

Department of Philosophy
Philosophy 3450 SYLLABUS
Ethical Issues in the Life Sciences

Term: Winter 2013
Time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:30 to 1:20
Location: Rozanski 105
Class Size: 60

Instructor: Dr. Karen Houle
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Office: MacKinnon 337
Office hours: Tuesdays 11am – 1 pm.

1. Brief Description of Course

This course reads our current concepts of *health, medicine and disease* – mental and physical -- and their respective institutional forms in clinical medicine (physical and psychiatric) via the discourse analysis of 20th century French critical theorist, Michel Foucault (1926-1984). We will read 3 Foucauldian texts that deal directly with the production of the fields of modern medicine: objects to be concerned with, and subjects to be concerned with such things. Foucault claimed not to have written his books for a philosophical audience. Rather, he desired his books “to be a kind of tool-box others can rummage through to find a tool they can use however they wish in their own area...I write for users, not readers.” Since we are all *users* of the concepts and institutions of health, mental and physical, these texts can be tools which help us in that use, however we conceive it. Moreover, as a critical theorist, it is precisely in gaining a profound sense of our own positionality in the production of discursive fields that ethical possibilities are accomplished. In short: critical analysis of “the life sciences” is ethics, a form of ethical work. The course will focus on relevant concepts Foucault developed and/or deployed – discourse, intelligibility, visibility & sayability; figures & personae; archeology & genealogy; normalization & governmentality, panopticism, power/knowledge, biopower, subjectivation, discipline, signification, force. It will expose us to his genealogical method, and through this exposure we will come to understand firsthand what it is about this method that is allegedly ethical labour.

In addition to understanding students will be expected to use these capacities and conceptual tools to gain insight into and thus to be able to critique philosophical aspects of modern health and medicine such as: hormone replacement therapy, weight loss and self-starvation, use of animals in laboratory testing, antidepressants, yoga, personal trainers, alleged increase in OCD in children, cosmetic surgery, reproductive/fertility technologies, fitness regimes, teeth-whitening, stem-cell anti-aging therapies, anti-smoking lobbies, UVA therapy i.e. tanning, body modification, & cancer surveillance.

2. Prerequisites, requirements

7.5 credits with 1.5 of those being Philosophy courses.

NOTE: This is a 3rd year course with very challenging material. Students without a solid background in Philosophy will not be adequately prepared.

3. Purpose, Goals and Objectives of the Course

- a) Working as individuals and as a mutually-engaged emerging collective, we will become familiar with, and able to use *some* of Foucault’s conceptual landscape and methodologies. Students often hear about Foucault but rarely have an opportunity to delve into his ideas, and to get a grip on them.

- b) We will not simply memorize & parrot these ideas of Foucault's but be critical of their limits and shortcomings, and be able to use them creatively in novel situations as thinking-tools.
- c) We will recognize the relevance of these concepts and methodologies for critically assessing a wide range of biomedical practices most importantly those we ourselves have encountered as embodied subjects-in-process.

4. Texts or Resources Required

- a) Michel Foucault. 1994. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. (Vintage Books)
- b) Michel Foucault, editor: I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother...A Case of Parricide in the 19th century. Translated by Frank Jellinek. University of Nebraska Press, 1975.
- c) Michel Foucault: *Psychiatric Power (Lectures at the Collège de France 1973-1974)*. Edited by Jacques Lagrange: Translated by Graham Burchell. Picador Press, New York, 2003.

5. Organization of the Course

The course involves a combination of formal lectures by the instructor, discussions, some material prepared by students and presented in very short (micro-) presentations.

Note: Please check the ANNOUNCEMENTS on Courselink regularly. I make changes and updates there.

6. Evaluation

The grade for the course will be based on the following items weighted as indicated:

<i>Evaluation Point</i>	<i>% Value</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Class participation (attendance + micro-presentations + reflective prompts + contribution)	20%	Each class
Critical Summaries + Application (In-class tests)	40%	4 in total
Final Exam (comprehensive)	40%	TBA

{**Late Policy:** Any work to be handed in by a particular date and time will be docked 20% per day, or 1/5 of the total possible mark. These are worth 10%. That means that after 5 days late, you would get a zero. If you have medical, compassionate or non-insane reasons for not being able to get an assignment in on time, communicate with the instructor **before** the assignment is due.}

a) **Participation [20%]**

I keep track of attendance and contribution each and every class.

Students are expected to attend every class, actively participate in discussion, draw on insights offered by peers to extend a line of discussion, ask good questions and listen carefully. Students must demonstrate via participation (including the reflective prompts and micro-presentations) that they have been paying attention in class and have read the required course readings in full, not just the first page or the summaries on Wikipedia or Spark Notes. Often the reflective prompts will be drawn from one class discussion and asked at the beginning of next. If you miss a class you will not be able to get oriented to the question!

Please note: Students in 3450 are not being asked to do any extra-curricular *contributions* such as on-line moderated discussions, or seminar slots. You contribute to, and gain from, this class *in* the classroom time and space assigned, 3 x a week for 12 weeks. That's it, that's all.

