

GALLATIN SCHOOL OF INDIVIDUALIZED STUDY
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Foucault: Biopower and Biopolitics

Spring 2008 Course K20.1339

Monday 3:30-6:10 10 WP 101

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Office hours: Monday (Noon to 2:30), Thursday (Noon to 2:30),
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Course Overview

Michel Foucault's far-reaching departure from the usual approaches to science and the body destabilized rigid distinctions between biology and culture, knowledge and power. His work anticipated a new form of "bio-politics" that were first used by ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and have gone on to influence science studies, feminist theory of the body, disability studies, queer theory, and WTO activism. Each of these forms of theory and activism have in common a focus on the dense intertwining of knowledge (science/reason), power, desire, and disciplinary control that Foucault conceptualized as biopower.

We devote this class to close readings of Foucault's work. Our focus will be on his key notions of discourse, power, biopower, discipline, subjectivity, and sexuality. In addition, we explore the ways Foucault's theories and concepts have become synergistic with contemporary politics and cares of the self.

Texts

Michel Foucault	<i>Archeology of Knowledge</i> <i>Discipline and Punishment</i> <i>History of Sexuality</i>
David Halperin	<i>Saint=Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography</i>
Barry Smart	<i>Michel Foucault</i> (2002)
Michel Foucault	<i>The Birth of the Clinic</i>
Rabinow and Rose (eds)	<i>Essential Foucault</i> (2003)
David Macey	<i>Michel Foucault: Critical Lives</i> (2004)

Academic Year Calendar Spring 2008

Spring Classes Begin	Tuesday, January 22
Holiday: Presidents' Day	Monday, February 18
Spring Recess	Monday, March 17 - Saturday, March 22

Last Day of Classes Monday, May 5
Commencement Thursday, May 15

Class Schedule

1.) Jan 28: Introduction

Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault: Human Nature: Justice versus Power

2.) Feb 4: Science Studies

Sismondo: *An Introduction to Science and Technology Studies* (excerpts)

Kuhn: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (excerpts)

Alcoff: Foucault's Philosophy of Science: Structures of Truth/Structures of Power

3.) Feb 11: Madness and Civilization

Smart: *Michel Foucault* (I p. 12-26)

Andreason and Black: *Introductory Textbook of Psychiatry*

Foucault: The Historical Constitution of Mental Illness

Foucault: *Madness and Civilization* (excerpts): Preface and Birth of the Asylum

Feb 18 (**Holiday: President's Day**)

4.) Feb 25: The Medical Gaze

Smart: *Michel Foucault* (I p. 26-31)

Foucault: *Birth of the Clinic*: Preface, 8, 9 and conclusion

Foucault: The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century

*****First paper due*****

5.) Mar 3: Discourse

Smart: *Michel Foucault* (I p.31-41)

Sturrock: *Structuralism and Since* (excerpts)

Saussure: *Course in General Linguistics* (excerpts)

Foucault: *Order of Things*: Preface

Foucault: *Archeology of Knowledge*

Chapter 2: Discursive formations

Chapter 3: Formation of objects

6.) Mar 10: Discourse Continued

Foucault: *Archeology of Knowledge*

Chapter 5: Formation of concepts

Chapter 6: Formation of strategies

Chapter 4: Formation of enunciative modalities

Chapter 7: Remarks and consequences

Appendix: The Discourse on Language

Mar 17 (**SPRING BREAK** Monday, March 17 - Saturday, March 21)

7.) Mar 24: Discourse and Power

Smart: *Michel Foucault* (I p.41-46; II 71-80)

Foucault: Truth and Power

Andreasson and Black: Introduction and Table of contents for *Introductory Textbook of Psychiatry*

Mosher: Letter of Resignation from the American Psychiatric Association

Lewis: The New Psychiatry as a Discursive Practice

8.) Mar 31: Disciplinary Society

Smart: *Michel Foucault* (II p.80-93)

Foucault: *Discipline and Punishment*

Part I, Chapter 1: Body of the condemned

Part III, Chapter 1: Docile bodies

9.) Apr 7: Disciplinary Society

Smart: *Michel Foucault* (II p. 91-93)

Foucault: *Discipline and Punishment*

Part III Chapter 2: The means of correct training

Chapter 3: Panopticism

Part IV Chapter 3: The carceral

******Second paper due******

10.) Apr 14: Sexuality

Smart: *Michel Foucault* (II p.93-107)

Foucault: *History of Sexuality* (p. 1-51) (p. 92-115 and 133-159)

11.) Apr 21: Subjectivity

Smart: *Michel Foucault* (II p. 107-117)

Foucault: Subject and Power

Foucault: Technologies of the Self

12.) April 28: ACT-UP to Queer Politics to WTO

Halperin: Saint Foucault (p. 3-126)

Shepard: Introductory notes on the trail from ACT-UP to WTO

Film: *Voices from the front: America 1988-1991*

13.) May 5: Politics of Bioscience and Identity (LAST CLASS)

Rose: Bipolitics in the twenty-first century

Hekman: A new politics of identity

******Final Paper Due on Thursday May 8th, 5 PM (my office box)******

Course Requirements

Grades are based on four parts: attendance/participation (25%) and 3 papers (25% each). Late papers are graded down. The attendance/participation grade is composed of weekly class attendance and participation.

This is a seminar type class which means that discussion begins with student initiative. Please type out or mark two quotes from the week's readings about which you have questions or comments. In class, I will often ask you to read your quotes and discuss your questions or comments. Regardless of whether you are asked, doing this assignment carefully not only helps you prepare for your papers and increases your participation grade; it also helps your classmates because it increases the quality of our conversations together.

The papers are 5 pages type written, double spaced. Please use the material from the class to develop the topic question I hand out. Back up your thesis with arguments and examples from the class readings. A good paper demonstrates that you've integrated the material from the class discussions and class readings and can use it to analyze your topic. You do not need outside research for these papers. Use your energy reading closely and thinking seriously about the materials you have.

The grading scale for the class will be as follows: 93-100% (A) 90-92 (A-), 87-89 (B+), 83-86 (B), 80-82 (B-), 77-79 (C+), 70-76 (C), 63-69 (D), and below (F).

Paper Topic One

Please consider Foucault's history of madness and medicine in the context of our readings from science studies.

Paper Topic Two

How does your exposure to Foucault's work on discourse, power, and discipline further develop your understanding of modern psychiatry?

Paper Topic Three

How can Foucault's work inform contemporary politics of bioscience and identity?