

PHL 559: FOUCAULT [WQ] / PHL 522: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY [SQ]

FOUCAULT AND THE QUESTION OF TRUTH

Kevin Thompson

2352 N. Clifton, Suite 150.24; T, TH: 1:30-2:30, and by appointment
773.325.4866 (office); 773.325.7265 (department); Email: kthomp12@depaul.edu

Truth stands as perhaps the central organizing problematic of Foucault's thought. From the early investigations of madness, health, and knowledge through the later accounts of criminality, sexuality, and the practices of parrhesia, he continually sought to interrogate the historical nature, function, and value of truth. Accordingly, this seminar examines the problematic of truth in Foucault's writings in its relationship to the core themes of his thought: knowledge, power, subjectivity, method, and critique.

The seminar assumes no prior knowledge of Foucault's work. However, the second quarter will build on the work undertaken in the first in a way that may be somewhat different than a more conventional two quarter long seminar. Specifically, the first quarter (The Truth of Man) will engage in a standard close reading of two of the major works from the corpus: *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* [1966] and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [1975]. Foucault indicates very clearly that these works seek to demonstrate that the history of the human sciences and the history of penal law derive from a 'common matrix': man. In the opening of the nineteenth century in Europe, man is invented, Foucault argues, as, at once, the ultimate object of knowledge and of punishment and as the authoritative subject of both as well, which is to say, man was born here as the final standard and purveyor of truth. The first quarter will thus explore the question of truth in Foucault's accounts of the shifting grids of intelligibility and criminality by reading these two works, as Foucault suggests, in tandem.

The second quarter (Truth-Telling) investigates the problematic of truth in Foucault by looking outside the canon of his main published works. This quarter will therefore function more like a research seminar investigating interpretive hypotheses and lines of analysis that appear only tangentially in the writings that Foucault himself authorized and brought to publication. In particular, the seminar will examine the question of truth in relationship to knowledge, power, subjectivity, method, and critique in the reading and rereading of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* that Foucault undertook from his first lecture course at the Collège de France in 1971 through to his final course there in 1984.

TEXTS

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Vintage, 978-0679753353)
_____, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage, 978-0679752554)
_____, *Power (The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol. 3)* (The New Press, 978-1565847095)
_____, *Lectures on the Will to Know: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1979-1980* (Palgrave, 978-1250050106)
_____, *On the Government of the Living: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1979-1980* (Palgrave, 978-1250081612)
_____, *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice* (Chicago, 978-0226257709)

REQUIREMENTS

WQ: One exegetical paper (1500-2400 words), due by noon on Monday, March 19th, via D2L Submission
SQ: One thematic paper (3000-4500 words), due by noon on Wednesday, June 13th, via D2L Submission

PREPARATORY READINGS

Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* [426 BCE]
Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” [1784]
Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense” [1873, French translation, 1969]
Martin Heidegger, “On the Essence of Truth” [Composed, 1930; Published, 1943¹, 1949², French translation, 1948]
_____, “Letter on Humanism” [Composed, Fall 1946, Published, 1947¹, 1949², French translation, 1957]
Marcel Detienne, *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece* [1967], Foreword (Vidal-Naquet), Preface to the American Edition, Chapters One, Three, Five, Six, & Seven.
Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* [1968], Chapter III: The Image of Thought

RECOMMENDED SECONDARY SOURCES

I. GENERAL

James W. Bernauer, *Michel Foucault’s Force of Flight: Towards an Ethics of Thought* (Humanities, 1990)
Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Minnesota, 1988)
Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd Ed. (Chicago, 1983)
Clare O’Farrell, *Michel Foucault* (Sage, 2005)
Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (Tavistock, 1980)

II. SCHOLARLY RESOURCES

Christopher Falzon, Timothy O’Leary, and Jana Sawicki, eds, *A Companion to Foucault* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)
Leonard Lawlor and John Nale, eds. *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon* (Cambridge, 2014)
Dianna Taylor, ed. *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (Acumen, 2011)

III. ANTHOLOGIES

Arnold I. Davidson, ed. *Foucault and his Interlocutors* (University of Chicago, 1997)
Mike Gane and Terry Johnson, eds. *Foucault’s New Domains* (Routledge, 1993)
Jan Goldstein, ed. *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Blackwell, 1994)
Gary Gutting, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge, 1994; 2nd rev. ed., 2003)
David Couzens Hoy, ed. *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Blackwell, 1986)
Barry Smart, *Michel Foucault: Critical Encounters*, 7 vols. (Routledge, 1995)
Michel Foucault: Philosopher, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong (Routledge, 1992)

