CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY @ CITY COLLEGE 2016-2017 COLLOQUIA SERIES
2nd ANNUAL RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP DAY KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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THE ORIGINS OF DISORGANIZED

ATTACHMENT: A MICROANALYSIS APPROACH

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TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER, 2016 AT 12:30-1:50PM

SHEPARD HALL RM 107

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TALK ABSTRACT

This lecture presents research on the origins of disorganized attachment, illustrated by films and frame-by-frame analyses. Disorganized attachment poses the torturous paradox that the infant's source of safety is also a source of threat and alarm. The findings demonstrate that remarkable dysregulations of attention, affect, spatial orientation, and touch in mother-infant interaction at 4 months predict disorganized attachment at one year. We infer from the results that the future disorganized infant has difficulty feeling known by his mother, for example as she shows smile/ surprise expressions to his distress; has difficulty knowing his mother, for example, as she "closes up" her face and becomes inscrutable; and has difficulty knowing himself, for example, in moments of discrepant affect, smiling and whimpering in same second. Since disorganized attachment at 12 months predicts dissociative difficulties in young adulthood, understanding these interactions offers insight into adult psychopathology and transference patterns. The research on the origins of disorganized attachment is linked to theories of the origins of dissociation in adulthood: inescapable threat, failures of integration, and failures of recognition. Threatening/threatened, dysregulated and dissociated patterns of interaction in infancy may have analogues in adult treatment.