

Foucault's Turn to Ethics

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: In 1976, when Michel Foucault published the introduction to the *History of Sexuality*, it was planned to be the first in a multi-volume series of texts on the development of sexuality in the modern era. In what turned out to be only a few months before his death in 1984, two additional volumes were published. These texts were, on Foucault's own appraisal, a significant departure from what he had intended to write. The 8-year gap between these works saw a transformation in Foucault's thought, which Foucault scholars have frequently identified as a turn away from analysis of discursive power to an ethical project. This seminar in Foucault's late thought takes up this ethical turn through a close reading of several lectures given during his period along with the entire 3 volumes of the *History of Sexuality*. We will focus particular attention on the 1982 lecture course at the College de France entitled *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. This course will give students a fuller picture of Foucault's thought in the several years before his untimely death. We will take up the question of whether his late work is continuous with, or signals a break from, his early thought. Additionally, we will take this opportunity to explore the differences between writing and speaking, between the book and the lecture as genres of political theory.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: This course is intended for graduate students in political theory. Students must have a background in political theory, and are expected to have already read some Foucault's (preferably *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*). Familiarity with the French language and ancient Greek philosophy will be helpful, but are not required. Advanced undergraduates may petition to enroll in the course with the instructor's consent.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students will submit a seminar paper at the end of the quarter, approx. 20-25 pages in length. Each student will also be responsible for one in-class presentation. Class attendance and active participation in the seminar are mandatory.

GRADING: Seminar paper (50%); class presentation (25%); attendance and participation (25%).

ACCOMMODATION: Students in need of accommodation for an impairment and/or disability should contact me as soon as possible. You should also contact the Coordinator for Disability Services (773-834-4469), as outlined in the Student Handbook, to document your needs and determine a reasonable accommodation.

REQUIRED TEXTS: These texts will all be available for purchase from the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore. *Please use these editions of the texts*, so that we are all literally on the same page during class. You will be expected to come to class with the text in hand. Some readings will be made available via Chalk in PDF format. You should **print** hard copies of these readings, i.e. do not bring your computer in order to refer to the texts.

- Foucault, Michel, and Arnold I. Davidson. 2005. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College*

De France 1981-82: New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality Vol. I: An Introduction*. Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure* New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, Michel. 1988. *The History of Sexuality Vol. 3: The Care of the Self*. New York: Vintage Books.

READING SCHEDULE:

Part 1: Writing, Speaking, Power, and Sexuality, 1975-1976

1.1: Introduction and course overview

1.2: Books and Lectures

- “What is an Author” in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice* [E-Reserve]
- “What is an Author” in *The Essential Foucault* [E-Reserve]

These readings represent two versions of the same essay; one is a published article, while the other is a transcribed lecture.

2.1: Bio-Power and Governmentality

- *Society Must be Defended*, Lectures 1 and 11, and Course Summary [E-Reserve]
- Foucault, Michel. 1982. "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry* 8 (4):777-795. [E-Reserve]

2.2: History of Sexuality I

- *History of Sexuality Vol. 1: An Introduction*

Part 2: Turning towards Subjectivity, 1980-1982 lectures

3.1: Dartmouth Lectures, November 1980.

- Foucault, Michel. 1993. "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth." *Political Theory* 21 (2):198-227. [E-Reserve]

3.2: *Hermeneutics of the Subject* I

- Introduction and Lectures 1-6

4.1: *Hermeneutics of the Subject* II

- Lectures 7-12

4.2: *Hermeneutics of the Subject* III

- Lectures 13-16

5.1: *Hermeneutics of the Subject* IV

- Lectures 17-20

5.2: *Hermeneutics of the Subject* V

- Lectures 21-24, and course summary

6.1: Vermont University Lectures, Oct. 1982

- “Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self*, ed. by L.Martin et.al, (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1988), pp.16-49. [E-Reserve]
- “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress” (1983) [E-Reserve]

Part 3: The History of Sexuality, 1984

6.2: History of Sexuality II

- *The Use of Pleasure*, Introduction, Parts 1-2

7.1: History of Sexuality III

- *The Use of Pleasure*, Parts 3-5

7.2: History of Sexuality IV

- *The Care of the Self*, Parts 1-4

8.1: History of Sexuality V

- *The Care of the Self*, Parts 5-6

8.2: The Berkley Lectures

- *Fearless Speech*
- “The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom” [E-Reserve]

Part 4: Critical Analysis of the Late Foucault

9.1: Sex and Sexuality

- Halperin, David M. 1989. "Is There a History of Sexuality?" *History and Theory* 28 (3): 257-274. [E-Reserve]
- Halperin, David M. 1998. "Forgetting Foucault: Acts, Identities, and the History of Sexuality." *Representations* (63):93-120. [E-Reserve]

9.2: Subjectivity

- Thompson, Kevin. 2003. “Forms of Resistance: Foucault on tactical reversal and self formation,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 36:113-128. [E-Reserve]
- McWhorter, Ladelle. 1999. “Self-Overcoming through Ascetic Pleasures,” Chapter 6 of *Bodies and Pleasures: Foucault and the Politics of Sexual Normalization*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. [E-Reserve]
- Sebastian Harrer. 2005. “The Theme of Subjectivity in Foucault's Lecture Series *L'Herméneutique du Sujet*,” *Foucault Studies*. 2:75-96. [E-Reserve]
- “Deep subjects: Foucault and the Return of the Individual” and “Arts of Living: Antiquity, Modernity, and the Experience of Self” in Paras, Eric. 2006. *Foucault 2.0: Beyond Power and Knowledge*. New York: Other Press. [E-Reserve]

10.1: Ethics I

- Réal Fillion. “Freedom, Truth, and Possibility in Foucault's Ethics,” *Foucault Studies* 2:50-64. [E-Reserve]
- Chapters 1-3 of O'Leary, Timothy. 2002. *Foucault: The Art of Ethics*. London; New York: Continuum. [E-Reserve]

10.2: Ethics II

- Selections from Oksala, Johanna. 2005. *Foucault on Freedom*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [E-Reserve]
- Luxon, Nancy. 2004. “Truthfulness, risk, and trust in the late lectures of Michel Foucault,” *Inquiry* 47:464-489. [E-Reserve]
- Paul Veyne. 1993. "The Final Foucault and His Ethics," *Critical Inquiry* 20:1-9. [E-Reserve]
- Neil Levy. 2004. “Foucault as Virtue Ethicist,” *Foucault Studies* 1:20-31. [E-Reserve]