



Northwestern
Psychoanalytic
Society & Institute

NPSI Requirements for Graduation

Course Outline

There are four major components to our training program in psychoanalysis:

- 1) The personal analysis
- 2) Infant Observation
- 3) The didactic program
- 4) Conducting supervised analysis or “control cases”

Personal Analysis

Perhaps the most formative element of the psychoanalytic training is the experience of the personal analysis, which in psychoanalytic training is known as a training analysis. This experience, conducted in complete confidentiality with one of the training analysts on our faculty, allows the student to experience the psychoanalytic investigation into his or her own unconscious processes. Typically through transference phenomena, the many aspects of one’s personality, some of which have remained silent for some time, “come alive” in the analytic experience in vivid ways. A training psychoanalysis consists of 50-minute sessions four or five times per week. Fees vary and are arranged with the training analyst. A minimum of 400 hours of psychoanalysis is required, but most analyses go much longer.

Infant Observation

This experience, crucial to the intellectual and emotional appreciation of the impact of early mental states, entails weekly observation of a primary care giver (usually the mother) and her newborn from as close to birth as possible through the first year of life. The observations are detailed in written reports and discussed in weekly seminars with three or four other observers and the seminar faculty. Many feel this course along with the personal analysis to be the most formative experience in the psychoanalytic training program.

Didactic Program

The course work component reviews the development and evolution of thought among the major psychoanalytic traditions beginning with Sigmund Freud and following especially the line of development of the Kleinian tradition. Some of the aspects of Sigmund Freud’s work include his developing thoughts about the nature of unconscious processes including: dreams; the nature of infantile sexuality; the repetition compulsion and its expression in the phenomenon of transference; internal conflicts; defenses against psychic pain; the nature of anxiety; and throughout life considerations about the forces for and against growth and change.

The works of Melanie Klein and her followers (Segal, Rosenfeld, Meltzer, and so on)

illustrate a focus on very early formative processes of mental structure: an ego shaped by the influence of projective and introjective processes operating especially within the experience of the mother-infant dyad; the function of unconscious phantasy in shaping the nature of this increasingly complex internal world; and the inevitable conflicts between aspects of the personality which yearn for growth and those which actively operate to maintain the status quo. Ways of understanding narcissistic, perverse, and psychosomatic mechanisms as defenses against the pain of emergence into reality, which embraces separateness, also have roots in the understanding of Klein and her followers.

A third major thinker is Wilfred Bion whose creative contributions cover a vast range. Among his many contributions are his notions on the origins of thinking and knowing, which he believed emerge out of the infant's relationship with primary care givers, wherein one's unknowable aspects are transformed into the knowable. Bion's way of understanding mental life encourages one to resist the safety of unyielding conviction and supports an attitude of braving the uncertainty of one's every changing future.

Thus Bion's work circles us back to our second basic emphasis: developing the capacity to think for oneself, based upon learning from emotional experience. Besides these luminary psychoanalytic figures, candidates study many other psychoanalytic authors and draw upon the wealth of the NPS faculty whose interests range widely across the spectrum of thinking in the contemporary psychoanalytic world.

Supervised Psychoanalysis

Conducting psychoanalysis under supervision or taking on "control cases" comprises another aspect of psychoanalytic training. The goal here is for the candidate, through careful attention and weekly supervision, to be able to observe, understand, and interpret unconscious processes from the analyst-in-training's perspective. Three cases are usual in the training, and supervision on a weekly basis for two years with the first two cases, is required. Careful attention is paid to the candidate's growth included monitoring of one's capacity to utilize countertransference experiences as an analytic tool.

Oral Presentation

An oral presentation or monitoring of progress around the growth of the candidate's clinical skills occurs when the second control case is well under way. The procedure consists of presentation of sequential process notes to a panel of senior faculty who offer feedback and guidance if necessary about the clinical work presented. Successful completion of this requirement is the basis for senior candidate status. Senior candidates are encouraged to proceed with a third and final control case and may conduct other analyses without supervision.

Graduation Paper and Completion of Training

Each candidate writes a graduation paper which demonstrates an understanding of psychoanalytic theory and technique and which shows the application of this understanding to clinical work. The candidate's graduation paper committee is composed of three members of the faculty. Upon graduation, the graduate is awarded the designation FIPA or Fellow of the International Psychoanalytical Association.

Schedule

Classes are held during the academic year from September through June. Classes meet Friday afternoons from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM, excepting major holidays, on the NPS campus. On occasion, due to visiting (out-of-town) faculty, classes are held at alternate times.

Please note: Infant Observation is a weekly seminar for one full year or 40-44 seminars conducted at a time separate from the Friday class time.

The NPS academic calendar is standardized and follows this format year after year. Classes begin on the first Friday after Labor Day and there will be three quarters that are each 12 weeks long. There are no breaks between quarters, but there are 5 vacation weeks during the academic year:

- 1) The Friday after Thanksgiving
- 2) Two weeks in December the weeks of Christmas and New Years
- 3) Good Friday (April)
- 4) The Friday before Memorial Day (May)

If we host an Evolving British Object Relations conference, there will be 11 classes in that quarter (i.e. the Friday of EBOR substitutes for one day of classes).

Cost of Training

Training costs are currently (2011) based on \$30 per seminar. Required for a typical trimester are 2 didactic courses of 6-8 seminars each and 1 clinical case conference of 6-8 seminars.

Personal psychoanalysis and supervision fees and method of payment are negotiated between the candidate and training analyst or supervisor.