**Foucault in and on the Post-Political Global Present:**

**Using and Reading Foucault in Europe, Asia, and America**

Academic Workshop

Sponsored by

Deutscher akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD)

Centre canadien d’études allemandes et européennes (CCEAE) and

Centre d’études et de recherches internationales de l’Université de Montréal (CERIUM)

European School of Management and Technology (ESMT)

May 25-26, 2012

Schlossplatz 1, Berlin

Garden View Room

Friday, May 25

10:00-10:10 Words of Welcome:

* Catalina Stefanescu-Cuntze, Director of Research, ESMT on behalf of C.B. Bhattacharya, Dean of International Relations, ESMT
* Barbara Thériault, Director, CCEAE
* Laurence McFalls and Mariella Pandolfi, conveners

10:10-10:30 Introductory Remarks:

* “Foucault’s Anticipation of the Post-Political Present:

from liberalism to neo-liberalism to post-liberalism”

*Mariella Pandolfi and Laurence McFalls* (Université de Montréal)

10:30-18:00[[1]](#footnote-1)\* Part 1: Following Foucault into the Global Present

* 10:30: “Security, a Field Left Fallow : towards a governmentality of (un)freedom,” *Didier Bigo* (Sciences-Pô, Paris; King’s College London)

Summary: I will discuss the legacy of Foucault for critical security studies, by analysing the shift in his work from the notion of security to governmentality in *Security, Territory and Population*.

* 11:30: “Foucault’s Law? The case of targeted killing,” *Susanne Krasmann* (Universität Hamburg)

Summary: Targeted killing, while receiving increasing approval in the US’s fight against terrorism, changes the politico-legal landscape. On the example of this state practice of resorting to lethal force, I will try to show that Foucault indeed provides us with a considerable set of analytical tools for theorizing law. However, rather than about ‘the law’, talk then is about legal practices and their knowledge

12:30-14:00 Lunch (ESMT Restaurant)

* 14:00: “Foucault in the age of globalisation: the governmentality of war”, *Alessandro dal Lago* (Università Genoa)

Summary: Foucault's analyses of governmentality and war as presented in his lecture courses of the late 1970s are devoted to the management of power outside the classic realm of the State. Even if Foucault did not work on

globalisation or internationalisation of politics (in fact, his intellectual

frame of reference was mainly formed by European countries), his concern for "governmentality" can be considered an excellent tool when studying the "modus operandi" of western powers in the so-called new wars. Military operations can be conceived today as a normal feature of western powers: a sort of global police or global enforcement to which the traditional definition of war cannot be applied. In other words, global powers tend to act as managers of the world (cf. the role of NATO in Afghanistan) in a continuum where war and peace are mere options of a global governmentality.

* 14:55: “How Did we Become Unprepared?  From modernist to post-modernist conceptions of disaster”, *Mark Duffield* (Bristol University)

Summary: The talk examines the shift from the modernist experience of disasters as ‘accidents’ originating outside society, to being events that are intrinsically connected with how society works; the move from ‘outside’ to ‘inside’ involves important changes in the nature of disaster management.  Rather than saving lives or protecting populations, the post-modernist emphasis is on livelihoods and critical infrastructure.  At the same time, instead of attempting to separate people from disasters, there is a new willingness, in the interests of encouraging resilience, to embrace uncertainty as a development opportunity.  The talk concludes by examining some of the implications of this essentially political transition.

15:50: Coffee Break

* 16:05: “Using Foucault to Problematize the Uncertainties of the Insured World,” *Luis Lobo-Guerrero* (Keele University)

Summary: My work is a problematisation of the political economy of insurance, a technology whose effects have underpinned the security of not only individuals and corporations, but also of states in the modern period. Using Foucault’s understanding of problematization and strategy, I conduct a historical epistemology of past and current insurance strategies.

* 17:00: “Scenario Planning and the Rhetoric of Risk”, *James Faubion* (Rice University)

Summary: Biopolitics is still very much with us, but from the Second World War forward, it has not been the only technology of the legitimation and orientation of strategic intervention. Scenario planning is its counterpart, and an increasingly salient counterpart as we have found ourselves ever more deeply entrenched in an ecology of ignorance. It does not rest on the authority of statistics, but instead on the narration of what, however incalculably, could be the case in the future. It has no single master trope, but among its most powerful tropes is hyperbole, especially when it is deployed to thematize risk. Foucault did not explicitly address scenario planning, but his careful analysis of biopolitics serves as a foil against which its distinctive features and distinctive effects can be brought to clearer light.

Saturday, May 26

9:30-12:30 Part 2: Reading Foucault in and out of Context

* 9:30: “Foucault's Dissertation Between the Measured and the Mad,” *Cheryce von Xylander* (Universität Darmstadt)

Summary: *Histoire de la* *Folie à l’age classique*, Foucault’s monumental doctoral thesis has had a lasting and transformative effect on the concept of reason and its role in history. Given the status both of the author and the text in question, it seems curious that a complementary thesis Foucault wrote and defended together with said dissertation has, until recently, been deemed unsuitable for publication. Foucault’s *Anthropologie*-essay is tame by comparison with the history of madness. While the former is conservative in subject matter, expository style and methodological precision, the latter is by standards of academic scholarship eclectic, idiosyncratic and conjectural. Scientific publishing tends towards the cautious and the conventional. All the same, the latter was published, the former was not. This unequal treatment of the two theses is puzzling and calls for explanation. Unless the claim is that, erratically, one study fell far short of the other in forethought and mindfulness, we must look for interpretative contingencies governing the human sciences in post-war Europe to supply a discursively grounded account of the lopsided reception of Foucault’s doctoral findings.

* 10:25: “Governmentality and the Politics of Self-cultivation: Foucault in the Context of Contemporary Chinese Philosophy,” *Fabian Heubel* (Academia Sinica, Taipei)

Summary : My presentation will not only deal with the "reception" of Foucault in China, it rather combines reflections about this reception with the use of Foucault's "conceptual tool box" to address contemporary problems of political thought in the Chinese speaking world. Throughout the 20th century, Chinese scholars have been discussing possibilities of establishing democratic politics in China. From the perspective of the relation between governmentality and self-cultivation in the late Foucault, I will try to interpret the attempt within contemporary Neo-Confucianism to reconcile modern democracy and the rule of law with the Confucian idea of government based on self-cultivation.

11: 20: Coffee Break

* 11:30: “On the Use and Abuse of Foucault in America”, *James Faubion* (Rice University)
* 12: 00: “Foucault in Germany,” *Martin Saar* (Universität Hamburg)

12:30-14:30 Lunch (restaurant to be announced)

14:30-16:30 Part 3: Roundtable on Foucault’s Cross-National, Cross-Disciplinary Reception

with opening statements by:

* Frieder Vogelmann (Universität Frankfurt)
* Sven Opitz (Universität Hamburg, co-editor of *Foucault Studies*)
* Elfriede Fürsich (Freie Universität Berlin)
* Mariella Pandolfi and other panelists

1. \* NB: The presentation and immediate discussion of each paper will be allotted 55 to 60 minutes total time, with the exception of the last two papers of part 2 which will be shorter and only briefly discussed since they are an introduction to part 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)