

The Dynamics of Trauma. Therapeutic Narrative Strategies

Elective Course

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The topic of trauma is the outgrowth of an interest into an area of acute contemporary concern. There is general consensus that “trauma studies” have been shaped by and encompass collective catastrophes, alongside everyday experiences of violence and loss. At the conceptual heart of critical trauma studies is a set of tensions between individual identity and collective experience, between experience and representation. The category of trauma will be unraveled and interrogated to assess the individual and cultural work that trauma does. What sorts of experiences cause trauma? What are the psychological effects of trauma on those who have suffered and survived it? How might it be alleviated? How might one develop resilience to trauma? What is the role of narrative in alleviating the effects of trauma?

A comprehensive exploration of the psychological trauma field will be provided, including the current theories in the field, the nature of trauma, how trauma affects individuals and systems, grief reactions, and reliving/relieving traumatic stress through narrative. The topic of trauma will be discussed by resorting to different theoretical frameworks including philosophical issues about self, identity and free will and psychoanalytic issues about narrative memory, repression, and self-understanding.

The course will critically consider the various psychoanalytical and cultural practices that cohere around contemporary notions of trauma, equally exploring issues related to resilience, transformation in the wake of trauma, post-memory and narrative therapeutic strategies.

GRADING PAPER

This assignment allows students to tailor the course to their own intellectual specificities and interests. That is, some may be interested more in theoretical research and others in analysis. There are two paper options.

Option #1: Literature Review. This paper offers an opportunity to expand knowledge in a particular area of trauma-related material. The paper should be 2-5 pages long.

Option #2: Analytical Paper. This paper will require an integration of the information from the course to discuss and investigate trauma-specific elements in a narrative (of your own choice). The paper should be 3-6 pages long.