Arriving late, leaving early, using cellphones, texting, surfing the net, chatting on Skype or Facebook, or any other non-course related use of electronic devices will result in penalties to your participation grade and/or expulsion from the room or being moved or asked to close your laptop and take notes the old-fashioned way.

If you come to class without having done the readings, or even tried to, and you shop on E-bay for speakers or purses, and watching skateboard videos, even while you are toggling back and forth taking notes, you are not *participating*. In fact, you are quite likely interfering with others' capacity to be actively involved in the class including the instructor's!

The table below presents a general guide to the evaluation of class participation used in this course.

Evaluation criteria for participation	Grades
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degrees of absenteeism and associated lack of contribution. This includes during micro-presentations. 	0-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present, not disruptive. • Tries to respond when called on but does not offer very much. • Very infrequent involvement in discussion, by commentary and/or body language. 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates adequate preparation in comments and reflective prompts: knows basic case or reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them. • Offers straightforward exegesis (e.g., straight from the reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a month). • Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. • Sporadic involvement. • Speaks too frequently trying to demonstrate erudition, rather than build upon insights in play. • Disruptive interventions that go off on tangents, take up time, or repeat what has already been said. 	12-14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates good preparation: knows subject or reading well, has thought through implications of them. • Offers interpretations and analysis of material (more than just facts) to class and in reflective prompts. • Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion. • Willing to go out on a limb, either by risking an interpretation or offering a novel insight. • Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement (active listening and speaking) 	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed case, issue, etc. exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material (e.g., readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.). • Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of material, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further. • Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, carefully and respectfully responds to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc. • Responds to others in classroom by name and works with their points, respectfully. • Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement. 	18-20

[criteria adapted from Maznevski, Martha L. (2007) *Grading Class Participation*. Teaching Resources Center, University of Virginia: Charlottesville]

b) In-class tests: **Critical Summaries of Reading Excerpts + Application [40%]**

Foucault's writing is really a challenge. It is frilly, obtuse and repetitive. And, it is in translation from French. Certain

terms he uses in French to make an important distinction – *la connaissance* vs. *le savoir* – simply get mashed together in English as *knowledge*. There is an overwhelming amount of detail, especially about obscure moments during and following the French Revolution! And the detail can easily obscure his exceptionally fantastic, philosophically trenchant ideas. Yet, it is crucial to practice dealing with the text on its own terms, because Foucault is doing it on purpose to help us to learn something about how we think and read! And moreover, drawing out these ideas, trying to really understand what is being said, & putting these ideas in dialogue with other philosophical insights and questions. Be active! The critical summaries are designed to get you to work closely with interpreting passages from The Birth of the Clinic. At four points in the course everyone will be given the same short passage. You will be asked to explain the passage, explain the concepts used, lay out the claim, and state its larger significance in light of a concrete, practical matter with which you will be familiar. Each of these will be graded out of /10.

c). Final Exam [40%]. Will cover material from the whole course.

Schedule of Topics and Readings (subject to change)

Topics covered in each week of the course are presented below. It is your responsibility to check CourseLink regularly to see updated versions of this schedule, with the topics and page #'s filled in. If you miss classes, it is your responsibility to check where we are at in the topics and schedule. Announcements and handouts are made in class and not always repeated on CourseLink.

Michel Foucault. 1994. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. (Vintage Books) = **BoC**
 Michel Foucault: I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered.... = **I,P**
 Michel Foucault: Psychiatric Power (Lectures at the Collège de France 1973-1974) = **PP**

Date	Topic or Themes	Readings
Week 1	Course Organization IDIOM, CRITIQUE, CRITICAL THEORY	<i>Foreword</i> I, P
Week 2 (Jan 14, 16, 18)	DISCOURSE, INTELLIGIBILITY, SAYABILITY & VISIBILITY	3-122, I,P.
Week 3 (Jan 21, 23, 25)	POWER-KNOWLEDGE, SUBJECTIFICATION	122-212, I,P
Week 4 (Jan 28, 30, Feb 1)	TEST #1 on Friday, Feb. 1st No class on Wed (catch up)	212-269, I,P
Week 5 Feb 4, 6, 8		Birth of the Clinic:

Week 6 Feb 11, 13, 15	Test #2	BoC
Week 7	Winter Break/Reading Break	
Week 8 Feb 25, 27, March 1		BoC
Week 9 March 4, 6, 8	Test #3	BoC
Week 10 Mar 11, 13, 15		BoC
Week11 Mar 18,20, 22		PP
Week 12 Mar 25, 7, 9		PP
Week 13 April 1, 3, 5	Last week of classes, Test #4	PP
April		Final Exam

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

E-mail communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> email account regularly: email is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

When you cannot meet a course requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and email contact. [See the Undergraduate Calendar](#) for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

Drop date

The last date to drop one-semester Winter 2013 courses, without academic penalty, is *Friday, March 8, 2013*. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, [see the Undergraduate Calendar](#).

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities which, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are [detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar](#).

Academic misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is [detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar](#).

Recording of materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources

The [Undergraduate Calendar](#) is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. If you find yourself in difficulty, contact the undergraduate advisor in your program, or [the BA Counseling Office](#).