

# Pomona College SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 37  
1:15 – 2:30 T/Th  
Carnegie 214  
Office Hours: 10-11am Tuesday/Thursday  
or email to schedule appointment

Professor Jordan Daniels  
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Office: Pearsons 205



Tony Robert-Fleury, *Pinel, médecin en chef de la Salpêtrière en 1795*

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does power look like in the social world of today? How is it exerted? Has the deployment of power changed in recent history, and if so, how? What is power's relationship to knowledge and truth? How are social institutions involved? This course takes up these questions in relation to criminality, sexuality, social death, and disability. Basing our investigation in Michel Foucault's elucidation of disciplinary power and biopower, we trace how thinkers extend these conceptions of power to the social institutions and discourses that govern our world today.

Our course is divided into four main units. In Unit 1, **Discipline, Punishment, Criminality**, we open by reading Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault examines the shift in punishment in France from the spectacular to the granular. Punishment is increasingly oriented around discipline, as are other social institutions. In *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, Angela Davis complicates Foucault's analysis of incarceration in French

society by examining the interplay of racism, the history of slavery, and the criminal justice system in the United States.

In Unit 2, **Sexuality, Biopower, Norm**, we read Foucault's *History of Sexuality, Volume One*. Here Foucault argues *against* the widespread notion that sex has been repressed, only to be liberated by recent progressive culture. Instead, sex and sexuality have long been objects of proliferating knowledge; for some time, they have been the means by which we know the “truth” of ourselves. Distinct from the disciplinary power, however, emerges Foucault's concept of biopower. As we read in two lectures, Foucault traces how life itself comes to be a central concern for social and political power.

In Unit 3, **Life, Death, Necropolitics**, we interrogate how the “power to make live” goes hand in hand with the “power to let die” in the work of Hannah Arendt, Giorgio Agamben, and Achille Mbembe. Drawing on Mbembe's concept, how might we understand the globe via necropolitics? That is, how does race and location influence whose lives are protected and whose are systematically left vulnerable?

We conclude in Unit 4, **Ab/Normal Bodies**, with Lennard Davis's genealogy of “normal” bodies, wherein disability is a social process. Jasbir Puar challenges the concept of disability to recognize that of debilitation, wherein populations are designated as available for injury and social exclusion. We end the class with Judith Butler's meditation on the notion of a grievable life: whose life counts? Who can be mourned?

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the class, I hope students will be able to understand knowledge creation, engage multiple perspectives, and investigate meaningful questions in the domain of contemporary social philosophy. Here are some more specific learning outcomes we will work towards:

- Students are able to articulate the differences between sovereign power, disciplinary power, and biopower
- Students can culturally and historically situate our discussions of incarceration and discipline
- Students can define biopolitics and necropolitics
- Students learn to evaluate claims about the “normal” and the “abnormal”
- Students assess their own place in the world and their own responsibilities in light of our discussions of power and social institutions



## COURSE MATERIALS

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Penguin Random House, 1995). ISBN: 978-0679752554

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction* (New York: Penguin Random House, 1990). ISBN: 978-0679724698

Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Open Media Series, 2003). ISBN: 9781583225813

We will be reading the entirety of these three books, and you can purchase them in the Claremont bookstore. I also recommend you search online for a second-hand copy! All other readings and films will be available via Sakai.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Participation

Regular attendance and your engaged attention are expected. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. Excused absences include illness or Covid-related difficulties and notification prior to class beginning. (See Covid policy below.) I also reserve the right to add short quizzes if students do not seem prepared. These quizzes will count towards your participation grade.

Participation can take many forms: being vocal in discussion, active listening, respectful engagement with your peers, and meeting with me in office hours.

I encourage everyone to experiment with forms of participation that may be new for them. If you find yourself taking up a lot of space in the classroom, try directing your questions and comments to other students. If you don't find vocal participation to be intuitive, practice by asking a question—odds are, other students share your question or you might spark a really generative new direction. Alternately, focus on the weekly blog to develop thoughts that you can then bring to class discussion.

I divide your participation grade into two units of 10 points so that you can take note of your standing around halfway through the course.

### Thursday Blog

These are chances for you to engage with your peers and synthesize the material we have been covering in the readings and in course meetings. The blog will be continuous throughout the semester, and you are required to post a comment of 4-8 sentences once a week, by Thursday, 11:59pm (see syllabus and Sakai for weeks when no blog is required), though you are encouraged to engage beyond that and to comment on fellow students' posts. Your participation will be graded

equivalent to ✓, ✓+, ✓-. A ✓ amounts to full credit, while a ✓+ is a truly exceptional post. A ✓- reflects minimal or superficial engagement.

