

Foucault (PHIL 4050/5050 and Crosslists)
Fall 2013
MW 9:30-10:45, Smith 352

Course Objectives and Description: From the early 1960s until his death in 1984, Michel Foucault was one of the most innovative and influential figures in French philosophy. Known most fundamentally for his development of the thesis that our most basic categories of thought are inescapably the products of their social and institutional environments, Foucault wrote about such topics as the emergence of a clinical understanding of insanity; the change in punishment theory from the dungeon to intensive surveillance; the emergence of power as a force for fostering life and managing populations; the emergence of “sexuality” as a marker of identity; and the transformation of economic thought from classical, laissez faire liberalism to the intensely interventionist theory of today’s neoliberalism. Not surprisingly, given the range of his thought, Foucault’s influence today extends into such diverse fields as philosophy, sociology, criminal justice, literary theory, and queer and feminist theory.

In this course, we will read representative set of Foucault’s works, particularly in the context of the ways that his writings enable or preclude certain forms of critique. In that sense, we should view the readings as staging an ongoing engagement between Foucault and various of his sympathetic critics and interlocutors: Gilles Deleuze (a very prominent late 20c French philosopher), Nancy Fraser (presenting a kind of neo-Marxist theory), Judith Butler (presenting an idiosyncratic synthesis of Foucault and post-Freudian psychoanalysis, and as a thinker highly influential in feminist and queer theory), Lynn Huffer (presenting a revisionist queer theory reading of Foucault, partly in opposition to Butler), Ladelle McWhorter (applying Foucault to American racism), Gayatri Spivak (postcolonial theory), and various discussions of neoliberalism (including an exchange between Gary Becker and François Ewald). It is my hope that this alignment of readings will help you to see some of the options for and stakes of understanding power, subjectivity and political resistance opened by Foucault’s texts.

Over roughly the last ten years, students of Foucault have been treated to the publication and translation of many of the lecture courses he gave annually at the Collège de France. These readings are enormously helpful in understanding the materials he subsequently published, and we will make liberal use of them.

As much as possible, I want to conduct this course as a seminar, where much of the discussion is student-driven. The fact that we come from different disciplinary and other backgrounds will be a tremendous virtue in discussing Foucault; I’ve tried to facilitate that by including secondary readings from postcolonial, feminist, queer and other theoretical positions.

Books to Get:

Foucault, M. (1984). *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1988). *The History of Sexuality* (R. Hurley, Trans. Vol. 1). New York: Vintage Books.

Readings on Moodle:

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author," at <http://www.deathoftheauthor.com/>

"Becker on Ewald on Foucault on Becker," at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2142163>.

Butler, J. (2006). "Indefinite Detention," in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso.

Butler, J. (1988). Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40(4), 519-531.

Cooper, Melinda. "Life beyond the Limits," in *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era*. Seattle: Washington University Press, 2008

Deleuze, G., & Foucault, M. (1977). Intellectuals and Power. In D. F. Bouchard (Ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (pp. 205-217). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Foucault, M. (2008). (lectures from) *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79* (G. Burchell, Trans.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan .

Foucault, M. (1972). The Discourse on Language (A. Sheridan, Trans.) *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language* (pp. 215-237). New York: Pantheon Books

Foucault, M. (1997). The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (pp. 281-301). New York: New Press

Foucault, M. (1985). "Morality and the Practices of the Self," in *The Use of Pleasure* (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, Michel. "Panopticism," in *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1977, 195-230.

Foucault, M. (2003). (Lectures from) *Society must be defended: lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76* (D. Macey, Trans.). New York: Picador.

Fraser, N. (1981). Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions. *PRAXIS International*, 1981(3), 272-287.

Haggerty, Kevin D. and Richard V. Ericson, "The Surveillant Assemblage," *British Journal of Sociology* 51 (2000), 605-22

Huffer, L. (2010). "A Political Ethic of Eros," in *Mad for Foucault: Rethinking the Foundations of Queer Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Kant, Immanuel. "What is Enlightenment?"

McWhorter, L. (2009). "Scientific Racism and the Threat of Sexual Predation," in *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America: A Genealogy* (pp. 141-195). Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Spivak, G. (1988). Can the Subaltern Speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (pp. 271-313). Chicago/Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Weibel, Peter. "Pleasure and the Panoptic Principle," in *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, ed. Thomas Y. Levin et. al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 206-23.

Grading/Requirements: The requirements are slightly different for graduate and undergraduate students. I list them here, and then follow with short descriptions.

Graduate:

Short Assignments: 30% (total)
Short Paper: 15%
Prospectus: 15%
Seminar paper: 40%

Undergraduate:

Short Assignments: 30% (total)
Short Paper: 15%
Long Paper: 30%
Final: 25%

Short Assignments [both undergrad and grad]: Eight times over the semester (i.e., more or less every other week), you should prepare a précis of one of the readings for that class (where you turn it in at the beginning of the class discussing the reading in question – once we've talked about a text, you can't then go back and précis it). **Four of these need to be done by mid-term grade deficiency day.** The précis should clearly state (a) the basic argument of the text, and (b) the primary supporting arguments/evidence used to defend that argument. This is not a book report, and you should not summarize "he says this, then he goes on to say that..." Your goal should be to extract the important parts of the argument and present them synthetically – in the manner of an extended abstract. Minor points do not go in this précis; the major ones do. You should conclude with (c) an assessment of the greatest strength of the argument – what is most compelling about it, and why; and (d) a criticism of the argument – something you think is wrong with the paper, and why. The entire assignment shouldn't be much more than 2-3 pages,

double-spaced. Try to be both concise and precise. I expect you to find this difficult; it is. But it's an important skill. I am also, of course, aware that Foucault's argumentative style is going to strike those with backgrounds in more "analytic" philosophy as weird. Stick with it. He is always trying to persuade you of *something* (if you want to complain, do so in the last part. But make sure you explain why the text fails to persuade, using criticisms appropriate to what he was trying to do).

