

SYLLABUS

PHIL 190-000: Freshman Seminar: Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*

Spring 2024

Mo We 2:30-3:45 / Candler Library 123

Professor Noëlle McAfee, nmcafee@emory.edu, office hours by appointment via Calendly / Bowden Hall 215

Content:

This freshman seminar will immerse students in Sigmund Freud's magnum opus, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Though the first edition was published at the end of 1899, Freud chose to have the year 1900 printed on the frontispiece, indicating that this was a volume for the new twentieth century. And indeed it was. During the course of the twentieth century, psychoanalytic ideas seeped into every corner of life, from the bedroom to the boardroom, from pop culture to highbrow literary magazines. As it went through eight editions, Freud continued to update it. So in many ways it is a compendium of all of Freud's theory of the workings of the human mind. In it he states that dreams are the royal road to the unconscious. True, it is one road among others. But the process of following that road opens up many ways of understanding our hidden wishes, desires, and defenses and how they become manifest in our dreams along with our slips of the tongue. Now, 123 years after it was published, scientific research into sleep and dreaming have turned up what may be competing theories of the mind. Freud himself was a neuroscientist and hoped that one day science would confirm what he was discovering in the talking cure of psychoanalysis. Are current developments in neuroscience challenging Freud's findings or are they compatible accounts of what we are doing when we dream? Are dreams just the random firing of neurons? Or do they mean something more?

Other texts may be assigned and will be available electronically.

Course Objectives (and assignments geared toward mastering them):

- To give you an opportunity to read and understand one of the most important books of the twentieth century
- To introduce you to psychoanalytic theory
- To develop skills for critically engaging with philosophical texts and issues through discussion and writing
- To develop skills of interpretation

- To be able to formulate, articulate, and defend your own considered views (orally and in writing) on complex topics

Assignments:

Each of the following assignments is designed to help students reach the course objectives. To pass the course with a grade of A or B, students must demonstrate proficiency on each assignment. Proficiency of 82% will merit a B, of 93% an A. Details and rubrics will be posted in files.

1. Read the text for the week in advance of our Monday meeting
2. Come to Monday's class with a few sentences identifying the text's general topic, at least one of its aims, and the method it employs to make its case, followed by your own brief assessment.
3. Come to Wednesday's class with at least one comment of question about the themes and/or readings of the week.
4. Oral presentation and analysis of a film clip of a dream sequence.
5. 5-page exegetical paper on what Freud means by dreams being wish fulfillments due by noon on February 15. May be revised within a week of getting initial grade. The new grade will take the place of the old one.
6. 5-page paper (1) analyzing a dream (whether one of your own, a friend's, or from a film) using Freud's theory and (2) giving a critical assessment of whether you find the analysis to be plausible and compelling due on due by noon on March 22. May be revised within a week of getting initial grade. The new grade will take the place of the old one.
7. Final project on a topic of your choice that has been approved by the professor. May be revised within a week of getting initial grade. The new grade will take the place of the old one.

Schedule:

Unless otherwise noted, all readings are from *The Interpretation of Dreams: The Complete and Definitive Text*. Translated and edited by James Strachey.

Week One

1/17 Introduction

Week Two 1/22 & 24

Chapter I (The Scientific Literature Dealing with the Problems of Dreams)

Week Three 1/29&31

Ch. II (The Method of Interpreting Dreams: an analysis of a specimen dream)

Week Four 2/5 &7

Ch. III (A Dream is the Fulfillment of a Wish)

Week Five 2/12 & 14

Ch. IV (Distortion in Dreams)

First paper due by noon on 2/15

Week Six 2/19 & 21

Ch. V (The Material and Sources of Dreams) up to page 240

Week Seven 2/25 & 28

Remainder of Ch. V (somatic sources of dreams and typical dreams)

Week Eight 3/4 & 6

Ch. VI (a) the work of condensation and (b) the work of displacement

[March 11-15 SPRING BREAK]

Week Nine 3/18 & 20

Ch. VI sections (c) and (d)

Second paper due by noon on 3/22

Week Ten 3/22 & 3/24

Ch. VI (sections f-g)

Week Eleven 3/25 & 27

Ch. VI (sections h-i)

Week Twelve 4/1 & 3

Ch. VII (The Psychology of the Dream Process) sections (a) and (b)

Final project proposal due on April 1.

Week Thirteen 4/8 & 10

Ch. VII (The Psychology of the Dream Process) sections (c) and (d)

Week Fourteen 4/15 & 17

Ch. VII sections (e) and (f)

Week Fifteen 4/22 & 24

Other readings TBD

Final Paper Project Abstract Presentations & Wrap-up discussion

Last Class Day 4/29

Last day to submit final project.

