### Proposal for Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts—Bratislava, Slovakia

### Instructor: Amanda Holmes

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### Course Title Freud and Philosophy

### Course Description

### The aim of this course is to identify and elaborate the philosophical implications of Freudian Psychoanalytic Theory. Freud’s discovery of the unconscious poses a radical challenge to the conception of the human being within the history of Western Philosophy. While Freud was fundamentally ambivalent about Philosophy, his theory of the unconscious is steeped in philosophical entanglements. Freud’s early work aligns psychoanalysis with the natural sciences over and against philosophical inquiry and is peppered with aspersions against “the Philosophers.” Yet in an important sense, Freud is a philosopher in his own right. Freud once remarked in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess, “When I was young, the only thing I longed for was philosophical knowledge, and now that I am going over from medicine to psychology I am in the process of attaining it.” The legacy of Freud’s thought on the History of Philosophy cannot be understated as it was a major influence on some of the most important philosophical movements of the 20th century from Existentialism to Phenomenology, Structuralism to Deconstruction.

### The course will be organized according to three major lines of inquiry. We will begin by establishing and explicating the concepts of the unconscious and repression, exploring the basics of the so-called “talking cure.” We will then move on to mapping out the various models of the psyche that Freud developed, identifying the continuities and ruptures in the dynamic and topographical models of the psyche. We will conclude with a section on the role of pleasure in psychoanalytic theory and the Freudian theory of the drives.

### The course will develop close readings of Freud’s main texts including selections from his larger works *The Project for a Scientific Psychology, Studies on Hysteria, The Interpretation of Dreams* and *Civilization and Its Discontents.* We will also read several of the decisive essays from his corpus including *The Unconscious, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Instincts and Their Vicissitudes,* and *On Negation.*

### Students with interests in 20th century European Philosophy will find the course particularly instructive for tracing the influences of psychoanalysis on these later philosophical movements. No prior knowledge of psychoanalysis necessary and all intrigued parties are encouraged to attend.

**Assessment**

Students will be expected to prepare one 10-15 minute presentation on a reading from the course reading list of their choosing. The presentations will consist of a short description of the main concerns of the text and the posing of 1 to 3 questions or provocations for discussion. There will be a mid-term essay requirement in which students will explicate one of the key Freudian concepts we will have discussed in class. In order to receive a final grade, students will need to take an examination at the end of the course. The examination will consist of 3 short form essay prompts on the main topics of the course. Students will be asked to write a few paragraphs in response to each prompt.

**Minimum Requirement and Assessment Criteria**

This course will introduce students to the fundamental concepts of Psychoanalysis and prepare them to engage critically with these concepts. Students will be expected to demonstrate this critical engagement in their class presentation, in class discussions, and on the final examination.

**Reading List**

* Freud, Sigmund. “The Project for a Scientific Psychology” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Translated by James Strachey. vol. 1, London, Vintage Books, 2001, 295-344.
* Freud, Sigmund and Joseph Breuer. *Studies on Hysteria,* Translated by James Strachey. Basic Books, 2000.
* Freud, Sigmund *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Translated by James Strachey. Basic Books, 2010.
* Freud, Sigmund “The Unconscious” (1915) in *General Psychological Theory,* New York, Simon and Schuster, 1991.
* Freud, Sigmund “Negation” (1925) in *General Psychological Theory,* New York, Simon and Schuster, 1991.
* Freud, Sigmund *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Translated by James Strachey. vol. 18, London, Vintage Books, 2001, 3-66.
* Freud, Sigmund “Female Sexuality” (1931) in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love,* New York, Simon and Schuster, 1997.
* Freud, Sigmund *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), Translated by James Strachey New York: Norton, 2010