### Midterm Paper

You will complete one analytical paper of 5-7 pages that focuses on our first unit. The assignment will be distributed in class, and you are to upload the assignment to Sakai. Please submit a double-spaced **Word document**, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font.

### Final Paper

By the end of the semester, you will turn in a final argumentative paper of 7-10 pages, double-spaced, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font with normal margins. You will receive the assignment in class.

\*For papers, I suggest you use the Chicago Manual of Style for citations, though APA and MLA are also acceptable as long as you are consistent. Here is a helpful guide: [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

### GRADE TOTAL

| ACTIVITY      | POINTS      |
|---------------|-------------|
| Participation | 10          |
| Participation | 10          |
| Thursday Blog | Sakai       |
| Midterm Paper | Word, Sakai |
| Final Paper   | Word, Sakai |
| <hr/>         |             |
| TOTAL POINTS  | 100         |

### POLICIES AND RESOURCES

#### Covid Safety Awareness

The faculty at the 5C's knows that person-to-person interaction provides the best liberal arts education. The best learning occurs in small communities. This year we are gathering in person for what we do best: create, generate, and share knowledge. During the past academic year, we built community remotely, and this year we will build on the pedagogical improvements we acquired last year. For example, if we need to, we might meet on zoom from time to time.

Our health, both mental and physical, is paramount. We must consider the health of others inside and outside the classroom. All Claremont Colleges students have signed agreements regulating on-campus behavior during the pandemic; in the classroom, we will uphold these agreements. We need to take care of each other for this course to be successful. I ask you therefore to adhere to the following principles:

- There is a mask mandate for all indoor spaces on campus. You must wear a mask for the entire class; **eating and drinking are not permitted. Your mask must cover your mouth and nose.** The college has zero-tolerance for violations of this policy, and our shared commitment to the health and safety of our community members means if you come to class unmasked you will have to leave class for the day.
- Class attendance is required, but if you need to miss class for health reasons, concerning symptoms, suspected Covid exposure, unexpected dependent care, technology issues, or other emergency reasons I will work with you. Let me underscore this: please make your decisions always based on health, safety, and wellness—yours and others—and I will work with you at the other end. Take the symptom “Pomona Safe Daily Health Check” seriously; we’re counting on each other.
- When not in class, avoid closed public spaces, and if you can't avoid them: wear your mask properly, wash your hands, and maintain social distance.
- If you, or a family member, are experiencing hardship because of the pandemic, talk to someone in the Dean of Students office. You are not alone during this time.

The pandemic is fast-moving, and we might have to adjust these principles as the semester evolves. I am always happy to receive your feedback to make this course work.

Let's care for each other, show empathy, and be supportive. While there will likely be some community transmission and breakthrough infections, together, we can minimize their effect on our community and on your learning.

## Technology Policy

Phones, tablets, computers, and other electronic devices are great, but not for our classroom except in cases where accommodations are arranged. Let's practice sustained attention with one another, a welcome break after so much screen time last year. All PDFs should be printed unless permission is granted in advance.

## Late Assignment Policy

You will lose 50% of the possible points for any assignment that you submit late if you have not spoken with me before the deadline. I AM VERY HAPPY TO GRANT EXTENSIONS IF YOU WRITE/SPEAK WITH ME. Please communicate with me at least 48 hours before an assignment is due if you feel you need an extension.

## Academic Integrity

The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

## Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your faculty and the Pomona Academic Support Services at <https://www.pomona.edu/accessibility> at the beginning of the semester if you have not already registered for accommodations.

## Writing Center

The Writing Center is open this semester! Writing and Speaking Partners meet one-on-one with students to talk about their work and provide feedback at any stage of their preparation process. Trained to think deeply about rhetoric and communication across the curriculum, these student peers facilitate conversations about everything from ID1 papers to senior theses, lab reports to creative writing, giving presentations to developing strategies for reading and engaging more deeply in class discussions. Additionally, Jenny Thomas, our Assistant Director of College Writing and Language Diversity, offers specialized writing and speaking support for multilingual students navigating English as an additional language. To make an appointment with a Writing or Speaking Partner, please log on to the Portal and go to Academics > Writing Center, or contact at [writing.center@pomona.edu](mailto:writing.center@pomona.edu).

## Diversity and Inclusion

In our classroom, we seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability.

## Non-Sexist Use of Language

We academics no longer use “man” or “mankind” to refer to the entirety of humanity or a hypothetical person. This extends to written work as well as discussions, and it will serve you well throughout the rest of your professional lives.

