

Professor Jackie Orr
Fall 2007/Soc880
jtorr@maxwell.syr.edu

Office hours: Tues. 12-1:00
Wed. 4-6:00
Maxwell 310C
443-5758 (o)

**POLITICS OF LIFE, DEATH, AND DISEASE
FALL 2007**



Stephen Pfohl, *Missing*

This is an advanced graduate seminar designed to explore a set of questions launched in part by Michel Foucault's analysis of 'biopolitics' as a founding regime of power/knowledge in Western modernity. Taking seriously Foucault's assertion that modernity is built on new technologies of power and practices of knowledge that take

‘life itself’ — that is, the life, health, birth, death, disorder, security, disease, or ‘bios’ of individuals and entire populations — as an object of political management and rational calculation, the course will approach Foucault’s ideas as useful provocations toward understanding and intervening in contemporary society.

Drawing on theoretical, ethnographic, and historical texts, the course attempts to develop a critical analytics of contemporary biopower while attending to concrete social sites including: the U.S. prison-industrial complex, the ‘war on terror,’ disability politics, mental disorders, bioinformatics, genetics, cybernetics, pharmaceutical drugs, surveillance, and U.S. biomedicine. Our aim will not be to explore each of these fields in depth, but to collectively investigate how to develop adequate theories and methods for future research. In that sense, this is an explicitly pragmatic course devoted to what might be of use in ongoing struggles — intellectual, political, corporeal — for the transformation of both society and that ‘technology’ of intimate influence...our selves. The course aims, then, to raise questions about how to think and *how to live* in an historical moment when ‘life itself’ becomes a terrain for biopolitical control.

Some of the questions animating the selection of materials we read are: (How) do colonialism, counter/terrorism, war, and state racism operate biopolitically? How might biopower be entangled with an ongoing, non-random social production of death — what Mbembe [2003] terms ‘necropolitics’? Where does an analysis of capital, technoscience, and political economy fit in thinking today about the regulation of ‘life itself’? How does the social management of both disease *and* health figure in the practice of biopolitics and ‘biocapital’? Foucault insisted that the social sciences were profoundly implicated in the emergence and proliferation of biopower — what do we (in the social sciences) think today? These questions are intended to encourage, and not displace, the collective questionings that arise over the course of the semester!

Course expectations:

This is a graduate-level seminar, and each student is expected to engage in a sustained, serious way with all assigned readings, and to actively prepare for and participate in seminar discussions each week.

Written work:

Each student will be required to write:

- **Book review** — A 3-4 page book review of Joao Biehl’s *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment*, due Wed., October 10.
- **Reflection on Methods** — A 6-page meditation on questions of method, due Wed., November 7.
- **Weekly postings** — Each week, by 10 a.m. Wednesday morning, students will post a written engagement/response to that week’s assigned readings (approx. 400 words). These postings will serve as a kind of collective intellectual diary of our passage through the syllabus. Writings can raise questions, identify topics,

experiment with style, launch critiques, or otherwise engage your experience of the readings.

- **Final paper**—A 25-page final paper that engages course authors and ideas in an explicit and sustained way will be due on Tuesday, December 18. While the final paper may take different forms, including an engagement with your own research area, a substantial portion of the paper must reflect a critical analysis of the intellectual terrain of this course.

Specific guidelines for the book review, methods essay, and final paper will be handed out in class.

Course Texts:

Most course materials are available re: the online e-journals at Syracuse University Library, or in PDF version on the course's Blackboard website.

required text (available at the bookstore, Schine Student Center):

Joao Biehl, *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

recommended texts:

Michel Foucault, "*Society Must Be Defended*": *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*. Trans. by David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003 [1997].

Emily Martin, *Bipolar Expeditions: Mania and Depression in American Culture*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2007.

Eugene Thacker, *The Global Genome: Biotechnology, Politics, and Culture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005.

Schedule of Readings:

August 29 **Openings**

September 5 **Biopolitics, Governmentality, ‘Life Itself’**

What we are dealing with in this new technology of power is not exactly society...nor is it the individual-as-body. It is a new body, a multiple body...Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power’s problem. (Foucault 2003: 245)

My last point will be this: the emergence of social science cannot be isolated from the rise of this new political rationality... (Foucault 2000: 417)

Michel Foucault, “Right of Death and Power over Life” [from *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1] in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, pp. 258-272.

Michel Foucault, Ch. 11 in “*Society Must Be Defended*”: *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*. Trans. by David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003 [1997], pp. 239-263.

