

**Eötvös Loránd University
Institute of Philosophy**

Course Code: BMI-FILD-236.44

Title: Michel Foucault at 100: Power, Knowledge, and Subjectivity

Lecturer: Joseph Tanke, Visting Profesor

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This course will begin on Thursday, October 8, 2026.

Course Description:

Coinciding with the centenary of Michel Foucault's birth, this course provides students with an overview and a critical introduction to his work. Paying particular attention to its relevance for the discipline of philosophy, we will examine the Kantian and Nietzschean dimensions of Foucault's project, while reconstructing the broader historical, philosophical, and political contexts to which it is responding. At the same time, however, we should bear in mind that Foucault was a thinker who delighted in changing his mind and in confounding his readers. He once issued the following warning: "I am not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask me who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write." Thus, rather than treating Foucault's work as a single, unified system, we will follow the course of its development, paying particular attention to moments of hesitation, changes in emphasis, instances of methodological reflection, and shifts in the overall point of view. In general, students can expect to grow in their understanding of many of the Foucaultian concepts that inform the humanities and social sciences today, including: archaeology, genealogy, power/knowledge, discipline, normalization, panopticism, governmentality, biopower, and the idea that ethics might be practiced as a critical resistance to power.

Tentative Schedule:

(Please come to class well prepared to discuss the readings assigned for each date. The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule as needed.)

Writing to Have no Face? Foucault's Attempts at Self-Understanding

October 8: Greetings and Overview. Read: Michel Foucault, "Maurice Florence," "The Subject and Power," and "Preface" to *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality*.

The Early Foucault: From the *History of Madness* to the *Order of Things*

October 15: Read: Michel Foucault, "Madness only Exists in Society," "The Order of Things," (Interview with Raymond Bellour) in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, pp. 261–267, and "Preface," "Analytic of Finitude," and "Psychoanalysis and Ethnology," from *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*.

Methodological Reflections: Archaeology and Genealogy

October 22: Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse" and "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History."

October 29: Fall Break

Genealogies of Disciplinary Power, Normalization, and Panopticism

November 5: Read: Michel Foucault, selections from *Discipline and Punish*, "The Body of the Condemned," pp. 3–31, "Generalized Punishment," pp. 73–103, and "The Gentle Way in Punishment," pp. 104–131.

November 12: Read: Michel Foucault, selections from *Discipline and Punish* (continued): "Panopticism," pp. 195–228, "Complete and Austere Institutions," pp. 231–256, "Illegalities and Delinquency," pp. 257–292.

Histories of Sexuality

November 19: Read: Michel Foucault, selections from *History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, "We Other Victorians," 3–13, "The Incitement to Discourse," pp. 17–35, and "Method," pp. 92–102.

November 26: Read: Michel Foucault, selections from *History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (continued): "Right of Death and Power over Life," pp. 135–159, and *Society Must Be Defended*, "Lecture of 17 March 1976," pp. 239–264

Ethics as Critical Resistance

December 3: Read: Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, pp. 253–280, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," pp. 281–301, and *The Courage of the Truth*, "Lecture of 28 March 1984" (both hours), pp. 307–342.

December 10: Seminar Presentations

Assignments and Evaluation:

Students are expected to read all assignments in advance of each seminar meeting. Moreover, students are expected to become active readers by posing questions to our texts and preparing for class discussion. Students will be asked to prepare several short position papers throughout the course of the semester, as well as one seminar presentation, and a term paper of approximately 2000–2500 words.

Policy Regarding the Use of Artificial Intelligence:

The use of artificial intelligence in this course is governed by Dean's Decree No. II/2025 (XII. 12.) and Rector's Decree No. 4/2025 (X. 28.). Every submitted paper must include a declaration stating whether and how artificial intelligence was used. In this course, permissible uses are restricted to specific supporting tasks, such as brainstorming and checking the language of text already written by the student. **Artificial intelligence may not be used to generate, draft, or substantially rewrite any portion of a submitted paper, nor may it substitute for reading, analysis, argumentation, or independent scholarly judgment.** The instructor will

discuss permissible and impermissible uses with students. Students must be able to explain and defend orally any work they submit. Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect prohibited AI use, the student may be required to complete an oral defense of the work, and the matter may be addressed through the applicable university channels.

Accommodations:

ELTE and your instructor are committed to ensuring equal access for students with disabilities, learning or neurodevelopmental conditions, and chronic illnesses. Students who require accommodations should register with the Faculty Disability Coordinator by contacting [**specialis@btk.elte.hu**](mailto:specialis@btk.elte.hu) and submitting the required documentation. Once accommodations have been approved, please contact me so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. You are not required to disclose your diagnosis to me; however, I will treat all such requests with confidentiality and work with you to make sure that the course is genuinely accessible.