## Content Warning

In this course, we will be discussing torture, incarceration, racism, sexual abuse, gender and gender violence, disease, death, and colonial violence.

## CONTACT

I prefer if you contact me via email at [Jordan.Daniels@pomona.edu](mailto:Jordan.Daniels@pomona.edu) rather than through Sakai.

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SCHEDULE (*subject to change*)

**UNIT 1: Discipline, Punishment, Criminality**

Week 1

Tuesday, January 18

- Introduction; syllabus review

Thursday, January 20

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part One: Torture, “The Body of the Condemned,” pgs. 3-31

Week 2

Tuesday, January 25

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part One: Torture, “The Spectacle of the Scaffold,” pgs. 32-71

Thursday, January 27

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part Two: Punishment, “Generalized Punishment” and “The Gentle Way in Punishment,” pgs. 73-133

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, January 27

Week 3

Tuesday, February 1

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part Three: Discipline, “Docile Bodies,” “The Means of Correct Training,” pgs. 135-194

Thursday, February 3

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part Three: Discipline, “Panopticism,” pgs. 195-229

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, February 3

Week 4

Tuesday, February 8

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, Part Four: Prison, *Discipline and Punish*, pgs. 231-292

Thursday, February 10

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, Part Four: Prison, *Discipline and Punish*, pgs. 293-309

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, February 10

## Week 5

Tuesday, February 15

- Reading due: Angela Davis, "Racialized Punishment and Prison Abolition" (pdf on Sakai)
- Reading due: Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, pgs. 9-59

Thursday, February 17

- Reading due: Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, pgs. 60-115

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, February 17

## UNIT 2: Sexuality, Biopower, Norm

## Week 6

Tuesday, February 22

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, Part One: We "Other" Victorians and Part Two: The Repressive Hypothesis, pgs. 1-49

Thursday, February 24

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, Part Three: *Scientia Sexualis*, pgs. 51-73

## Week 7

*\*Assignment due: MIDTERM PAPER, 11:59pm, Monday, February 28\**

Tuesday, March 1

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, Part Four: The Deployment of Sexuality, pgs. 75-131

Thursday, March 3

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, Part Five: Right of Death and Power over Life, pgs. 135-159

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, March 3

## Week 8

Tuesday, March 8

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended" *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*, March 17, 1976 (pdf on Sakai)

Thursday, March 10

- Reading due: Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, January 11, 1978 (pdf on Sakai)

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, March 10

**\*SPRING BREAK\***

**UNIT 3: Life, Death, Necropolitics**

Week 9

Tuesday, March 22

- Reading due: Hannah Arendt, excerpts from *The Human Condition* (pdf on Sakai)

Thursday, March 24

- Reading due: Hannah Arendt, “The Perplexities of the Rights of Man” (pdf on Sakai)

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, March 24

Week 10

Tuesday, March 29

- Reading due: Giorgio Agamben, “Introduction to *Homo Sacer*: Sovereign Power and Bare Life” and “The Politicization of Life” (pdfs on Sakai)

Thursday, March 31

- Reading due: Giorgio Agamben, “Biopolitics and the Rights of Man” (pdf on Sakai)

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, March 31

Week 11

Tuesday, April 5

- Reading due: Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics” (pdf on Sakai)

Thursday, April 7

- **Watch before class:** *Children of Men* (dir. Alfonso Cuarón) via Video47 on Sakai
- discussion of Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics” cont’d

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, April 7

**UNIT 4: Ab/Normal Bodies**

Week 12

Tuesday, April 12

- Reading due: Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, “Preface” and “Introduction: Disability, the Missing Term in the Race, Class, Gender Triad”

Thursday, April 14

- Reading due: Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, “Constructing Normalcy”

*Assignment due: Blog Post, 11:59pm, Friday, April 14*

Week 13

Tuesday, April 19

- Reading due: Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim*, “Preface: Hands Up, Don’t Shoot!” and “Introduction: The Cost of Getting Better”

Thursday, April 21

- **Watch in class:** *Fixed* (dir. Regan Brashear)

*Assignment due: Blog Post, 11:59pm, Thursday, April 21*

Week 14

Tuesday, April 26

- Reading due: Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim*, “Crip Nationalism”

Thursday, April 28

- Reading due: Judith Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics”

*Assignment due: Blog Post, 11:59pm, Thursday, April 21*

Week 15

Tuesday, May 3

- discussion of Judith Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics” cont’d
- Conclusion, evaluations