



GNDR_ST 321 • Ivan Bujan

The Uses of Pleasure

In the first volume of *History of Sexuality*, French philosopher Michel Foucault differentiates between *scientia sexualis* and *ars erotica*. Whereas the former notion concerns Western approach to sexuality as a set of scientific facts, the later refers to Eastern societies where the truth is drawn from the body and its pleasures, understood as a practice, rather than an identity. Unlike *scientia sexualis* that is highly regulated by the state and differentiates between normal and abnormal embodiment of gender, race, and sexuality, pleasures of *ars erotica* exceed the disciplinary regimes that shape one's embodiment. Taking Foucault's dichotomy as a point of departure, this course will think of pleasure as a polymorphous site that alongside disciplinary, also has a world-making potential. The course considers a variety of productive uses of pleasure as they appear in the Western intellectual tradition across disciplines in a variety of forms, including ecstasy, queer sex, orgasm, BDSM, promiscuity, abjection, race play, limit experience, drug use, harm reduction, HIV prevention, and (post)pornography, to name a few. Alongside scholarly literature, the class will consider multiple examples in film, performance, video, and other artistic medium that will challenge and expand one's consideration of what counts as pleasurable. By the end of the course, students will analyze and deconstruct pleasure as a historically constructed site not immune to racism, homophobia, and transphobia. Students will evaluate a variety of uses of pleasure, including (bio)political control, work of resistance, anti-racist and anti-colonialist work, creative experimentation, and pedagogical purposes.

Kresge 2-343 • MW 10:00-12:30pm
Summer Quarter