

Seminar

Critique and Power in the Work of Michel Foucault

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The aim of this seminar is to examine how the Enlightenment notion of critique has played a central role in the formation of secularising modernity's response to religious experience. We will examine the modern notion of critique as the consequence of questions and issues that remain unresolved within the Enlightenment, as well as the concepts of rationality, subjectivity, and history through which secularism continues to be articulated in opposition to religion. The purpose of this examination is to rethink the division between religion and the secular and the concept of critique on which that division is founded. An important focus of our discussion will be the centrality of the notion of power in Michel Foucault's thinking and how it emerges as the object of critique in his work. Finally, we will turn to Foucault's understanding of genealogy and its relation to the practice of criticism. Here, seminar participants will be asked to consider the methodological implications of Foucault's thinking for the use of critique in their own work.

Morning Session:

9:00-10:00am **Enlightenment**

📖 Kant, Was ist Aufklärung? *The Politics of Truth*. Los Angeles, CA:

Semiotext(e), 2007: 29-37.

📖 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" *The Politics of Truth*. Los Angeles, CA:

Semiotext(e), 2007: 97-119.

10:00-10:50am **Critique**

📖 Foucault, "What is Critique?" *The Politics of Truth*. Los Angeles, CA:

Semiotext(e), 2007: 41-81.

📖 Foucault, "Practicing Criticism." *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*. New York, NY:

Routledge, 1990: 152-156.

20 minute break

11:10am-12:30pm **Power**

📖 Foucault, "Truth and Power." *Power. Essential Works by Foucault, 1954-1984 Volume 3*. Edited by J.D. Faubion, New York, NY: The New Press, 2001 : 111-133.

📖 Foucault, "Omnes et Singulatim: Toward a Critique of Political Reason." *Power. Essential Works by Foucault, 1954-1984 Volume 3*. Edited by J.D. Faubion, New York, NY: The New Press, 2001: 298-325.

12:30-2:00pm *Lunch*

Afternoon Session:

2:00pm-5pm **Presentations and Discussion**

Discussion focus:

📖 Foucault, Michel. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History." *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology. Essential Works by Foucault, 1954-1984 Volume 2*. Edited by J.D. Faubion, New York, NY: The New Press, 1999: 369-391.

The afternoon session will begin with a brief introduction to the above text and will be followed by student presentations and open discussion. It is specifically structured around a discussion of issue of genealogy in the work of Michel Foucault and its relationship to his elaboration of critique. As such, students are asked to use this text as a point of departure for their presentation of any *one* of the texts discussed in the morning.

The point is to 1) assess how the issue of genealogy in the work of Michel Foucault corresponds to his elaboration of the critique of power; 2) explore the intersections between a significant problematic, terminology, conceptual problem etc between the two articles; 3) think about the bearing of the issue of methodology on their own research into and critical departures for the study of the Islamic tradition, Muslims in contemporary society etc.

These are guidelines for the discussion as well as for the structure of student presentations, however the student is free to organise their presentation of the two articles in any way they wish. Individual presentations will be limited to 10-12 minutes in order to allow time for discussion.

2:00-2:15pm Brief introduction to "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History."

2:15pm-2:50pm:

Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?"

Students presenting:

2:50-3:50pm

Foucault, "What is Critique?"

Students presenting:

Foucault, "Practicing Criticism."

Students presenting:

3:50-4:10 *Break*

4:10-5:10pm

Foucault, "Truth and Power."

Students presenting:

Foucault, "*Omnes et Singulatim: Toward a Critique of Political Reason.*"

Students presenting: