalysis Goddamn

April 9

READINGS:

Claudia Tate, *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels*,  
“Introduction,” pp. 3-21

Badia Sahar Ahad, *Freud Upside Down: African  
American Literature and Psychoanalytic Culture*,  
“Introduction,” pp. 1-12



April 11

READING:

James Baldwin, “Going to Meet the Man,” pp.  
229-249

## WEEK 13 – Sex and Difference

April 16

READINGS:

Eliza Haywood, “Fantomina: Or, Love in a Maze,” pp. 257-291

Patricia Gherovichi, *Transgender Psychoanalysis*, “Introduction,” pp. 1-10, and “A Natural Experiment,” pp. 55-62

April 18

READINGS:

Luce Irigaray, “When Our Lips Speak Together,” *Signs* vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 69-79

Gertrude Stein, “If I Told Him, A Completed Portrait of Picasso” and “Sacred Emily”

ASSIGNMENT:

Submit your Critical Dream Journal on CourseWorks



## Bibliography

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Baldwin, James. *Going to Meet the Man*. New York: Vintage: 1993.

Bernstein, Joseph. "Not Your Daddy's Freud." *New York Times*, March 22, 2023; <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/22/style/freud-psychoanalysis.html>.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Vintage, 1976.

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Dick, Philip K. *Selected Stories*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.

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Garland, Alex. *Ex Machina*. A24 Films, 2014.

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Hoffman, E.T.A. *Tales of Hoffman*. Edited and translated by R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Penguin, 2004.

Irigaray, Luce. "When Our Lips Speak Together." *Signs* 6.1 (Autumn 1980), 69-79.

Kafka, Franz. *The Complete Stories*. Edited by Nahum N. Glatzer. New York: Schocken, 1995.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Translated by Bruce Fink. New York: Norton, 2006.

*Parapraxis Magazine*. Editorial: "A Tragedy of Errors, A Comedy of Terrors." October, 2022;  
<https://www.parapraxismagazine.com/articles/a-tragedy-of-errors-a-comedy-of-terrors>.

Phillips, Adam. "Against Self-Criticism." *London Review of Books* 37.5 (March, 2015);  
<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v37/n05/adam-phillips/against-self-criticism>.

Reed, Ishmael. *Mumbo Jumbo*. New York: Scribner, 1972.

Schnitzler, Arthur. *Night Games: And Other Stories and Novellas*. Translated by Margret Schaefer. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*; <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/hamlet/read/>.

Stein, Gertrude. "If I Told Him, A Completed Portrait of Picasso";  
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/55215/if-i-told-him-a-completed-portrait-of-picasso>.

Stein, Gertrude. "Sacred Emily"; <https://www.oatridge.co.uk/poems/g/gertrude-stein-sacred-emily.php>.

Tate, Claudia. *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels: Desire and the Protocols of Race*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Woolf, Virginia. *To The Lighthouse*. San Diego: Harcourt, 1989.

Wordsworth, William. *The Prelude*, in *Selected Poetry*. Edited by Mark Van Doren. New York: Modern Library, 1950.