Short Paper [both undergrad and grad]: This is a 4-6 page paper on an assigned topic (TBA). You will be graded on the quality of your argument and your development of it. You should have a clear thesis statement: "In this paper I will argue that..." If you can't finish that sentence with a straight face, you don't have a thesis.

Prospectus [grad only]: This is a brief statement of where you're going with your seminar paper. It should include (a) a thesis. Even if you can't have a thesis ready, you should have a topic, along with a justification/explanation of why that topic is worth looking at and a direction you want to take it; (b) a literature survey – you need to have at least 4 secondary sources listed, with an indication of why each of them is included; (c) if possible, a very rough outline of how you plan to structure the paper. This assignment is for your own benefit, so the more you can put into it, the more it will help you – even if you end up changing a lot of what you are doing between writing the prospectus and the final paper.

Seminar paper [grad only] (12-15 pages): This is a 12-15 page (usual format: double-spaced, 12 point, reasonable margins) paper due on the last day of class. You will develop a topic of your own choosing related to the course readings. The paper must be about (in some significant way) ethical theory (an applied ethics paper will not earn a passing grade). More information closer to due-date. *You must submit a passing seminar paper in order to pass the class.*

Long Paper [undergrad only]: This is a 6-8 page paper due on the last day of class. Topics will be assigned (there will be several to pick from); you will need to specifically reference/cite and discuss at least *two* of the readings from the semester. By "specifically reference/cite," I mean quote and discuss in a way that indicates you have assimilated the material. For the sake of your grade, you should have a clear thesis and an "In this paper I will argue that x" sentence, somewhere in the first paragraph. I'll have more details for you closer to the due date.

Final exam [undergrad only]: This is a written exam (essay and/or short answer) designed to test your comprehension of the material. I will give you questions in advance, and you'll write answers to one of them during the test period.

Attendance/Participation: You can't learn very much in philosophy by just sitting there. You learn even less if you're not there at all. Attendance is expected. I'm not going to formally measure attendance, as traditionally in my courses attendance correlates pretty well with grade. .

Contact Information/Getting Assistance: It is important that you not fall behind. I want to help you avoid doing so. To get help from me:

1. Speak to me before or after class; we can set an appointment to meet at a later time if need be.
2. Office hours: by appointment (Winningham 105C, in the Ethics Center). I'm not setting formal office hours, because I'm going to be in charge of the Ethics Center starting this fall, and have no real idea what my schedule will be. However, I'll be on campus quite a bit, and will work with you on meeting times.
3. Email me at ghull@uncc.edu. This is probably the best way to get in touch outside of class.
4. Call my office 77804 and leave a voicemail (note: this is a new phone number). This is less effective than email because I'm bad about checking my messages.

Disabilities: I share UNCC's commitment to provide reasonable accommodations to enable students with disabilities to access course material. Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. You'll also need to contact disability services, 704-687-4355 (230 Fretwell).

Academic Integrity: This syllabus incorporates university policy on academic integrity as found at <http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407>.

Proposed Readings/Schedule (not a contract!)

8/19	First class
8/21	Kant, "What is Enlightenment" (pdf) Foucault, "What is Enlightenment" (RR 32-50) [RR is the Rabinow edited Reader]
8/26	Barthes, "Death of the Author" (http://www.deathoftheauthor.com/) Foucault, "What is an Author?" (RR 101-20)
8/28	Foucault, "Discourse on Language"
9/2	Labor day, no class
9/4	Foucault, "The Great Confinement" (RR 124-40)
9/9	Foucault, "The Birth of the Asylum" (RR 141-67)
9/11	Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned" (RR 170-8)

	Foucault, "The Means of Correct Training" (RR 188-205)
9/16	Foucault, "Panopticism" (use the pdf on Moodle, which includes the entire chapter, originally <i>Discipline and Punish</i> , pp. 195-228)
9/18	Haggerty and Ericsson, "Surveillant Assemblage"
9/23	Weibel, "Pleasure and the Panoptic Principle"
9/25	Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution"
9/30	Foucault, <i>Society must be Defended</i> (1/17 lecture: pp.1-21)
10/2	Foucault, <i>Society must be Defended</i> (3/17 lecture: pp. 239-64)
10/7	Fall break, no class
10/9	Foucault, "The Repressive Hypothesis" (HS 17-49) [HS is the first volume of <i>History of Sexuality</i>]
10/14	Foucault, "The Deployment of Sexuality," (HS 75-132)
10/16	Foucault, "The Right of death and Power over Life" (HS 133-end ...)
10/21	McWhorter, "Scientific Racism and the Threat of Sexual Predation"
10/23	Butler, "Indefinite Detention"
10/28	Foucault, <i>Birth of Biopolitics</i> (3/14 lecture)
10/30	Foucault, <i>Birth of Biopolitics</i> (3/21 lecture)
11/4	"Becker on Ewald on Foucault on Becker"
11/6	Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power"
11/11	Cooper, "Life beyond the Limits"
11/13	Foucault, "Morality and Practice of the Self" Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom"
11/18	Foucault, "The Subject and Power" (we may substitute "What is Critique," which pairs with a commentary (on that paper) by Butler)

11/20	Huffer, "A Political Ethic of Eros"
11/25	Deleuze and Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power"
11/27	Thanksgiving Break
12/2	Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"
12/4	Last day of classes. Catch-up and final thoughts
12/11	Final Exam