COURSE DETAIL

BATTLES FOR BODIES: THE BIRTH OF SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY
Country Hong Kong
Host Institution University of Hong Kong
Program(s) University of Hong Kong
UCEAP Course Level Lower Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) Sociology
UCEAP Course Number 22
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title BATTLES FOR BODIES: THE BIRTH OF SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY
UCEAP Transcript Title SURVELLIANCE SOCIET
UCEAP Quarter Units 5.00
UCEAP Semester Units 3.30

Course Description

What is the state’s final frontier? How and why have governments around the world been vested with the authority to manage the most intimate aspects of our existence: from the food we eat to our sexual behavior? What has the impact of this encroachment been on our sense of self? Engaging with these questions from an historical perspective provides a critical lens for re-evaluating our own relationship to society and the state, as well as furnishing a context for considering the extent to which we are ever fundamentally “free” to possess our own bodies. Exploring the birth of “surveillance society” enables us to reflect upon – and challenge – the inherited assumptions which underpin our reliance on government and our aspirations for personal autonomy. This course ranges from the formation of the modern state in Europe and the techonologies it developed for managing populations, to global health surveillance and recent biomedical advances which have resulted in progressively interventionist governmental measures, with profound social, political and ethical implications. Topics include: surveillance; “medical police” and state-sponsored interventions in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe; the invention of the “population” as a collective body; colonialism and the global exportation of ideas about what is “normal”; “healthy citizens”: the coercive state and the democratization of society; and, finally, the limits of public health in the twenty-first century.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
CCHU9002

Host Institution Course Title
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Host Institution Course Details

Host Institution Campus

Host Institution Faculty
Host Institution Degree
Host Institution Department
Course Last Reviewed 2024-2025

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