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Course Syllabus (SP15) COLI 214 Literature & Society: "Societies of Discipline and Control"

Christopher Southward

Binghamton University--SUNY, csouthw1@binghamton.edu

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SUNY Binghamton Department of Comparative Literature
COLI 214B-02—Literature and Society: “Societies of discipline and control”
Instructor: Christopher L. Southward; csouthw1@binghamton.edu
Class hours: MW 0925-1050; DC-329; Office hours: M 12:00-3:00

Course description:

Optics is central to the arts of producing human subjects and governing our spatiotemporal deployment of vital forces. Yet, in the transition of societies from industrial to post-industrial modes of production, there seems to have occurred a parallel shift in governmental focus from merely producing and disciplining subjects at the material level to controlling them at the ideological. In this discussion-driven course, we will turn to works of theory and fiction in order to examine the basic tenets of discipline and control and consider the extent to which these social practices diverge and converge in our present era.

This course fulfills the SUNY Binghamton General Education “Composition” and “Humanities” requirements. The University’s guidelines regarding these categories are as follows:

Category 1: Language and Communication: *Composition* (C) courses are courses in any of the departments or divisions of the University. They require a process of revision and a minimum of 20 pages of expository prose. At least 50 percent of the course grade is based on student writing.

Category 4: Aesthetics and Humanities: *Humanities* (H) courses enhance students’ understanding of human experience through the study of literature or philosophy.

Source: <http://www.binghamton.edu/human-development/current-students/general-education.html>

Course objectives and learning outcomes:

Our shared objectives are (1) to understand the nature of and aims of social practices of discipline and control, (2) to examine historical instances of these practices in the context of the United States, (3) to think and write critically about practices of discipline and control, developing a final seminar or research paper that demonstrates the student’s unique understanding of topics addressed over the course of the semester.

Course requirements and grading:

(1) Two 5-page papers, each of which is to be revised and expanded to 7 pages (draft + revision = 25%), **(2)** the maintenance of a weekly reading journal for course weeks 1 – 7 (10%), **(3)** two presentations (25%), and **(4)** a 10-page final seminar or research paper (40%). These exercises are designed to enable students (1) to recognize and respond to authors’ main and sub-arguments, (2) to generate questions and make observations to facilitate class discussions, and (3) to gauge personal understanding of the texts and develop theses for the final paper. All submitted papers are to be typewritten in MLA format using double-spacing, 1-inch margins, and 11- or 12-point font. Students in need of writing assistance are encouraged to visit the University Writing Center at LN 2412.

Expectations and responsibilities:

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and ready to discuss the texts assigned for the day. Students are additionally expected to maintain a binder containing each of the assigned readings in their entirety and to bring this each class session. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own academic success and to support that of their colleagues, thereby promoting the success of the course as a whole. Active participation will facilitate these goals. Students will be allowed one (1) absence during the semester; absences beyond this limit will result in the reduction of your final grade by one half grade-point per absence (for example, a grade of **A** for the course will be reduced to **A-**, and so on. The same policy will apply to late submissions of papers and other assignments). Students should expect to spend at least 9.5 hours per week preparing for our biweekly class sessions.

*The use of laptop computers will be permitted for note taking only; please silence these and other electronic devices before the start of class.

*Please privately inform the instructor of your special learning needs no later than the end of the week following the Course Add/Drop deadline.

A note on academic integrity:

Plagiarism consists in the unacknowledged use of another person's work. Students enrolled in this course are required and expected to do their own work. Instances of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, will be punished in accordance with University policy. Students found to have engaged in plagiarism in this course will receive an F for the assignment(s) in question. Students in need of clarification of the University's policy on academic integrity should review it online at the following link, listed under the heading, "Rules Governing Academic Life":

Source: http://buweb.binghamton.edu/bulletin/program.asp?program_id=103

A note on the readings:

The following is a list of texts required for the course and available for purchase from the University bookstore; all other readings will be available on Blackboard. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the reading schedule on short notice and as deemed appropriate.