IV. FOUCAULT AND THE QUESTION OF TRUTH

Jacques Bouveresse, *Nietzsche contre Foucault. Sur la vérité, la connaissance et le pouvoir* (Agone, 2016)
Don T. Deere, “Truth,” in *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*, 517-527.
Frédéric Gros, “Michel Foucault, une philosophie de la vérité,” in *Michel Foucault: Philosophie Anthologie*, ed. Arnold Davidson and Frédéric Gros (Gallimard, 2004), 11-25.
Thomas R. Flynn, “Truth and Subjectivation in the Later Foucault,” *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 82, no. 10 (1985): 531-540.
C. G. Prado, *Searle and Foucault on Truth* (Cambridge University Press, 2006)

THE TRUTH OF MAN

JANUARY

2: Truth & Method

“Preface” [OT (1966), xv-xxiv, esp. xx-xxiv]

“Candidacy Presentation: Collège de France, 1969” [D2L]

“Foreword to the English Edition” [Introduction, 1970; OT, ix-xiv]

“The Body of the Condemned” [DP (1975), 3-31, esp. 23-31]

9: The Epistemologico-Juridical Formation of Man

“Preface” & “Las Meninas” [OT, xv-xxiv, esp. xv-xx, & 3-16]

“The Body of the Condemned” [DP, 3-31, esp. 3-23]

16: The Fundamental Problematic of the Classical Period I: Identity/Difference & Sovereignty

“Representing” [OT, 46-77]

“The Spectacle of the Scaffold” [DP, 32-69]

23: The Techniques of Epistemology of the Classical Period II: Tabulation

“Speaking” [OT, 78- 92 & 115-120]

“Classifying” [OT, 125-150 & 157-162]

“Exchanging” [OT, 166-195 & 200-211]

30: The Techniques of Power of the Classical Period II: Punishment

“Generalized Punishment” [DP, 73-103]

“The Gentle Way in Punishment” [DP, 104-131]

FEBRUARY

6: The Epistemological Break

“The Limits of Representation” [OT, 217-249]

“Labour, Life, Language” [OT, 250-302]

13: Discipline

“Docile Bodies” [DP, 135-169]

“The Means of Correct Training” [DP, 170-194]

20: Modernity: Man as Subject/Object Effect I

“Man and his Doubles” [OT, 303-343]

“Panopticism” [DP, 195-228]

27: Modernity: Man as Subject/Object Effect II

“The Human Sciences” [OT, 344-367]

“Complete and Austere Institutions” [DP, 231-256]

“Illegalities and Delinquency” [DP, 257-292]

MARCH

6: The Limits of Man

“The Human Sciences” [OT, 367-387]

“The Carceral” [DP, 293-308]

TRUTH-TELLING

MARCH

I. TRUTH & KNOWLEDGE

27: "The Order of Discourse" [Inaugural Lecture, 2 December 1970; Published, 1971] [D2L]

Lectures on the Will to Know [CdF Lecture Course, December 1970-March 1971], Lectures One (9 December 1970)-Four (13 January 1971) [1-70]

"How to Think the History of Truth with Nietzsche without Relying on Truth" [Lecture, McGill University, April 1971] [*Lectures on the Will to Know*, 202-223]

APRIL

3: *Lectures on the Will to Know*, Lecture Twelve (17 March 1971) [183-201]

"Oedipal Knowledge" [Lecture, SUNY-Buffalo, March 1972 & Cornell, October 1972] [*Lectures on the Will to Know*, 229-261]

"Truth and Juridical Forms" [Lecture Series, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, May 1973] Lectures I-II [*Power*, 1-32]

10: "Truth and Juridical Forms," Lectures III-IV [*Power*, 32-89]

II. TRUTH & POWER

17: *On the Government of the Living* [CdF Lecture Course, January-March 1980], Lecture One (9 January 1980)-Lecture Two (16 January 1980) [1-46]

24: *On the Government of the Living*, Lecture Three (23 January 1980)-Lecture Four (30 January 1980) [47-92]

MAY

III. TRUTH & SUBJECTIVITY

1: *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice* [Lecture Series, Catholic University of Louvain, 2 April-20 May 1981], Inaugural Lecture (2 April 1981)-Second Lecture (28 April 1981) [11-89]

8: *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling*, Lectures Three (29 April 1981)-Four (6 May 1981) [91-161]

15: *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling*, Lectures Five (13 May 1981)-Six (20 May 1981) [163-233]

IV. TRUTH & CRITIQUE

22: "What is Critique?" [Lecture, 27 May 1978; Published, 1990] [D2L]

The Government of Self and Others [CdF Lecture Course, January-March 1983], Lectures One & Two (5 January 1983) [D2L]

29: *The Courage of Truth* [CdF Lecture Course, February-March 1984], Lectures One & Two (1 February 1984) [D2L]

"What is Enlightenment?" [Essay, 1984] [D2L]