Learning Objectives: This course is a survey of the major theoretical schools of psychotherapy. Theories of psychotherapy lead necessarily to interventions. It is only through an in-depth knowledge of theory that efficacious interventions may be tailored, even when built on a foundation of empirically supported models of therapy, which in turn permits one to employ evidence-based practices. As a result of this guiding principle, this course has the following aims:

Aim 1: students will be familiar with the central theoretical bases of the dominant schools of psychotherapy
Aim 2: students will be able to identify the link between theory and intervention
Aim 3: students will understand the common features across theories
Aim 4: students will be able to develop case conceptualizations employing concepts from the dominant schools of psychotherapy

These objectives will be achieved via careful reading of (primarily) contemporary literature critically examining the major psychotherapy approaches, empirical findings, and the movement toward evidence-based practice. All of these stated aims contribute to a single over-arching goal, namely for students to begin to develop an implicit working model of treatment planning, one that will form the basis for ongoing developing clinical acumen. Class will be primarily structured by a combination of lecture, discussion, and demonstrations. Particular attention will be given to cultural variations in the application of major approaches to treatment.

Assessment of Aims: There will be four major evaluations for this course.

- Three separate models of case conceptualizations using a graphical illustration derived based on a template provided in class, with an accompanying written justification for the conceptualization.
- A Final paper, which is a combination research methods and psychotherapy theories exercise. Specifically, students are to find a published empirically based treatment study and critically evaluate it for three or more methodological and/or theoretical flaws. Following this, students must describe an alternative study to address the hypotheses articulated in the target paper.

Attendance: It is expected that students attend all classes. Please be sure to be familiar with the readings for each class in order to facilitate our in-class discussions.

In class activities: There will be a series of in-class activities to facilitate learning the topics covered. Generally there will not be any preparation necessary for these activities.

Course Outline:

1/23 Introduction and orientation to psychotherapy

_Psychotherapy, 50_, 102-109.
1/30 General considerations in therapy

2/6 Psychodynamic therapy – basics

2/13 Psychodynamic therapy – modern conceptualizations and issues

2/21 (Tuesday, follows Monday schedule)
Therapeutic alliance and other psychodynamic models
CASE ILLUSTRATION 1 DUE

2/27 No Class

3/6 Short term dynamic therapy - basics

3/13 No class – Spring Break

3/20 Interpersonal Psychotherapy

3/27 Basic behavioral theory


CASE ILLUSTRATION 2 DUE

4/3 Behavioral Theory – modern operant conditioning perspectives


4/10 Modern Conditioning Approaches – Inhibitory Learning

4/24 Cognitive therapy

5/1 Empirically supported treatments and clinical guidelines


CASE ILLUSTRATION 3 DUE

5/8 Is it all effective? Common and specific effects


FINAL PAPER DUE