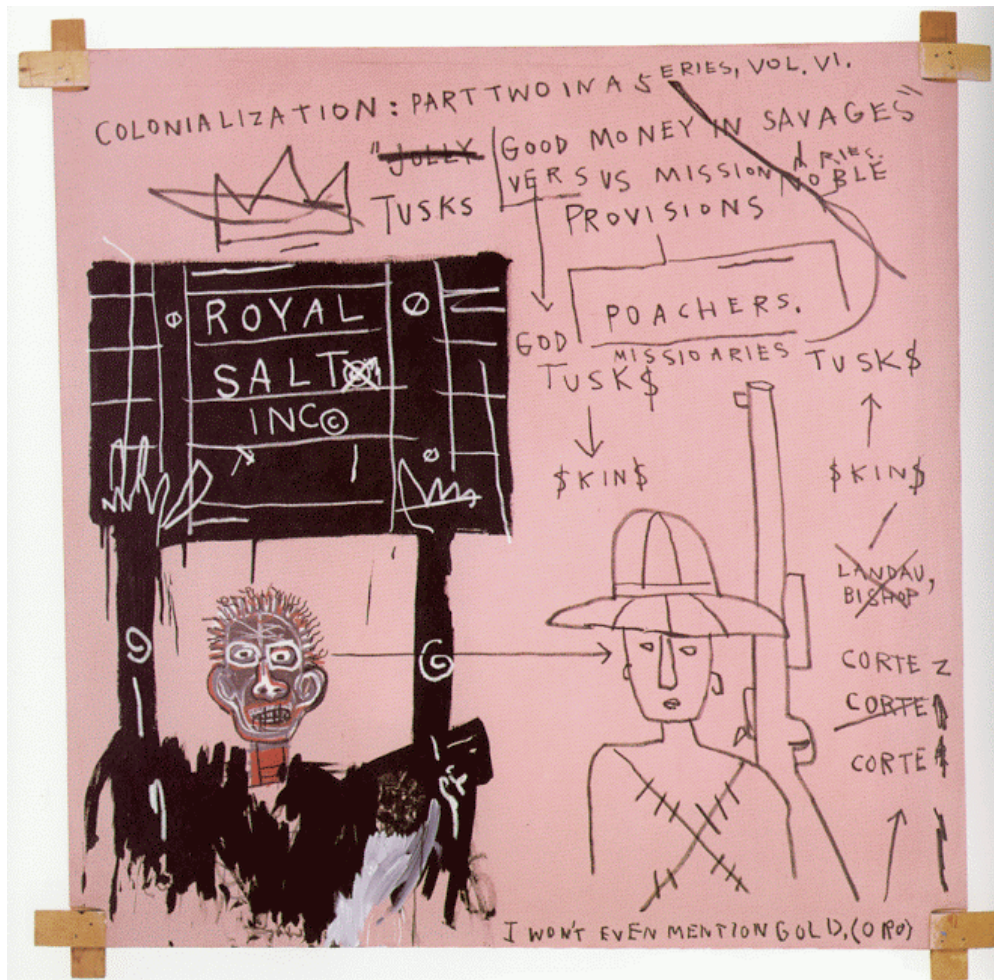


**BIOPOLITICS:  
BODIES, TECHNOLOGIES, POWER**  
Soc880  
SPRING 2006



Jean-Michel Basquiat (*Native Carrying Some Guns, Bibles, Amorites on Safari*, 1982)

This course is organized around the problem of power, and the possibility that one of the most important forms that power takes today is what Michel Foucault has called 'biopower': techniques and technologies for managing, administering, modifying and regulating 'life itself.' Working through the corporeal and affective (per)mutations of individual bodies and of entire populations, biopower operates to make 'life itself' —

especially the psycho-logics and bio-logics of health, disease, death, and genetic re/productions—an increasingly central and intensive site for new socio-logics of control.

We will explore the emergent contours of biopower and a ‘biopolitical society’ through close readings of the work of four influential social theorists: Donna Haraway, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari. Each of these writers approaches the problem of contemporary power, the politics of bodies, and the nature (and culture) of new technologies in divergent ways. Taken together they offer a complex and passionate—and useful—body of recent theoretical work that raises questions about both how to think and *how to live* in an historical moment when ‘life itself’ becomes a landscape of power. Questions we will address include: What is the changing ontological and epistemological status of humans as some of us become materially and imaginarily networked to informatic processes—i.e. (how) are ‘we’ becoming posthuman and what does that promise and threaten? What are the local, global, everyday, and extra-ordinary features of an emergent “informatics of domination”? How do colonialism, counter/terrorism, war, and state racism figure in a history of the present? (How) do colonialism, counter/terrorism, war, and state racism operate biopolitically? Why is ‘necropolitics’—or the politics of mass death, genocide, sacrifice—also central to biopolitical orders? How or why to make pleasures in the midst of techno-capitalist schizophrenia? Do machines make desires? What is the place of creativity, desire, curiosity, and resistance in contemporary political struggles? In contemporary theory? In your own biopolitical everyday life?