Michel Foucault, “The Political Technology of Individuals” in *Michel Foucault: Power*. Ed. by James D. Faubion and trans. by Robert Hurley and others. New York: The New Press, 2000 [1994], pp. 403-417.

Nikolas Rose, “The Politics of Life Itself,” *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 18, no. 6 (2001), pp. 1-30. <http://tcs.sagepub.com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/content/vol18/issue6/>

Websites of interest:

Conference archive: Beyond Biopolitics: State Racism and the Politics of Life and Death
<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/womencenter/biopolitics.html>

Conference archive: The Sinues of the Present: Genealogies of Biopolitics
<http://www.radicalempricism.org/biocolloque/propositionsblocke.html>

BIOS Research Centre, London School of Economics, Nikolas Rose (director)
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/BIOS/>

recommended:

Michel Foucault, “Governmentality” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Ed. by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991.

September 12 **Biopowers of Race/Necropolitics of Colonialism**

[C]olonial violence and occupation are profoundly underwritten by the sacred terror of truth and exclusivity (mass expulsions, resettlement of “stateless” people in refugee camps, settlement of new colonies). Lying beneath the terror of the sacred is the constant excavation of missing bones. (Mbembe 2003: 27)

Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture* vol. 15, no. 1 (2003): 11-40.
SU library: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/public_culture/v015/15.1mbembe.html

Rey Chow, “Introduction: From Biopower to Ethnic Difference” in *The Protestant Ethic & The Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2002, pp. 1-17.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, “Globalisation and U.S. Prison Growth: From Military Keynesianism to Post-Keynesian Militarism,” *Race and Class*, vol. 40, nos. 2-3 (1999): 171-188.

SU library: <http://rac.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/40/2-3/171>

Diane Nelson, “‘The More You Kill the More You Will Live’: The Maya, ‘Race,’ and Biopolitical Hopes for Peace in Guatemala” in *Race, Nature, and the Politics of Difference*. Edited by Donald S. Moore, Jake Kosek, and Anand Pandian. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2003, pp. 122-143.

recommended:

Ann Stoler, “Colonial Studies and *The History of Sexuality*” and “Toward a Genealogy of Racisms: The 1976 Lectures at the Collège de France” (Chs. 1 & 3) in *Race and the Education of Desire*. Durham, Duke Univ. Press, 1995.

Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2006.

Dylan Rodriguez, *Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the U.S. Prison Regime*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, (2006).

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 2007.

Critical Resistance website (U.S. prison abolition grassroots movement): <http://www.criticalresistance.org/>

September 19 **‘Bare Life’ at Guantanamo Bay**

The question of who will be treated humanely presupposes that we have first settled the question of who does and does not count as a human. (Butler 2004: 91)

Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1998 [1995], pp. 119-143, 166-180.

Paul Farmer, "Pestilence and Restraint: Guantanamo, AIDS, and the Logic of Quarantine" (Ch. 2) in *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2005, pp. 51-90.

Judith Butler, "Indefinite Detention" (Ch. 3) in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, 2004, pp. 50-100.

recommended:

Paul Gilroy, "Modernity and Infrahumanity" (Ch. 2) in *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2000, pp. 54-96.

September 26 Social Death

NOTE: Paul Farmer will be speaking on campus, Wed., Sept. 26, at 7:30 p.m. as part of SU's "JUSTICE" symposium. For details see: <http://symposium.syr.edu/schedule.html>

--

NOTE: Please check out the two conferences being held September 27-29 at SU. The first (September 27-28) is a conference on Gender, Sexuality, and HIV/AIDS; and on Sept. 28-29, a related conference on the changing landscape of health care in contemporary South Asia. You are encouraged to attend!!

Joao Biehl, *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2005.

recommended:

Paul Farmer, "Introduction" and "On Suffering and Structural Violence" in *Pathologies of Power*, op. cit., pp. 1-50.

October 3 Re-thinking Disability

[T]he power of the modern state to produce an ever-expanding and increasingly totalizing web of social control is inextricably intertwined with...its capacity to generate an increasing specification of individuality. (Tremain 2005: 6)

Shelley Tremain, "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critical Disability Theory" in *Foucault and the Government of Disability*. Edited by Shelley Tremain. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2005, pp. 1-12.

Michel Foucault, "The Birth of Biopolitics" in *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-84*, vol. 1, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: New Press, 1997.

Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein, "Inclusive Education for Exclusive Pupils: A Critical Analysis of the Government of the Exceptional" in *Foucault and the Government of Disability*, op. cit., pp. 208-228.

