

Course Code: PHIL *6950	Section:	Semester: W13
Course Title: MA Seminar		
Instructor: Dr. Karen Houle		
<p>This course reads our current concepts of <i>health, medicine and disease</i> – 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 key Foucauldian texts that deal directly with the production of the fields of modern medicine: its objects to be concerned with, and its 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 <i>users</i> 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, in principle, a form of ethical work. The course will focus on relevant concepts Foucault developed and/or deployed – discourse, (visibility & sayability; figures & personae; archeology & genealogy), panopticism, power/knowledge, biopower, subjectivation, discipline, governmentality, force. It will expose us to his genealogical method, and we will understand what it is about this method that is allegedly ethical labour. In addition to this, for their final projects, students will be expected to use these tools to critically investigate an aspects of modern health and medicine of concern to them, 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.</p> <p>Textbook(s): TBA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Michel Foucault: <u>The Birth of the Clinic</u> 2) Michel Foucault: <u>I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered....</u> 3) Michel Foucault: <u>Psychiatric Power (Lectures at the Collège de France 1973-1974)</u> 4) <p>Course requirements / evaluation: This is a 3rd year course with challenging material. Students without a solid background in Philosophy will not be adequately prepared.</p>		