

**Foucault's power analytics:  
Thinking the ways of resistance**

**Type and reader:** 'en bloc' seminar held by Jozef Zelinka (Currently I am a doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Politics and a member of the research group 'Governmentality'. In my research, I focus on Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality and try to explore its various theoretical dimensions. My lecture courses aim to cover the gap between mandatory and individual studies, and seek to strengthen students' critical and analytical skills necessary for their scholarly inquiries).

**Course description:** The current political and socio-cultural development, especially given the birth of post-factual era<sup>1</sup>, uncovers a number of neglected problems. The most pervasive and painful of them include racism, sexism, child abuse, modern slavery, xenophobia, religious fundamentalism, etc. They permeate the whole society in its various dimensions and often remain unnoticed and unsanctioned. Therefore, the role of critical political science is to challenge the existing modes of oppression, and develop strategies in order to "contest and breach structures of inequality."<sup>2</sup> Within the field of critical political theory, a special place is occupied by Michel Foucault's power analytics. Foucault's emphasis on micro-powers, power relations and governmentality (the way one conducts the conduct of others) allowed him to study the state through the manifold rationalities of government.<sup>3</sup> Exploring these rationalities and thinking about the possible ways of how to resist them, forms the fundamentals of this course.

**Objectives and design of the course:** The students will be given the opportunity to theorize their respective field of inquiry and to search for the existing yet unmasked rationalities of government. Their task is to think about and develop practical and creative ways of resisting specific modes of oppression and inequality. The forms of resistance may be written, oral, performed or materialized. The only condition is their practical application. For this to happen, the course will be split in two parts, or blocs. In the first bloc, the students will be provided with basic analytical tools, as developed by Michel Foucault and subsequent thinkers. In the second bloc, they will conduct presentations and discuss the results of their home-work. Each of the parts of the seminar will be held as a two-day bloc (Friday and Saturday) on October 21/22 and on November 24/25, respectively. The exact time and room details will be announced later.

**Conditions and course evaluation:** In order to participate in the seminar, students need to fulfill the following conditions: they have to demonstrate the necessary knowledge in political theory and/or political philosophy (i.e. completing of the basic course 'Introduction to the Political Theory', or of other thematically related course; further, to command advanced English skills (B2/C1 levels of CEFR<sup>4</sup>); and finally, to show readiness to prepare the mandatory literature and engage in discussions. The final examination consists of three parts. First, students will have to present their projects and describe their proposals, methods, and theoretical background. Secondly, after presenting the project, their task will be to lead the discussion and react to the comments and questions of the audience. Lastly, when finishing the presentation, they are required to submit their projects in a written form, including the remarks and comments of the audience. The evaluation consists of a commentary, a short list of a recommended literature and a number of references to improve analytical skills. The day of submission has to be settled by the students and announced to me at the end of the course.

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<sup>1</sup> William Davies: The Age of Post-Truth Politics, in: *The New York Times* 2016.

[https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/opinion/campaign-stops/the-age-of-post-truth-politics.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/opinion/campaign-stops/the-age-of-post-truth-politics.html?_r=0)  
(August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Brian Hogan brings to the fore the very specific ways of disruption and resistance in the context of women's empowerment. See: Brian Hogan: Gendered Modes of Resistance: Power and Women's Songs in West Africa, in: *Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology* 13 (2008). <http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/13/piece/498> (April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Elden: *Foucault's Last Decade*, Cambridge/Malden 2016, p. 107f

<sup>4</sup> Council of Europe: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment, Cambridge 2001. <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680459f97>  
(April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017)

**Compulsory literature:**

- ≈ Michel Foucault: *The History of Sexuality. Volume I - An Introduction*, transl. by Robert Hurley, New York 1978 (especially part IV, chapter II - Method).
- ≈ — The Subject and Power, transl. by Leslie Sawyer, in: *Critical inquiry* 8 (4/1982), pp. 777-795
- ≈ — Power, Moral Values, and the Intellectual. An Interview with Michel Foucault conducted by Michael Bess, in: *History of the Present* (4/1988) pp. 1-2 and 11-13
- ≈ — *The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-79*, ed. by Michel Sennelart, transl. by Graham Burchell, Hampshire/New York 2008 (especially chapters II, III, and IV).

**Optional readings:**

- ≈ Catherine Mills: Contesting the Political: Butler and Foucault on Power and Resistance, in: *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 11 (3/2003), pp. 253-272
- ≈ Brent L. Pickett: Foucault and the Politics of Resistance, in: *Polity* 28 (4/1996), pp. 445-466
- ≈ Kevin Thompson: Forms of resistance: Foucault on tactical reversal and self-formation, in: *Continental Philosophy Review* 36 (2003), pp. 113-138
- ≈ Stellan Vinthagen; Anna Johansson: "Everyday Resistance": Exploration of a Concept and its Theories, in: *Resistance Studies Magazine* (1/2013), pp. 1-46