Sharon L. Snyder and David T. Mitchell, "The Eugenic Atlantic: Disability and the Making of an International Science" (Ch. 3) in *Cultural Locations of Disability*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006, pp. 100-129.

recommended:

Troy Duster, *Backdoor to Eugenics*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Anne Waldschmidt, "Who Is Normal? Who Is Deviant? 'Normality' and 'Risk' in Genetic Diagnostics and Counseling," in *Foucault and the Government of Disability*, op. cit., pp. 191-207.

Special issue on Disability Studies, *Public Culture*, vol. 13, no. 3 (2001).

October 10 **No class meeting**
due date: Book review due (send e-version) by class time on October 10.

October 17 **Methodological Interlude (I):**
Genealogies, Truth-Events, Ghosts

[W]e can give the name "genealogy" to this coupling together of scholarly erudition and local memories, which allows us to constitute a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of that knowledge in contemporary tactics....It is not that [genealogies] demand the lyrical right to be ignorant, and not that they reject knowledge, or invoke or celebrate some immediate experience that has yet to be captured by knowledge. That is not what they are about. They are about the insurrection of knowledges. (Foucault 2003: 9)

A different way of knowing and writing about the social world, an entirely different mode of production, still awaits our invention. (Gordon 1997: 21)

Michel Foucault, Ch. 1 in "*Society Must Be Defended*," op. cit., pp. 1-21.

Michel Foucault, "a little history of truth..." in *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France 1973-1974*. Edited by Jacques Lagrange and trans. by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006 [2003], pp. 235-254.

Avery Gordon, "her shape and his hand" (Ch. 1) in *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp. 3-28.

Jackie Orr, "History, Memory, Story" (Ch. 1) in *Panic Diaries: A Genealogy of Panic Disorder*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2006, pp. 5-31.

recommended:

Stephen Pfohl, *Death at the Parasite Café: Social Science (Fictions) and the Postmodern*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

M. Jacqui Alexander, "Pedagogies of the Sacred: Making the Invisible Tangible" (Ch. 7) in *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 287-332.

Chela Sandoval, "Revolutionary Force: Connecting Desire to Reality," (Ch. 7) in *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2000.

NOTE: Diane Nelson is speaking in the Anthropology Dept., Monday, October 22

October 24 Methodological Interlude (II): Statistical Populations

[S]tatistical stress and statistical boredom...can be thought of as a particular structure of feeling, one that discloses the society of the statistic in which we live today, a mediatised, marketized, and medicalized culture in which the notion of being at risk has assumed dominant proportions. (Woodward 1999: 182)

due date: Essay on methods due in class.

Theodore M. Porter, "How Social Numbers Are Made Valid" (Ch. 2) in *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995, pp. 33-48.

Kathleen Woodward, "Statistical Panic," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 11 (Summer 1999): 177-197.

SU library: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/differences/v011/11.2woodward.html>

Jackie Orr, "The Martian in the Machine: Panic Theory and Theaters of War" (Ch. 2) in *Panic Diaries: A Genealogy of Panic Disorder*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 36-77.

Sarah Lochlann Jain, "Living in Prognosis: Toward an Elegiac Politics," *Representations* vol. 27 (Spring 2007): 77-92.

recommended:

Ian Hacking, "How should we do the history of statistics?" in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller. Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 181-195.

_____. "Biopower and the Avalanche of Printed Numbers." *Humanities in Society*, vol. 5 (1982): 279-295.

Alexandra Minna Stern, "An Empire of Tests: Psychometrics and the Paradoxes of Nationalism in the Americas" in *Hauanted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*. Edited by Ann Laura Stoler. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2006, pp. 325-343.

October 31 (Self)-Surveillance & the Rise of Biomedicine

By taking notice of “elsewheres within here”—zones of “other” intelligibilities—the edifice of a single hegemonic biomedicine that alone renders what was possible and intelligible crumbles. Though marked as impossibilities, bodies with MCS [multiple chemical sensitivity, or ‘environmental illness’] were not abjected into an abyss of nothingness. Instead, bodies with MCS were captured by other connections...producing new knots of possibility for inhabiting bodies, creating a densely populated elsewhere within here. (Murphy 2006: 157)

David Armstrong, “The Rise of Surveillance Medicine,” *Sociology of Health & Illness*, vol. 17, no. 3 (1995): 393-404.

Adele Clarke, Janet Shim, Laura Mamo, Jennifer Ruth Fosket, Jennifer Fishman, “Biomedicalization: Technoscientific Transformations of Health, Illness, and U.S. Biomedicine,” *American Sociological Review*, vol. 68, no. 2 (April 2003): 161-194.
SU library: <http://www.jstor.org/view/00031224/ap050001/05a00020/0>

Michelle Murphy, “How to Build Yourself a Body in a Safe Space” (Ch. 7) in *Sick Building Syndrome and the Problem of Uncertainty*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2006, pp. 151-178.