**Required Texts:** The following texts are available at the bookstore in Schine Student Center:

1. Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Routledge, 1991.
2. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, Vintage Books, 1980.
3. Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
4. Jackie Orr, *Panic Diaries: A Genealogy of Panic Disorder*, Duke University Press, 2006.

All other required readings will be made available through online library resources, a course reader, and a class webpage.

**Course expectations** This is an advanced graduate seminar, and much of what we do in class will be driven by student engagement, questions, curiosities. Each student is expected to come to each class having read all assigned readings, prepared to collectively participate in extended discussions of the texts and issues raised by the texts. Students are

expected to attend every class; if you need to be absent from class, please let me know in advance by e-mail.

Written assignments for the course include three 5-page essays, due throughout the semester, and a final 12 page paper on a theoretical issue of your choice. Students are also encouraged, but not required, to keep an intellectual ‘diary’ of your weekly experiences of the readings. This can be an immensely useful space for thinking and reflecting—by writing something more than notes but less than a paper.

## **JANUARY 18**

Openings

### **I. CONTEXTS**

These are strange times, and strange things are happening. (Braidotti, 1)

## **JANUARY 25**

Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, “Biopolitical Production” (chapter 1.2) in *Empire* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), pp. 22-41.

Steven Best & Douglas Kellner, “Technological Revolution and Human Evolution” (chapter 4) in *The Postmodern Adventure: Science, Technology, and Cultural Studies at the Third Millennium* (The Guilford Press, 2001), pp. 149-164, 171-200.

Rosi Braidotti, “Prologue” and “Cyber-teratologies” (chapter 4) in *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Polity, 2002), pp. 1-10, 172-211.

Paul Gilroy, “The Crisis of ‘Race’ and ‘Raciology’” (chapter 1) in *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Harvard U Press, 2000), pp. 11-53.

### **II. HARAWAY: VAMPIRES, CYBORGS, SITUATED KNOWLEDGES**

The point is to get at how worlds are made and unmade, in order to participate in the processes, in order to foster some forms of life and not others. If technology, like language, is a form of life, we cannot afford neutrality about its constitution and sustenance. The point is not just to read the webs of knowledge production; the point is to reconfigure what counts as knowledge in the interests of reconstituting the generative forces of embodiment. (Haraway, “Cat’s Cradle,” 62)

**February 1**

Donna Haraway, "A Game of Cat's Cradle: Science Studies, Feminist Theory, Cultural Studies." *Configurations* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 59-71.

"Possible Worlds: An Interview with Donna Haraway" by Avery Gordon in Michael Ryan & Avery Gordon, eds., *Body Politics: Disease, Desire, and the Family* (Westview Press, 1994), pp. 241-250.

D. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" (chapter 8) in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Routledge, 1991), pp. 149-181(**book**).

Stephen Pfohl, "Meta-Voodoo Economics: The Materiality of Cybernetic Culture" in *Death at the Parasite Café: Social Science (Fictions) & the Postmodern* (St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 249-261.

**February 8**

Joseph Schneider, "Bodies, Knowledges, Politics, Ethics, and Truth: Figuring a Feminist Technoscience" (chapter 4) in *Donna Haraway: Live Theory* (Continuum, 2005), pp. 87-113.

Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" (chapter 9) in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, pp. 183-201 (**book**).

D. Haraway, excerpts from "The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies: Constitutions of Self in Immune System Discourse" (chapter 10) in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, pp. 203-221 (**book**).

D. Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others" in Larry Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, eds., *Cultural Studies* (Routledge, 1992), pp. 295-337.

N. Katherine Hayles, "What Does it Mean to be Posthuman?" (chapter 11) in *How We Became Posthuman*, pp. 283-291.

**February 15**

Donna Haraway, *Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium. FemaleMan\_ Meets\_ OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* (Routledge, 1997), pp. 1-14, 131-154, 213-265.

Vandana Shiva, *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (South End Press, 1997), pp. 43-85.

**essay #1 due Monday, February 20, by 12:00 noon.**

### **III. FOUCAULT: ‘MAKING LIVE AND LETTING DIE’**

[W]e now have the emergence, with this technology of biopower, of this technology of power over ‘the’ population as such, over men insofar as they are living beings. It is continuous, scientific, and it is the power to make live. Sovereignty took life and let live. And now we have the emergence of a power that . . . in contrast, consists in making live and letting die. (Foucault, ‘*Society Must Be Defended*,’ 247)

#### **February 22**

Michel Foucault, “We ‘Other’ Victorians,” “The Repressive Hypothesis” and “Right of Death and Power Over Life” in *History of Sexuality, Vol 1* (Vintage Books, 1980), pp. 1-49, 135-159 (**book**).

Ann Laura Stoler, “Colonial Studies and the History of Sexuality” (chapter 1) in *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 1-18.

A. L. Stoler, “A Colonial Reading of Foucault: Bourgeois Bodies and Racial Selves” (chapter 6) in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Univ. of California Press, 2002), pp. 140-161.

