

Binghamton University

## The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB)

---

Comparative Literature Faculty Scholarship

Comparative Literature

---

Fall 2013

### Course Syllabus (FA13) COLI 211 Literature & Psychology: "Power, the Subject, and Technological Rationality"

Christopher Southward

*Binghamton University--SUNY*, [csouthw1@binghamton.edu](mailto:csouthw1@binghamton.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://orb.binghamton.edu/comparative\\_literature\\_fac](https://orb.binghamton.edu/comparative_literature_fac)



Part of the [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [Comparative Philosophy Commons](#), [Continental Philosophy Commons](#), [Literature in English, Anglophone outside British Isles and North America Commons](#), [Other English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Philosophy of Language Commons](#), [Philosophy of Mind Commons](#), [Philosophy of Science Commons](#), [Psychology Commons](#), [Sociology Commons](#), [Television Commons](#), and the [Visual Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Southward, Christopher, "Course Syllabus (FA13) COLI 211 Literature & Psychology: "Power, the Subject, and Technological Rationality"" (2013). *Comparative Literature Faculty Scholarship*. 23.  
[https://orb.binghamton.edu/comparative\\_literature\\_fac/23](https://orb.binghamton.edu/comparative_literature_fac/23)

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the Comparative Literature at The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Comparative Literature Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact [ORB@binghamton.edu](mailto:ORB@binghamton.edu).

COLI 211B Literature and Psychology: "Power, the Subject, and Technological Rationality"  
Tues, Thurs 8:30-9:55am, FA 249; Office Hours: Tues, Thurs 10:15-11:45  
Instructor: Christopher Southward; csouthw1@binghamton.edu

This course fulfills the SUNY Binghamton General Education "Composition" requirement.

**Course Description and Objectives:**

In this course, we will examine mechanisms of power and the processes by which these produce categories of subjectivity. Theoretically speaking, we will begin by considering these processes at the level of society and then dwell on their human experience at the level of the psyche. Here, we will aim to discover processes by which the subject reproduces conditions of domination by power at the level of psychic experience.

Power-practices assume their condition of possibility by positing, on the one hand, that the category of the subject is a priori existent and, on the other, that time and space form a linear and fixed field of subjective experience to be manipulated unconditionally by Power towards its own productive/destructive ends and in the interest of reinforcing individual and collective states of subjectivity. Against this notion, we will argue that power-practices and subject-production are rendered mere contingencies by virtue of the circular (dialectical) determination and movement of both the spatio-temporal field and the elusive element of human desire within it. Here, we will seek (1) to discern, at the level of theory, the scientific/technological division of human organic experience into the antagonistic relations of id/ego (Freud), that is, into base/superstructure (Althusser), which act of division appears to function as the primary means by which civil society produces the category of the subject, deploys power against it, and incites it to reproduce itself as such; (2) to unveil the dialectic of power-relations and their inherent contradictions, the latter of which make power susceptible to manipulation by the subject; and, based on this work, (3) to intervene theoretically in the functional logic of power and subjectivity in order to imagine deep practices of human liberation by radicalizing the category of the subject.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

**(1) Two 10-12-page papers** (mid-term (30%), final (40%)); **(2) maintenance of a weekly reading journal**, which will serve as a record of student engagement with the assigned texts. The journal is to be submitted to instructor twice during the semester for review. In it, students will identify core and sub-arguments and respond to them briefly but critically, formulate theses for the aforementioned papers, and identify points of interest to facilitate in-class discussions (30%). Papers are to be type-written, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, in 11- or 12-point font and MLA format. Students in need of writing assistance are encouraged to visit the University Writing Center, located at LN 2412.

**Expectations and Responsibilities:**

Students are expected to arrive to class on-time and ready to discuss the assigned texts for the day. 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 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 journals).

\*The use of laptop computers will be permitted for note-taking. Please silence cellular phones and other apparatuses before the start of class.

