Block One: Introduction and Michel Foucault (1926-1984)

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1. What is Theory? What is Theory in Geography?

The first lecture will raise questions about what it means to be theoretical in geography, about how geographers have used theoretical/philosophical ideas, and about the general interdisciplinary nature of this course.

It will discuss

- The question of ‘text’, and how to read texts
- The question of ‘context’, both as condition and limit
- Being theoretical – political-intellectual engagements

**Background Reading** – maybe worth considering for purchase


Paul Cloke and Ron Johnston (eds.) *Spaces of Geographical Thought*, London: Sage, 2005. 910.01 SPA


2. Foucault and Concepts

- Genealogy as Critique: from Archaeology of Knowledge to a History of the Present
- Discourse and the subject of Truth
- Power/knowledge

3. Foucault and Politics

- Discipline and bio-power
- Governmentality
- Political practice and ethics

4. Foucault and Space
• Foucault’s geographies
• Foucault’s cartography: power and resistance
• Using Foucault

Websites

www.foucault.info/ – includes some short texts by Foucault and lots of links
www.foucault-studies.com – open-access journal with 11 issues to date, devoted to
Foucault and work using his ideas. Has a detailed review section.
www.michel-foucault.com/ – useful links, bibliography, key concepts, etc.
www.theory.org.uk/ctr-fouc.htm – some useful bits, but very out-of-date
http://michel-foucault-archives.org/ – mainly in French

Reading List (*denotes a key text)

*Crampton, J. and Elden, S. (eds.) (2007) Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and
Geography, Aldershot: Ashgate. Contains some texts by Foucault including
“Questions on Geography” and several commentary pieces. 910.01 SPA The
introduction is freely available online -
http://www.ashgate.com/pdf/SamplePages/Space_Knowledge_and_Power_Intro.p
df

Key texts by Foucault

Foucault wrote several books. The most accessible, and the key ones discussed in these
lectures, are:

London. [1975] 365 FOU

There are also several collections of essays and interviews

Pantheon, New York (many are now contained in the essential works). 194 FOU
(short)
Lane, London. 194 FOU (short) 170 FOU
Epistemology. Allen Lane, London. 194 FOU
FOU
NB within the three volume essential works there are several key pieces. These include: “What is Enlightenment?” (vol 1); “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” (vol 2); “Different Spaces” (vol 2); “Governmentality” (vol 3). There are several useful interviews such as “Truth and Power” (vol 3) and “Space, Power and Knowledge” (vol 3).

Foucault’s lecture courses have been being published over the last fifteen years. The most geographically relevant is:


**Commentaries and Critical Assessment**

There is an enormous secondary literature on Foucault. Some good works include:


*O’Farrell, C. Michel Foucault*, Sage, London. 194 FOU/OFA (probably the best short introduction to his work)


Geographical Readings of Foucault

See the essays in Crampton and Elden (eds.) *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*; but also look in key geography journals.


Putting Foucault to work in Geography (a few examples of the range of studies)