Required texts:

Jean Baudrillard—*Passwords*

—*The Agony of Power*

Jeremy Bentham—*The Panopticon Writings*

Philip K. Dick—*A Scanner Darkly*

—*The Variable Man*

Michel Foucault—*Discipline and Punish*

Franz Kafka—*The Trial*

George Orwell--*1984*

Paul Virilio—*The Administration of Fear*

Part 1: Societies of discipline: materiality, optics, and the body

Week 1:

M 1/26: Introductions and overview; No readings

W 1/28: Michel Foucault—*Discipline and Punish*, Pt. 3, "Discipline," Ch. 1: "Docile bodies"

Week 2:

M 2/2: *Discipline*, Pt. 3, Ch. 2: "The means of correct training"

W 2/4: Jeremy Bentham—*The Panopticon Writings*, Introduction

***F 2/6: Course Add/Drop deadline**

Week 3:

M 2/09: *Panopticon*, Preface and Letters I – VIII;

Paul Auster—*Ghosts*, pp. 133-165, in *The New York Trilogy* (2006)

*W 2/11: *Discipline*, Pt. 3, Ch. 3: "Panopticism"; *Ghosts*, pp. 165-192

***Paper #1 draft due in class**

Week 4:

M 2/16: *Panopticon*, Letters IX – XVII;
Franz Kafka—*The Trial*: “Arrest”; “Conversation with Frau Grubach”; “Initial inquiry”

W 2/18: *Discipline*, Pt. 4, “Prison,” Ch. 1: “Complete and austere institutions”;
Trial: “The empty courtroom, the student, the offices”; “The flogger”

Week 5:

M 2/23: *Discipline*, Pt. 4, Ch. 2, “Illegalities and delinquency,” pp. 257-277;
Trial: “The Uncle, Leni”

*W 2/25: *Panopticon*, Letters XVIII – XXI;
Trial: “Lawyer, manufacturer, painter”, pp. 111-143;
Discipline, finish “Illegalities”; Ch. 3, “The carceral”

Paper #1 revision due in class*Week 6:**

3/02: *Discipline*, Pt. 1, “Torture,” Ch. 1, “The body of the condemned”;
Trial: “Lawyer...”, pp. 144 – end

3/04: *Discipline*, Pt. 1, Ch. 2, “The spectacle of the scaffold”;
Trial: “Block, the merchant....”

Week 7:

M 3/09: *Discipline*, Pt. 2, “Punishment,” Ch. 1, “Generalized punishment”
Trial: “In the cathedral”

*W 3/11: *Discipline*, Pt.2, Ch. 2, “The gentle way in punishment”; *Trial*: “The end”

Part 2: Societies of control: ideology, spectacle, and the passions**Week 8:**

M 3/16: Gilles Deleuze—“Postscript on the societies of control”; video: “Postscript”;
Martin Heidegger—“The question concerning technology”
Jean Baudrillard—*Passwords*: “The obscene”, “The transparency of evil”

*W 3/18: Baudrillard—*The Agony of Power*: Introduction: “Domination and servitude”;
Ch. 1: “From domination to hegemony”;
Bruno Latour—“On actor-network theory: a few clarifications”

Paper #2 draft due in class*Week 9:**

M 3/23: Paul Virilio—*The Administration of Fear*: Preface by Bertrand Richard;
Fear: Ch. 1, “‘Terror is the realization of the law of movement’—Hannah Arendt”;
George Orwell—*1984*: Part One (all)

W 3/25: *Fear*, Ch. 2, “Administrating fear: towards civil dissuasion”;
Guy Debord—*The Society of the Spectacle*: “Time and history”; “Spectacular time”;
“Environmental planning”; 1984, Part Two, pp. 105 – 183

***F 3/27: Course Withdrawal/Grading option change deadline**

Week 10:

M 3/30: *Fear*: Ch. 3, “New fears, new fights”;
Spectacle: “Negation and consumption in the cultural sphere”; “Ideology in material form”;
1984, Part Two, pp. 184 – 224

*W 4/1: *Power*: Ch. 2, “The white terror of world order”; Ch. 3: “Where good grows”;
Ch. 4: “The roots of evil”; 1984, Part Three (all)

***Paper #2 revision due in class**

Spring Break: 4/4 - 4/12 (Sat- Sun)

Week 11:

M 4/13: Baudrillard—*Passwords*: “The object”; “Value”; “Symbolic exchange”

W 4/15: *Passwords*: “The virtual”; “Randomness”; “Chaos”; “The end”
Philip K. Dick—*The Variable Man*, pp. 3-30

Week 12:

M 4/20: *Passwords*: “The perfect crime”; “Destiny”; “Impossible exchange”
Variable, pp. 31 – end

W 4/22: *Passwords*: “Duality”; “Thought”; “The last word”
Dick—*A Scanner Darkly*: Chs. 1 – 5

Week 13:

M 4/27: *Scanner*, Chs. 6 – 10

W 4/29: *Scanner*, Chs. 11 – 17

Week 14:

M 5/4: Dick—“We can remember it for you wholesale”; “Minority report”

*W 5/6: Review and closing observations

***Final Paper due in class**