Students who have special learning needs are encouraged to inform the instructor of them no later than 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 in need of clarification of the University's policy on academic integrity are encouraged to review it online at the following link: [http://www.binghamton.edu:8080/exist9/rest/lists2013-14/2\\_academic\\_policies\\_and\\_procedures\\_all\\_students/academicPoliciesAndProcedureAllStudents.xml?\\_xsl=/db/xsl/compose.xsl#d1591e36](http://www.binghamton.edu:8080/exist9/rest/lists2013-14/2_academic_policies_and_procedures_all_students/academicPoliciesAndProcedureAllStudents.xml?_xsl=/db/xsl/compose.xsl#d1591e36)

### **Course Assessment:**

Students are advised that our course has been selected by University Administration for a General Education Assessment in the Composition category, for which the instructor is required to submit a portfolio of course materials post-semester. An as-yet-unspecified number of students will be requested to submit work, with personal information redacted, for inclusion in the portfolio.

All scheduled readings are required. The following is a list of texts available for purchase in the University Bookstore; the remaining items will be available on Blackboard.

### **Texts for Purchase:**

*Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault (Knopf/Doubleday, 1995)  
*The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault (Knopf/Doubleday, 1990)  
*Civilization and its Discontents*, Sigmund Freud (Norton, 1989)  
*The Ego and the Id*, Sigmund Freud (Norton, 1990)  
*Outline of Psychoanalysis*, Sigmund Freud (Norton, 1989)  
*One-Dimensional Man*, Herbert Marcuse (Beacon, 1991)  
*Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley (Harper Collins, 2005)  
*Gravity's Rainbow*, Thomas Pynchon (Penguin Classics, 2006)

### **Reading and Class Schedule:**

#### **Part I: The Subject and Power**

#### **Week 1: August 27, 29:**

T 27: Introductions and overview.

R 29: Michel Foucault—"The Subject and Power", pp. 126-144, in Rabinow and Rose, Eds., 1997  
Max Weber—"The Meaning of Discipline", pp. 253-264, in H.H. Gerth, Ed., 1991  
Weber—*Economy and Society* (1978), pp. 53-54, 212-226, 926-927, 973-975, in Roth and Wittich, Eds., 1978

**\*No Classes August 31-September 8: Rosh Hashanah**

**Week 2: September 10, 12:**

- T10: Giorgio Agamben—"What is an Apparatus?", pp. 1-25, in Kishik and Pedatella, Trans., 2009  
Louis Althusser—"Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", pp. 127-186, in Brewster, Trans., 1971  
Gilles Deleuze—"What is a Dispositif?", pp. 338-348, in Armstrong, Trans., 1992
- R12: Foucault— *Discipline and Punish: "The Body of the Condemned"*, pp. 3-31

**Week 3: September 17, 19:**

- T17: Foucault—*Discipline and Punish: "Docile Bodies"*, pp. 135-169  
Herbert Marcuse—"A Note on Dialectic", pp. 444-451, in Arato and Gebhardt, Eds., 1978  
Hegel—Introduction to *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 46-66, in A.V. Miller, Trans. 1977  
Theodor Adorno: "Subject and Object", pp. 496-511, in Arato and Gebhardt, Eds., 1978
- R19: Karl Marx—"Alienated Labour", pp. 120-134, in T.B. Bottomore, Trans., Ed., 1963  
Marx—"Wage-Labour and Capital", Online Version, 2006:  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/index.htm>  
Mao Tse-Tung—"On Practice", pp. 1-23, in *Four Essays on Philosophy*, Foreign Language Press, 1966

**Week 4: September 24, 26:**

- T24: Marx—*Capital, Vol. 1*, Ch. 6: "The Sale and Purchase of Labour-Power", pp. 270-280, in Fowkes, Trans., 1992  
Marx—Ch. 11: "The Rate and Mass of Surplus-Value" and Ch. 12: "The Concept of Relative Surplus-Value", pp. 417-438 (chapters running), *ibid.*
- R26: Marx—*Capital, Vol. 1*, Ch. 10: "The Working Day", pp. 340-416, *ibid.*

**Week 5: October 1, 3:**

- T1: Sigmund Freud—*The Ego and the Id*, All  
**\*Mid-term Paper Topics due in class and by email**
- R3: Freud—*Civilization and its Discontents*, pp. 10-63

**Week 6: October 8, 10:**

- T8: Freud—Finish *Civilization and its Discontents*, pp. 64-112  
**\*Mid-term Paper Draft due in class and by email**
- R10: Freud—*Outline of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 13-79

**Week 7: October 15, 17:**

- T15: Freud—Finish *Outline of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 80-124  
Foucault—*The History of Sexuality*, Parts 1-3: "We 'Other Victorians'", "The Repressive Hypothesis", and "Scientia Sexualis", pp. 3-73
- R17: Foucault—Continue *The History of Sexuality*, Part 4: "The Deployment of Sexuality", pp. 77-131

