

PHI 630: FOUCAULT / DELEUZE / LYOTARD

Prof. Hugh J. Silverman

SPRING 2009

TUESDAYS 6:00-9:00

HARRIMAN 249

When Michel Foucault published *The Order of Things* (1966) and followed it two years later with his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, he signaled a significant reformulation in thinking about historical knowledge and interpretation. Marking a break in thought between the modern and the postmodern, Foucault's texts set the stage for an alternative knowledge framework that articulates a displacement of subjectivity, a reformulation of temporality and spatiality, and a reassessment of responsibility for knowledge production. Phenomenological and hermeneutic themes take a radically new shape after Foucault. Deleuze along with Guattari in their imposing second study of capitalism and schizophrenia *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) offer a kind of cultural metaphysics of disseminated knowledge across times and spaces. And Deleuze's own appreciation for the age of Foucault in his book on the French thinker in the wake of his sudden death in 1984 is quite remarkable. Both Foucault and Deleuze set the stage for the account of the postmodern condition as articulated in Lyotard's book on that topic and his development of the theme in *The Inhuman* (1991). This seminar will explore the articulation of postmodern thinking through each of these three phases of its formulation at the ends of the twentieth century. Questions of the subject, epistemological spaces, rhizomal dispersals, the event, and the intersection of the political, the cultural, and the aesthetic will constitute the domains of primary consideration.

Texts will be selected from:

Michel FOUCAULT

Gilles DELEUZE/ Felix GUATTARI

Gilles DELEUZE

Jean-Francois LYOTARD

The Order of Things (1966)

Archaeology of Knowledge (1968)

Thousand Plateaus (1980)

Foucault (1986)

Postmodern Condition (1984)

The Inhuman (1991)