

## Close Reading Assignment 2: Reading Michael Foucault's Panoptic Vision

Search on Google for “**Michael Foucault Panopticon Pdf**”. The document, which is an excerpt from Michael Foucault's book “Discipline and Punish” will appear at the top (or near the top) of the list of search terms. It should read in boldface letters at the top: **Michel Foucault. Discipline and Punish (1975), Panopticism III. Discipline 3. Panopticism.**

This is theoretical perspective that is pertinent to the world of work and to the world of criminal justice more generally. Foucault basically crossed his historical and philosophical interests to create the vision of a “brave new world”, in which the technologies of control not only create a micro-politics of power that negates our cherished ideas of freedom and liberty, but that also requires that the powers of surveillance and control be extended as a prerequisite to the further production of “socially useful” knowledge. So knowledge and rationality, something established by the Enlightenment as liberating, becomes the means to our further enslavement given the new technologies of power that Foucault describes.

This reading is difficult but well worth it. Read the passages over and over. Think about them. Grapple with the text to create your own understanding of it.

### The Assignment:

- 1) Read the first 10 pages.
- 2) Annotate by writing a statement at the top of each page that reminds you of what the page is about.
- 3) Highlight (or underline) at least two passages from each page that contain key ideas or ideas that stand out for you.

### On a separate document, answer the following questions:

- 1) Who was Michael Foucault? What was the significance of his intellectual contribution to social theory? Why is this guy such a big deal?
- 2) Page 1: In his discussion of the measures to prevent the spread of the plague, how does “strict spatial partitioning” lead to “a system of permanent registration”?
- 3) Page 3: What is the “panopticon”? How is visibility a “trap”? How does the panopticon work to “induce in the inmate a state of consciousness and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power”?
- 4) Page 4: what does “subjection” mean? How does Bentham's panopticon work to produce “a real subjection born from a mechanically fictitious relation”?
- 5) Page 5: How did the panopticon become “a laboratory of power polyvalent in its functions”?
- 6) Page 10: How did the panopticon, polyvalent in its functions, lead to the rise of a modern “surveillance society”?
- 7) In what ways is John Jay College a panoptic institution?
- 8) What is “criminal justice”? In what way is it a panoptic institution?