

SW 790
Theory and Practice of Infant Mental Health
Fall 2014

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Office hours -
Monday 12:15 - 1:30
Others by appointment

Course Domain and Boundaries

This is an *introductory* course on the relationship between theory and practice in infant mental health. It is intended for graduate students in Social Work, Education, Nursing and Psychology. Its purpose is to furnish a conceptual framework, based upon recent developments in attachment theory, for understanding how the emotional qualities of the infant-parent dyad influence the infant's development, the parent's capacity to give care, and finally the professional's state of mind regarding the family. Emphasis is given to how the experiences of early childhood persist over time, and how they are summoned up again by the presence of a baby. This understanding becomes in turn the basis for learning how to plan a treatment approach which takes into account the family's capacities for change.

Specific Knowledge and Skill Objectives

The students should learn:

- A. Theories of the relationship between early parent-infant interaction and subsequent development.
- B. Consequences of failures or disruptions of the attachment process for both parent and child.
- C. Strategies for effective intervention to strengthen early attachment.
- D. Transference and countertransference issues pertinent to infant mental health work.

Class Agenda

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| 9/29 | Class Introductions; course parameters
Attachment Theory – Secure and Insecure Templates |
| 10/5 | Disorganized Template
Adult's "State of Mind Regarding Attachment" |
| 10/20 | Assessment
Transference and Countertransference
Strategies for intervention
Infant-Parent Psychotherapy |
| 10/27 | Strategies for intervention
Watch, Wait and Wonder |
| 11/3 | Strategies for Intervention
Cross cultural work |

Reading Requirements

Prep for Class One (all found in Resources):

- Fraiberg, S., Adelson, E., Shapiro, V., (1975). Ghosts in the nursery: A psychoanalytic approach to the problems of impaired infant-mother relationships. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*. 14: 387-421
- SSP – Scoring (just peruse – no need to read in depth)

Optional (but helpful for paper)

- Zeanah, C., Berlin, L, and Boris, N., (2011). Practitioner Review: Clinical applications of attachment theory and research for infants and young children. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 52: 819–833.

Prep for Class Two:

- Weatherston, D. (1995). “She does love me, doesn’t she?” *Zero to Three*, February/March 1995.
- Lyons-Ruth, K & Jacobvitz, D. (2008). Attachment disorganization: Genetic factors, parenting contexts and developmental transformations from infancy to adulthood. In J. Cassidy & P.R. Shaver (Eds.) *Handbook of Attachment, 2nd edition* (pp. 666 – 697).

Prep for Class Three:

- Seligman, S. (1993). Why How You Feel Matters: Countertransference Reactions in Intervention Relationships. *The Signal*. Vol. 1, No.2 .
- Case Studies in Infant Mental Health: Risk, Resiliency, and Relationships - (In resources tab of Ctools). **ANY Two of the following chapters:** Pp. 27-39 (Ulrich Chapter – single mother and 5 month old), pp. 67-84 (Crockett Chapter – pre and post-natal work mo. with FASD) and pp. 187-199 (Weatherston Chapter – isolated young mother who had spent years in foster care, pre and post natal work).

Prep for Class Four:

- Kobak, R. & Madsen, S. (2008). Disruptions in attachment bonds: Implications for theory, research and clinical intervention. In J. Cassidy & P.R. Shaver (Eds.) *Handbook of Attachment, 2nd edition* (pp. 23 – 47).
- Sadler, L.S., Slade, A., Close, N., Webb, D.L., Simpson, T., Fennie, K., Mayes, L., (2013). Minding the baby: Enhancing reflectiveness to improve early health and relationship outcomes in an interdisciplinary home-visiting program. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, Vol. 34 (5), 391-405.

Prep for Class Five:

- Kermorian, R. and Leiderman, P. H. (1986). Infant Attachment to mother and child caregiver in an East African community. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*.
- Keller, H. (2013). Attachment and culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 44:175-194.

Paper Requirement

I. Briefly describe a vignette of problematic infant-parent interaction, observed or imagined (**please note which it is**). The described interaction may be short, lasting only minutes. It is usually easier to write about an interaction that is problematic. It will be helpful if you have formulated this by the second class, so you can enter into discussions with this in mind.

II. Describe the **working model of relationships** that the infant may be constructing based on the above interaction.

A. How would you characterize the infant's model in terms of attachment categories? What are the specific behaviors you would anticipate seeing in the Strange Situation?

III. Describe **the parent's corresponding internal working model** (i.e. AAI state of mind regarding attachment). How might this parent talk about their attachment experiences in the Adult Attachment Interview?

IV. How would you, as the therapist, attempt to modify this working model as it is played out between parent and infant? Organize your description as follows:

A. What observations and/or questions might you use? Be specific.

B. How would you, as the therapist, work directly with the parent infant interaction? Describe the therapeutic framework you would be thinking about.

V. What obstacles will the parent's working model create for the working alliance?

A. What problematic feelings are likely to be induced in you - generally (i.e., in any therapist) and specifically - i.e., what might be especially evocative for you?

B. What would these feelings communicate to you about the client's experiences?

C. How can you use these inferences to guide your treatment? Be specific.

D. How would the parent's working model intersect with or evoke something in you...what of your own countertransference might be evoked?

Length: 4 – 5 pages. Brevity is appreciated. Papers beyond that limit may not be read in their entirety. This is NOT intended to be an in-depth, clinical case study but a demonstration of your *grasp of the concepts* taught in this course.

Papers are due on Ctools by Saturday, 11/15 at 11:00 p.m. **Please upload as a Word Document - not a PDF.** If your paper is unavoidably late, write me at jribaudo@umich.edu and I will deal with it on a case-by-case basis.

I grade papers based on evidence of understanding of markers of attachment-related behavior, knowing how adult states of mind and infant attachment intersect, and ability to construct a strong therapeutic hypothesis and frame for intervention, as well as evidence of beginning level of understanding of transference and countertransference. Excellent papers (A papers) will show strong writing, strong clinical thinking and marked evidence of having read and integrated course materials. 'B' papers will show understanding of same concepts and at least some level of clinical thinking. Students' whose papers that do not show such evidence will be asked to meet with me and to re-write their paper. *ONLY Papers under a B- will be accepted for revision and the revised grade can only be as high as the lowest passing grade in the class.*