**Week 8: October 22, 24:**

- T22: Foucault—Finish *The History of Sexuality*, pp. 135-160  
\*Mid-term Paper Revision due in class and by email

**Part 2: The Subject and Technological Rationality**

- R24: Marcuse—“Some Social Implications of Modern Technology”, pp. 138-162,  
in Arato and Gebhardt, Eds., 1978  
----- “From Ontology to Technology: Fundamental Tendencies of Industrial Society”,  
pp. 119-127, in Bronner and Kellner, Eds., 1989  
Tse-Tung—“On Contradiction,” pp. 23-78, in *Four Essays on Philosophy*, Foreign Language  
Press, 1966

**Week 9: October 29, 31:**

- T29: Aldous Huxley— *Brave New World*, Foreword and Chs. 1-6  
Marcuse—“The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man”, pp. 233-246, in Bronner and  
Kellner, Eds., 1989  
-----“Liberation from the Affluent Society”, pp. 276-287, *ibid.*  
R31: Huxley—*Brave New World*, Chs. 7-13  
Martin Heidegger—“The Question Concerning Technology”, pp. 99-113, in Hanks, Ed., 2010  
Judy Wajcman—“Domestic Technology: Labour-saving or Enslaving?”, pp. 272-288, *ibid.*

**Week 10: November 5, 7:**

- T5: Huxley—Finish *Brave New World*, Chs. 14-18  
José Ortega Y Gasset, “Man the Technician”, pp. 114-131, in Hanks, Ed., 2010  
Marcuse—*One-Dimensional Man*, Introductions to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions, pp. 11-49  
R7: Marcuse—*One-Dimensional Man*, Chs. 1-2, pp. 1-55  
Thomas Pynchon—*Gravity’s Rainbow*, pp. TBD

**Week 11: November 12, 14:**

- T12: Marcuse—*One-Dimensional Man*, Chs. 3-4, pp. 56-120  
Pynchon—*Gravity’s Rainbow*, pp. TBD  
R14: Marcuse—*One-Dimensional Man*, Chs. 5-6, pp. 123-169  
Pynchon—*Gravity’s Rainbow*, pp. TBD

**Week 12: November 19, 21:**

- T19: Marcuse— *One-Dimensional Man*, Ch. 7, pp. 170-199  
Pynchon—*Gravity’s Rainbow*, pp. TBD  
\*Final Paper Topics due in class and by email  
R21: Marcuse— Finish *One-Dimensional Man*, Ch. 8-10, pp. 203-257  
Pynchon—Finish *Gravity’s Rainbow*, pp. TBD

**Week 13: November 26:**

- T26: No readings  
TV: Selections from *The Twilight Zone*  
\*Final Paper Draft due in class and by email  
Thanksgiving Break!!

### Part 3: Excursions in Radical Subjectivity

#### **Week 14: December 3, 5:**

- T3: Doreen Massey—"Politics and Space/Time", pp. 141-161, in Keith and Pile, Eds., 1993  
Alfred North Whitehead—*Concept of Nature*, Chs. 1-2: "Nature and Thought" and "Theories of Bifurcation of Nature", pp. 1-48  
-----*Process and Reality*, Ch. II: "The Extensive Continuum", pp. 61-82
- R5: Gilles Deleuze—*A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. TBD  
A.N. Whitehead—*Concept of Nature*, Ch. 3: "Time", pp. 49-73  
Neil Smith and Cindi Katz—"Grounding Metaphor: Towards a Spatialized Politics", pp. 67-83, in Keith and Pile, Eds., 1993

#### **Week 15: December 10, 12:**

- T10: William Haver—"A Sense of the Common", pp. 439-452, in *The South Atlantic Qtly*, 111:3, Summer 2012  
Whitehead—*Process and Reality*, Ch. X: "Process", pp. 208-215  
Graham Parkes—"Dogen's 'Mountains and Waters as Sūtras' (*Sansui-kyō*)", pp. 83-92, in Edelglass and Garfield, Eds, 2009  
Nishida Kitaro—"Absolute Contradictory Self-Identity", unpublished translation in progress, Southward, excerpts TBD
- R12: No readings; Conclusions  
**\*Final Paper Revision due in class and by email**