

NIETZSCHE AND FOUCAULT ON POWER AND SUBJECTIVATION

Tomer Sassonkin Efron

Spring Semester

tomerkexp@hotmail.com

Office Hours: by appointment

Short description:

The course will offer a critical introduction to some of the key tenets and major theses of 19th century German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, and 20th century French philosopher, Michel Foucault. Focusing on Nietzsche's seminal work, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, we will discuss the Nietzschean critique of "the value of values" and its attendant typology and genealogy of Master/Slave moralities and subjectivities. We will see how Nietzsche's critical stance on ethics and subject-formation coheres with, and proceeds from, his critique of the western "will to truth" as well as his views on perspectivism, the death of God, nihilism, and the will to power. Focusing on Foucault's later works, including *The History of Sexuality* and annual course lectures at the College de France, we will consider how Foucault extends and transforms the Nietzschean brand of genealogical critique. Reading Foucault's historical analyses and conceptualizations of the modern mechanisms of power, such as discipline and biopower, we will discuss these mechanisms' indissociability from knowledge and the production of truth, their deployment within a political rationality ("governmentality") shot through with economic reason and a concern for the biological existence of populations, and their productive effects on the constitution of modern subjectivities. Time permitting, we will consider Judith Butler's famous work on gender performativity, and the performativity of identity at large, as a present-day application to the Nietzschean-Foucauldian stance on power and its relation to the structuring of personhood, experience, and meaning.

Assessment:

Minor assignments:

Mid Term:

Short paper (4-6 pages), 30%

Final requirement:

Paper (6-10 pages), 50%

Participation:

20%

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.

Additional requirements:

Phones turned-off while in class.