#### **March 1**

Michel Foucault, “17 March 1976” in ‘*Society Must be Defended*’: *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*, edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 2003), pp. 239-263.

Paul Gilroy, excerpt from “Modernity and Infrahumanity” (chapter 2) in *Against Race*, pp. 76-96.

Ann Anagnost, “The Corporeal Politics of Quality (*Suzhi*).” *Public Culture* 16, no. 2 (2004): 189-208.

#### **March 8**

Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics.” *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11-40.

Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai, “Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots.” *Social Text* 72, vol. 20, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 117-140.

**March 15 – no class – spring break**

**NOTE: March 16-17, New York City. The Center for the Study of Women & Society at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and Barnard Center for Research on Women co-sponsor the symposium:**

**“BEYOND BIOPOLITICS:  
STATE RACISM AND THE POLITICS OF LIFE AND DEATH.”**

**All students in our class are encouraged to make arrangements to attend this conference in New York City during spring break!! We’ll discuss logistics during class. Here’s a description:**

March 16-17, 2006 (Thursday-Friday)

BEYOND BIOPOLITICS:

State Racism and the Politics of Life and Death

CUNY Graduate Center  
365 Fifth Avenue, NYC

This symposium will explore historical and transnational contexts of race in order to analyze various situations that constitute racism around the world today. "Beyond Biopolitics" takes the concept of state racism, as theorized by Michel Foucault and re-worked by contemporary writers, as a point of departure. State racism addresses asylum seekers, migrants, and others who have become target populations to be controlled, and is today not only part of a nationalist but also global politics. As they explore the continuities and discontinuities between colonialism and neocolonialism, slavery and affective labor, settlement and diaspora, subject identities and bodies, and macro and molecular organizations of populations, distinguished, interdisciplinary scholars will illustrate how these various systems of control come to influence (often disturbingly) our potentials to live and work.

Co-sponsored by: The Barnard Center for Research on Women and The Center for the Study of Women and Society (SCWS) at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York

To register or for more information, email Craig Willse at [CWillse@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:CWillse@gc.cuny.edu).

**March 22 – no class**  
**essay #2 due by class time, Wednesday, March 22**

#### **IV. DELEUZE: FROM DESIRING-MACHINES TO VIRTUAL MATTERS**

There is only desire and the social, and nothing else. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 29)

**March 29**

Michel Foucault, “Preface” to Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. xi-xiv (**book**).

Mark Seem, “Introduction” to Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. xv-xxiv (**book**).

Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. 1-50 (**book**), plus a ten-page selection of your choice from anywhere in the book.

Interview with Deleuze & Guattari, “Capitalism and Schizophrenia,” in Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974* (Semiotext(e), 2004), pp. 232-241.

Brian Massumi, “Everywhere You Want to Be: Introduction to Fear” in Massumi, ed., *The Politics of Everyday Fear* (University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 3-36.

Kathy Acker, “Back to the Witch,” in Massumi, ed., *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, pp. 85-110.

Guillermo Gomez-Pena, “Califas” in Massumi, ed., *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, pp. 41-49.

#### **April 5**

Brian Massumi, “Translator’s Foreword: Pleasure of Philosophy” in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia* (University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. ix-xv.

Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, “Introduction: Rhizome,” and excerpts from “Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible...” in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia* (University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 3-25, 233, 237-260, 272-286.

Rosi Braidotti, “Met(r)amorphoses: becoming Woman/Animal/Insect” (chapter 3) in *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (2002), pp. 117-171.

#### **April 12**

Jeffrey Skoller, “Virtualities: Historical Temporalities” (excerpt from chapter 3) in *Shadows, Specters, Shards: Making History in Avant-Garde Film* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 69-81.

Elizabeth Grosz, “Introduction” and “The Time of Thought” (chapter 10) in *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 1-7, 155-169.

Patricia Clough, “Future Matters: Technoscience, Global Politics, and Cultural Criticism.” *Social Text* 80, vol. 22, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 1-21.

**essay #3 due on Monday, April 17 by 12:00 noon**

## V. OPENING TOWARD ENDINGS: WRITING TECHNOLOGIES

I want to suggest that performative writing is a technique, even a technology, that must and can be commonly deployed . . . to write in excess of norms of scholarly representation, to write beyond textuality into what might be called social mortalities, to make writing/textuality speak to, of, and through pleasure, possibility, disappearance, and even pain . . . . [to make writing that lives] on the edge of death. (Pollock, 79, 85).

### **April 19**

Jackie Orr, Prologue and chapters 1, 2, & 3 in *Panic Diaries: A Genealogy of Panic Disorder* (Duke University Press, 2006) (**book**).

Della Pollock, "Performing Writing" in Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane, eds., *The Ends of Performance* (New York University Press, 1998), pp. 73-98.

### **April 26**

Orr, chapters 4, 5, & Epilogue in *Panic Diaries* (**book**).

Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October* 59 (Winter 1992): 3-7.