

Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth (Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol. 1)

By Michel Foucault

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Few philosophers have had as strong an influence on the twentieth century as Michel Foucault. His work has affected the teaching of any number of disciplines and remains, twenty years after his death, critically important. This newly available edition is drawn from the complete collection of all of Foucault's courses, articles, and interviews, and brings his most important work to a new generation of readers.

Ethics (edited by Paul Rabinow) contains the summaries of Foucault's renowned courses at the Collège de France, paired with key writings and interviews on friendship, sexuality, and the care of the self and others.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal
These essays?the first of three volumes of Foucault's short works, interviews, and fragments?open with 11 previously unpublished outlines for lectures at the College de France from 1970 until near Foucault's death. They begin with the distinction Foucault made between the "will to knowledge" (a passion for authoritative organization) and the "will to truth" (a concern for the integrity of subjective expression). The outlines often probe subjectivity, but Foucault's thought becomes increasingly moral and political, focusing on technology and the social order. Though not his major writings, these works may be "essential" because they express the kernel of his thought. They suffer from problems of vocabulary?"knowing" and "willing" have uncertain meanings in the original French and in the English translations?and his arguments do not get much formal analysis. Even so, he writes entertainingly and makes us think. For any sizable library.?Leslie Armour, Univ. of Ottawa
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From Booklist
The first of a multivolume series translated into English, this is an engaging and accessible introduction to Foucault, who was an enormously influential but notoriously difficult contemporary French philosopher. Rather than detailed studies, it offers mostly overviews--sketches of problems to be addressed--in the form of proposals for the courses Foucault taught at the College de France, as well as interviews and essays (including some reworked prefaces) from the late 1970s to his death in 1984. Among the latter, Foucault explores, from antiquity to the present, issues relating to ethics and the problem of a free relation to the self and sets the terms for a project called "the care of the self." Foucault opposes the popular notion of a hidden but authentic self (or desire), which could be liberated; for Foucault, there is no such authentic self. But there can be ethical relationships to the self, and he envisions "new modes of relating to the self," which can then also be seen in a larger project of undoing "the impoverishment of the relational fabric" of society as a whole. *Jim O'Laughlin*

Review

“Foucault’s work . . . leaves no reader untouched or unchanged.” —Edward Said

“What shines through in these pieces . . . is [Foucault’s] remarkable liveliness of response, the extravagance of his curiosity, the originality and assurance of his formulations. . . To read this book is to remember—as with the Kennedy assassination or the Challenger explosion—where you were when you heard it for the first time.” *—Boston Book Review*

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