Freudian psychoanalysis was the first attempt to work out systematically the idea that much of our behavior is the product of psychological forces which we do not understand and cannot become aware of in an ordinary way. While many of Freud's specific theories and claims have been superseded, the guiding ideas of psychoanalysis amount to a distinctive conception of what it is to be human. We will look at the origins of this conception in Freud's work and explore attempts to develop it within a contemporary scientific framework, consider philosophical issues arising in relation to this conception, and ask what implications it might have for philosophy.

Topics to be addressed include: the unconscious, attachment theory in child development, sexuality, repression, rationality, shame, self-knowledge, moral responsibility, autonomy, and self-determination. Readings from Plato, Freud, Sartre; contemporary psychoanalytic theorists Mary Target and Peter Fonagy; and contemporary philosophers including Donald Davidson, Martha Nussbaum, and Harry Frankfurt. For much of the semester our guide will be Jonathan Lear, a contemporary philosopher and practicing psychoanalyst. (No prior experience of philosophy or psychoanalysis expected.)

The course will involve careful reading of texts by Freud, contemporary clinicians and psychoanalytic theorists, and contemporary and historical philosophers. Many of these texts will be difficult, and you should be prepared to devote substantial time to reading and reflecting critically upon the course materials.