Course Work:

Overview: As a freshman seminar course, we will be using the seminar method rather than the lecture format. This means that while the professor will provide much background material and explanation of the text, the course will primarily move through the collective participation and discussion of all seminar members. In other words, do not come prepared to listen; come prepared to engage. This means that you should have read all the material carefully before class. This does not mean that you will be expected to have mastered or even understand it all but that you will be ready to ask good questions and discuss the issues.

Dream Journal: For your own benefit and as possible material for papers and class discussion, you are encouraged to keep a dream journal by your bedside to record any dreams or dream fragments on awakening. This journal is optional and private. You will never need to turn it in but you may find it very helpful as we move through the material. Also feel free to interview your friends and neighbors about any of their dreams.

Films: Also at least once per semester each student should share and analyze a film (or other media) dream sequence that's less than 10 minutes for us to view and discuss in class. Consider whether that film's portrayal congrues with Freud's account. How might you interpret the dream through Freud's lens? What unconscious processes are revealed through the dream?

Participation. One of the goals of this course is for you to develop the ability to listen and critically engage with philosophical texts and issues through discussion. While attendance at

each class is required, class participation is crucial for doing well in this course. “Good” participation does not necessarily mean talking the most, nor does it mean always saying something “right.” Dialogue can be promoted in class in many ways, e.g., asking questions, noticing if others are silent and trying to make space for their voices, allowing for productive silences, talking to each other and not just to us. You should come to seminar prepared to discuss the readings, actively listen, and respectfully and thoughtfully respond to other students. Participation will be graded with these considerations in mind, and may also be helped by attending office hours.

Papers. Students are required to write two short papers (5 double spaced pages, 12 point font, normal margins). See paper rubric posted under files.

Final Project Abstract. In preparation for their final project, each student must submit a **150-300 word** proposal by April 1.

Final Project. Final projects can be on a topic of students’ choice and in a medium of their choosing, whether an 8-10 page paper, a podcast or video, a photo montage, or some other creative format. The primary requirement is that the student use it to make a novel and compelling contribution to our thinking about dreams. Final project due by 2:30 p.m. on April 29.

COURSE POLICIES

Classroom Protocol: Students should arrive on time with the text in hand. Students may not use phones, laptops, tablets or other electronic devices in class unless they are making a presentation to the class.

Attendance: Student are expected to attend all classes. In the event that students are ill and can’t make it to class, they should contact let the professor know so that the absence is excused and then contact another student for class notes and help with what was missed. Toward that, students are advised to exchange contact information with a few other students at the beginning of the semester.

Papers. For guidelines, see the paper rubric posted under files.

Citation and Plagiarism. All work submitted should be the student’s own original work. Any ideas or words borrowed from other sources should be acknowledged and sources should be listed. For proper citation procedures, see guides.main.library.emory.edu/citing_your_sources. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Council.

Honor Code. By attending Emory College, students affirm their pledge to follow the Emory College Honor Code: http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/policy/honor_code.html. By taking this course you affirm that it is a violation to plagiarize, to give false information to a faculty member, to deviate from the professor’s instructions on collaboration for work submitted for a grade, or to engage in any other academic misconduct.

Academic Support. To enrich each student's educational experience, Emory offers students a range of services. Visit <http://college.emory.edu/advising> for a list of support programs and appointment directions.

Disability and Access. Students with medical/health conditions that might impact academic success should (1) discuss with the professor alternative ways to meet the requirements of the course and (2) visit Access, Disability Services and Resources (ADSR formerly the Office of Disability Services, ODS) to determine eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Students who receive accommodations must present the Accommodation Letter from ADSR to your professor at the beginning of the semester, or when the letter is received. ADSR is in 110 Administration Building, (404) 727-6016.

Emory Writing Center. The Emory Writing Center offers 45-minute individual conferences to Emory College and Laney Graduate School students. You may take any project—from traditional papers to websites—at any stage in your composing process. Writing Center tutors take a discussion- and workshop-based approach that enables writers of all levels to see their writing with fresh eyes. Tutors can talk with you about your purpose, organization, audience, design choices, or use of sources. They can also work with you on sentence-level concerns (including grammar and word choice), but they will not proofread for you. Instead, they will discuss strategies and resources you can use to become a better editor of your own work. The Writing Center is located in Callaway N-212. Visit <http://writingcenter.emory.edu> for more information and to make appointments.