Todd Haynes, *Safe* (1995, movie).

recommended:

Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society, Towards A New Modernity*. Trans. by Mark Ritter. London: Sage Publications, 1992 [1986].

Monica Casper, ed., *Synthetic Planet: Chemical Politics and the Hazards of Modern Life*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

November 7 Thinking With Cancer

I draw a space in which cancer can be brought out of the closet in a way that is not about comforting ourselves and each other, and that is not about righteous anger but, rather, is a space of mourning and a space that allows for the agency and material humanity of suffering and death. (Jain 2007: 506)

S. Lochlann Jain, “Cancer Butch,” *Cultural Anthropology* vol. 22, no. 4 (2007): 502-538.

Maren Klawiter, Introduction to *The Biopolitics of Breast Cancer*. Minneapolis, Univ. of Minnesota Press (forthcoming 2008).

Jackie Stacey, *Teratologies: A Cultural Study of Cancer*. London: Routledge, 1997 (selections).

November 14 Pharmaceutical Un/Reason

Two centuries after its invention, psychiatry's illnesses have neither known causes nor definitive treatments....The question remains...: What exactly counts as a disorder of the mind, and what as a cure? (Lakoff 2006: 5-6)

Andrew Lakoff, "Introduction: Specific Effects" (Ch. 1) in *Pharmaceutical Reason: Knowledge and Value in Global Psychiatry*. Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006, pp. 1-17.

Jackie Orr, "Panic Xanax: A Patient Diary" in *Panic Diaries*, op. cit., pp. 213-274.

Emily Martin, *Bipolar Expeditions: Mania and Depression in American Culture*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2007 (selections).

recommended:

The Icarus Project website (radical mental health collective): <http://theicarusproject.net/>

Adriana Petryna, Andrew Lakoff, Arthur Kleinman, *Global Pharmaceuticals: Ethics, Markets, Practices*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2006.

November 21 (Thanksgiving – no class)

November 28 Biocapitalism (I): Societies of Control

The deployment of biopower through control is much more dispersed than its deployment through disciplining. The target of control is not subjects whose behaviour expresses internalized social norms; rather, control aims at a never-ending modulation of moods, capacities, affects, potentialities, assembled in genetic codes, identification numbers, ratings profiles, and preference listings: that is to say, bodies of data and information... (Clough 2003: 360)

Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October* 59 (Winter 1992): 3-7.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "Biopolitical Production" in *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2000, pp. 22-41.

Patricia Clough, "Affect and Control: Rethinking the Body 'Beyond Sex and Gender.'" *Feminist Theory* vol. 4, no. 3 (2003): 359-364.

SU library: <http://fty.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/4/3/359>

Eugene Thacker, "The Incorporate Bodies of Recombinant Capital" (Ch. 5) in *The Global Genome: Biotechnology, Politics, and Culture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005, pp. 171-207.

Stephen Pfohl, "New Global Technologies of Power: Cybernetic Capitalism and Social Inequality" in *The Blackwell Companion for Social Inequalities*. Edited by Mary Romero and Eric Margolis. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2005, pp. 546-588.

recommended:

Antonio Negri, "Value and Affect." *Boundary 2* vol. 26, no. 2 (1999): 77-88.

Patricia Clough, Introduction to *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2007.

Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtua: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke U Press, 2002.

December 5 Biocapitalism (II): Bodies, Codes, Biocolonialism

With the incremental procurement, commodification and world-wide circulation of human DNA, tissue and body parts, this new form of biopolitics is here to stay. (Locke 2001: 88)

We can recruit bodies like popcorn: surgery is in your future. (Cohen 2001: 26)

Margaret Lock, "The Alienation of Body Tissue and the Biopolitics of Immortalized Cell Lines," *Body & Society* vol. 7, nos. 2-3 (2001): 63-91.

SU library: <http://bod.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/7/2-3/63>

Laurence Cohen, "The Other Kidney: Biopolitics Beyond Recognition," *Body & Society* vol. 7, nos. 2-3 (2001): 9-29.

SU library: <http://bod.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/7/2-3/9>

Eugene Thacker, "Biocolonialism, Genomics, and the Databasing of the Population" (Ch. 4) in *The Global Genome*, op. cit., pp. 133-172.

recommended:

Kaushik Sunder Rajan, *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2006.

Catherine Waldby and Robert Mitchell, *Tissue Economies: Blood, Organs, and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2006.

due date: Final papers due Tuesday, December 18. Please send electronically.