

830:453 Systems of Psychotherapy
Professor Robert Woolfolk
Hickman 101, TF3(12:35-1:55pm)

Prerequisites: 830:340 (Abnormal Psychology)
(Jr/Sr 830 Major or permission of instructor)

1. The principal goal of this course is to increase your ability to reason critically. Much of the “information” you acquire about psychotherapy may be obsolete, but sound thinking never goes out of style.
2. Another goal is to understand the evolution of psychotherapy over time. This historical perspective is rare in our “present-oriented” society where newer is always thought to be better. You will learn for example that hundreds of years ago John Locke articulated many of the principles of behavior therapy and that the Stoic philosophers anticipated cognitive therapy two thousand years ago.
3. I want you to comprehend how the mental health professions function within society and culture and to understand their relationship to the criminal justice system and to the other directive structures of society, such as religion and such cultural phenomena as Alcoholics Anonymous, the educational system, Coaching, and the various forms of Pop Psychology.
4. I want you to be able to take an interdisciplinary perspective on the mental health professions and to be able to view them the way economists, sociologists, anthropologists, and theologians see them.
5. You will become thoroughly familiar with the latest empirical research on psychotherapy, not only findings, but controversies and the issues of research design and problems of inductive logic that arise when we try to study psychotherapy systematically.
6. I want you to begin to get a feel for the kind of highly nuanced and subtle transaction psychotherapy is, to begin to see it as an endeavor that can be conceptualized many different ways, e.g., medical treatment, emotional pedagogy, an art form, or the imparting of wisdom and life skills.