

Society and Psychoanalysis in Sigmund Freud's Vienna

Eveline List

February 5 – 16, 2024

4 ECTS

Course Description

Around 1900, economic and social changes fostered deepening political and cultural conflicts. Emancipatory movements and mass phenomena demanded new approaches. Vienna was culturally highly complex and politically and socially divided. Religion and social conventions ceased to provide sufficient orientation. Mass movements and political demagogues characterized the public space. Psychoanalysis offered new ways of dealing with actual problems and found its way not only into psychiatry, into art, literature, and music but also into the emerging social sciences and political analysis. This was a radical reaction against traditional views of the world.

Psychoanalysis would combine developments that had been around since the 18th century. The scientific exploration of intimate emotions and of areas that were once taboo – like infantile sexuality or the profane foundation of religion and the functioning of propaganda – was considered scandalous, but nevertheless gained a wide notoriety and eventually revealed dimensions of human behavior and cultural life commonly denied or concealed.

In this course we want to combine a look at the history of human sciences with an exploration of developments in the fields of society, politics, and culture.

The course will cover the following topics:

- The political and social situation of the late Habsburg Empire
- Jewish emancipation
- Labor movement and women's rights movement
- The scientific background of psychoanalysis
- Foundations of creativity and artistic expression
- Understanding and enjoyment of literature, art and music.
- Mass psychology and (political) propaganda
- Political violence and war
- Sigmund Freud and his discoveries:
 - (1911) Formulation on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning
 - (1907) Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices
 - (1907) Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming
 - (1915) Thoughts for the Times on War and Death
 - (1921) Mass Psychology and Analysis of the Ego

Requirements: Attendance and participation in class discussion constitute 30%, small group discussion of reading-assignments and the presentations 30% and a written final exam 40% of the grade.

Syllabus

1st week

Monday, February 5, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Personal Introduction
Forming working groups
General Introduction to the course
Evolution of psychological thinking I

Tuesday, February 6, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Late 19th century Vienna:
 Legal, economic and social system
 Science and culture
 Emancipatory movements

Wednesday, February 7, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Sigmund Freud - son of the Enlightenment and the „Liberal Era“
Evolution of psychological thinking II
The Vienna School of Medicine
Jean-Martin Charcot and the French school
Hypnosis

Wednesday, February 7, 2024
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Excursion: Sigmund Freud Museum

Thursday, February 8, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

The discovery of the unconscious
The Interpretation of Dreams - Dynamic model of the psyche

Friday, February 9, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Theory of drives / repression and defenses
Developmental psychology, relationship of the psychic and the biological
The psychoanalytic understanding of sexuality
The Oedipus Complex

2nd week

Monday, February 12, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

The two Principles of Psychic
Functioning Symbolization
Creativity and literary writing
Love and hate

Tuesday, February 13, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Freud's discoveries and society
Sigmund Freud's biography

Wednesday, February 14, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

First World War - war neurosis
Freud's „Thoughts for the Times of War and Death“
Aggression and destructivity
Projections - scapegoating – prejudice

Thursday, February 15, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

mass psychology
Dynamics of social and political movements
Nationalism

Friday, February 16, 2024
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Final