

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

English 607-S01

Fall 2017

**Aesthetics of Existence: A Foucauldian Strategy of Resistance
to Neoliberal Governmentality**

Instructor: Dr. Shaobo Xie
Class time: Thursday 10:00-12:45 p.m.
Location: SS 1015
Office: SS 1012
Office hours: Tuesday 11:00-noon and by appointment
Telephone: 403-220-5478
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Course Description:

This course explores how Foucault's aesthetics of existence promotes new forms of subjectivity that enable individuals to break out of the iron cage of the neoliberal present. As Wendy Brown has pointed out, neoliberalism is a governing rationality through which everything is economized and human beings become nothing but market actors. In other words, neoliberal governing rationality subjects all domains of human behavior to the rule of capital and the commodity logic. At the core of Foucault's aesthetics of existence is the idea of the care of the self, which, as exemplified by the Cynic tradition of aesthetic parrhēsia, promises and leads to a true and beautiful life. The Foucauldian subject of self-care and self-practice, who champions an ethics of freedom and responsibility, emerges as "the unlimited, permanent, unbearable questioner," speaking truth to power from the perspective of the other world and the other life. Foucault's aesthetics of existence calls upon us to shape our life as a work of art. The artist of everyday life self-consciously inserts an order into his or her life, which is neither determined by transcendent values nor decreed by external powers or social norms. As such Foucault's aesthetics of existence can be taken as a strategy of resistance to neoliberal governmentality and the forms of individuality it imposes on us.

In this course students will make a systematic inquiry into Foucault's notion of aesthetics of existence. The seminar readings and discussions will be structured along the following questions: Why is Foucault's aesthetics of existence able to offer potential forms of resistance to a neoliberal governmentality? Why does the subject have to undergo self-transformation to have access to the truth? Why is it that the care of the self constitutes the individuals as true subjects of action? What is the relationship between aesthetics and ethics in Foucault's hermeneutics of the subject? Does the Foucauldian aesthetics of existence prioritize individuality over sociality or promote the individuality of the human and the sociality of humankind at the same time? In what sense is literature one of the major sites of production of new forms of subjectivity against neoliberal governmentality? To what extent do the novels read on the course explicitly or implicitly perform or call for a Foucauldian aesthetics of existence?

Texts:

- Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*
Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others II*
Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, Vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality*
Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*
Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other writings 1977-1984*
Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*
Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*
Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*.
Foucault, "Subjectivity and Truth," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*
Laurence McFalls and Mariella Pandolfi, "Parrhesia and Therapeusis: Foucault on and in the World of Contemporary Neoliberalism," in James D. Faubion, ed., *Foucault Now: Current Perspectives in Foucault Studies*
Heinz Paetzold, "Foucault's Aesthetics of Existence and the Ethics of Authenticity," in Liu Yuedi and Curtis L. Carter, eds., *Aesthetics of Everyday Life: East and West*.
Ha Jin, *A Free Life*
J. M. Coetzee, *Slow Man*
Tom McCarthy, *Remainder*
Walker Percy, *Lost in the Cosmos*
Walker Percy, *The Thanatos Syndrome*

Assignments:

Review essay	25%
Seminar presentation	25%
Critical essay	40%
Participation	10%

Each student will make a seminar presentation. The written assignments will be a review essay of 1500 words and a research paper of 5000 words.

Students must submit all assignments to qualify for a passing grade. All take-home written assignments must be typewritten and double-spaced. You should use a 12 point type-size and a readable font. Take-home essays must adhere to the format and documentation outlined in the *MLA Handbook* (7th Edition).

Please keep a copy of everything you submit. Except in cases of illness or crisis, late papers will be penalized a fraction of a grade per day (i.e., an A paper handed in a day late will receive an A-; an A paper handed in two days late will receive a B+).

I do not accept students' work by email except in cases of real emergency, but then an identical hard copy needs to be submitted later on.

Grading system:

Grades are calculated according to the 4 point scale used in the *Graduate Calendar*:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-g-1.html>

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding
A	4.00	Excellent-superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.70	Very good performance
B+	3.30	Good performance
B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	Minimum pass for students in Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.30	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted towards Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.
C	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0.00	

Please note: A B- is considered a minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

In the case of Instructors using numerical marks in the grading of term work, the departmental conversion chart applies.

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0

70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/graduate>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Library and Research Support:

Melanie Boyd Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: maboyd@ucalgary.ca.

Find The English Pages research guide here: <http://libguides.ucalgary.ca/english>

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:



Academic regulations and schedules:

Consult the Department of English's graduate website for courses, departmental deadlines, and other related program information at

<http://english.ucalgary.ca/node/245>. Consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar

for university and faculty regulations, dates, deadline, fees, and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar is <http://grad.ucalgary.ca>.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact the Graduate Office at 403 220 5484 or visit us in Social Sciences Tower 1148 in the first instance.

For program planning and advice, contact the Graduate Program Administrator at enggrad@ucalgary.ca to make an appointment with Dr. Suzette Mayr, Graduate Program Director.

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Deferral of term work and final examinations:

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>,
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

Student Accommodations:

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>;

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Contact for the Graduate Student Association: <http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/>

Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses (www.ucalgary.ca/usri). Your responses make a difference - please participate in USRI Surveys."

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>

“The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to

display care and concern for community". The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a "positive and productive learning and working environment." This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that "seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff". Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.