

Readings

Michel Foucault, “The Birth of Biopolitics,” in *Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth*, Essential Works of Foucault, Vol 1, pp 73-79.

_____. “The Birth of Social Medicine,” in *Power*, Essential Works of Foucault, Vol 3, pp 134-156.

Class Introduction

Contact info for Writing Fellow Lia Shimada

Background: Professor Erica James

(Taken from MIT Anthropology website) Her research interests focus on medical and psychiatric anthropology, gender and violence, religion and healing, and issues of race, human rights, and the ethics and politics of democratization projects. Her doctoral research, entitled *The Violence of Misery: “Insecurity” in Haiti in the “Democratic” Era*, examines the psychosocial experience of Haitian torture survivors targeted during the 1991-94 coup period, as well as the politics of humanitarian assistance in “post-conflict” nations making the transition to democracy

Course:

- Ask hard questions but do so with respect
- We’ll focus on:
 - biomedical issues (stem cells; fertilization)
 - Politics—access to care—Haitian women
 - Politics of knowledge—right to treat; control the population
 - Western construction of body, emotion, healing, cause of illness
 - How are doctors created? The clinical gaze; the craft of medicine
 - Forms of knowledge—replacing religion in society
 - New medical technologies: our western stance

Michel Foucault 1926-1984. French philosopher and historian. Prof at College de France. Foucault wrote controversially about the body, how institutions and states control and his writing will help us think about bioethics. Wrote on how medicine as an institution became a powerful apparatus of the state.

Major Works

Madness and Civilization

Plague, leprosy, outbreak led society to regard members as threatening and that society needed to be “protected”, leading to spatial arrangements, forms of governance, rationality, governmentality—what thinking goes into controlling epidemics. New functionaries surveyed homes. Medicine became a politicized enterprise and created a particular type of gaze. Forms of biopolitics.

The Birth of the Clinic

Creation of doctors. Good—how MDs view the body, what allows you to do it, space of hospital as site of Power. For example, applications of his theory discuss the Bantu clinic as site of colonial governance

Discipline and Punish

Birth of the prison as site of power: visible to invisible to internalized. Monarch has power over life and death—public spectacle of execution. Next, power shifts to become hidden through discipline, secret, torture (e.g., Guantanamo Bay, Cuba) arbitrary, suspending of rule of law and execution of justice for suspected terrorists. 17th-19th Century: new sites of deployment of power—army, school, family. Regimented control, hierarchy of who has power—techniques that shape individuals.

The History of Sexuality Vol. 1-3

How body became the object of technological practices where many types of interactions through a system as of Health, Child-Parent, proper family. Types of medicalization

Terms

Liberalism: Foucault argues on European society and government—but not about European colonies. Attention to individuals, populations—western view of discrete individuals. From the *Enlightenment*, Science as culture that replaces religion—changes our own subjectivity of how we view ourselves, how medicine is involved in the minutiae of life. (Compare to Haiti: not as disconnected individual, but more fluid, dynamic.)

Mind/Body—varying degrees of *rationality* with the pinnacle assumed to be the white male, autonomous individuals with rights (economic)—What concept of the person is involved? Who has power?

Apparatus: network of power with sites or nodes of power that are diffuse and capillary biohistory; medicalization; ethnography; economics of Health; biopolitics; enlightenment

Biopolitics: Has to do with productive populations—economics—biopolitics. Medicine as a form of productivity (Rosenberg, privatized)

Ethnography: Studying intensely; anthropological (v Medical) gaze—how individuals and institutions contest what is valid and true—then derive a theory on it

Culture, Cultural Relativism