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” 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, WTO activism, and postanarchy. 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  
*Madness and Civilization*  
*The Birth of the Clinic*  
*Archeology of Knowledge*  
*Discipline and Punishment*  
*History of Sexuality*

Lisa Downing  
*Cambridge Introduction to Foucault*

David Halperin  
*Saint=Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*

Reinsborough and Canning  

Class Schedule

**PART I: DISCOURSE**

1.) Jan 25: Introduction
In class: Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault: Human Nature: Justice versus Power

Suggested:
Sismondo: An Introduction to Science and Technology Studies (excerpts)
Alcoff: Foucault’s Philosophy of Science: Structures of Truth/Structures of Power

2.) Feb 1: Structural Linguistics

Sturrock: Structuralism and Since (excerpts)
Saussure: Course in General Linguistics (excerpts)
Lewis: Dodging the Science Wars

3.) Feb 8: Madness and Civilization

Andreason and Black: Introductory Textbook of Psychiatry
Downing: Introduction to Michel Foucault (p. 22-32)
Foucault: The Historical Constitution of Mental Illness
Foucault: Madness and Civilization (excerpts): Preface, Aspects of Madness (117-135), Birth of the Asylum, Conclusion

4.) Feb 15: The Medical Gaze

Downing: Introduction to Michel Foucault (p. 32-38)
Foucault: Birth of the Clinic: Preface, 8, 9 and conclusion

5.) Feb 22: Discourse

Downing: Introduction to Michel Foucault (p. 48-52)
Foucault: Archeology of Knowledge
   Chapter 2: Discursive formations
   Chapter 3: Formation of objects
   Chapter 5: Formation of concepts
   Chapter 6: Formation of strategies
   Chapter 4: Formation of enunciative modalities
   Chapter 7: Remarks and consequences

In Class: Foucault: Order of Things: Borges quote
Andreason and Black: Introduction and Table of contents for Introductory Textbook of Psychiatry
Brenner: An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis
Clifford: Tibetan Buddhist Medicine and Psychiatry p 6-7

6.) Mar 1: Discourse Continued

Appendix: The Discourse on Language
Lewis: The New Psychiatry as a Discursive Practice

In Class: Beckett Interlude

**PART II: POWER**

7.) Mar 8: Disciplinary Society  ***First paper due***

Foucault: *Discipline and Punishment*

- Part I, Chapter 1: Body of the condemned
- Part III, Chapter 1: Docile bodies

In Class: Beckett Interlude Continued

Mar 15 (SPRING BREAK Monday, March 14 - Saturday, March 20)

8.) Mar 22: Disciplinary Society

- Downing: *Introduction to Michel Foucault* (p. 75-85)
- Foucault: *Discipline and Punishment*
  - Part III Chapter 2: The means of correct training
  - Chapter 3: Panopticism
  - Part IV Chapter 3: The carceral

9.) Mar 29: Sexuality and Biopower

- Downing: *Introduction to Michel Foucault* (p. 86-96)
- Foucault: *History of Sexuality* (p. 1-51) (p. 92-115 and 133-159)

10.) Apr 5: Truth, Power, and Subjectivity

- Downing: *Introduction to Michel Foucault* (p. 96-103)
- Foucault: Truth and Power
- Foucault: Subject and Power
- Foucault: Uses of Pleasure (p. 187-192)
- Foucault: Hermeneutics of the Subject

11.) Apr 12: ACT-UP and Queer Politics

- Halperin: *Saint Foucault* (p. 3-81)

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

12.) Apr 19: ACT-UP and Queer Politics

- Halperin: *Saint Foucault* (p. 81-126)
Huffer: Foucault’s Ethical *Ars Erotica*

13.) Apr 25: Foucault and Circuits of Culture

   Hall: Representation (abstracts)
   Reinsborough and Canning: Reimagining Change

14.) May 3: Foucault and Post-Anarchism (LAST CLASS)

   May: Is Post-structuralist Political Theory Anarchist?
   Shepard and Hayduk: From ACT-UP to WTO
   Graeber: The New Anarchists
   Day: From Hegemony to Affinity: The Political Logic of the Newest Social Movements
   Newman: Anarchism, Poststructuralism and the Future of Radical Politics

   Suggested:
   Rousselle and Evren: Post-Anarchism: A Reader (release April 12, 2011)

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

**Course Requirements**

Grades are based on three parts: attendance/participation (20%) and 2 papers (40% each). Late papers are graded down. There will be an opportunity to rewrite the first paper if you desire. The attendance/participation grade is composed of weekly class attendance and participation.

Each class will begin with a short lecture on the material for that week. We then break up into small groups to select quotes we wish to discuss further. To prepare for this part of the class please type two quotes from the week’s readings which you have questions or comments (include page numbers so we can find your quotes). The last part of the class we spend discussing the quotes selected.

The papers are 7 pages typed, 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 (include internal citations with page numbers and a reference list at the end). A good paper demonstrates that you have integrated the material from the class discussions and readings and can use it to analyze your topic. Use the bulk of your energy reading closely and thinking seriously about the materials you have (rather than doing outside research). Also, be sure and give your paper a title.

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 discuss Foucault’s notion of “discourse” and apply it to an area of knowledge with which you are familiar.

**Paper Topic Two:** Please discuss Foucault’s notion of “power” and use it to consider an area of life politics important to you.