Merleau-Ponty and Nagarjuna: PHIL 5P16
Brock University, Fall 2010
Professor Michael P. Berman

Seminar: Wed 5:00-8:00pm    Email: mberman@BrockU.CA
Place: MCG310    Phone: 905.688.5550 ext. 3317
Office Hours: Office: GLN 273

Texts:
• M. Merleau-Ponty readings (photocopies in Philosophy Department office):
  Phenomenology of Perception, “Preface” (vii-xxi);
  Signs, “Philosopher and His Shadow” (159-182), “Man and Adversity” (224-226);
  Sense and Non-sense, “The Metaphysical in Man” (83-98);
• Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way, Nagarjuna’s Mulamadhyamakakarika, J. Garfield, trans. (MMK)

Recommended Readings and Secondary Sources:
• The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, Eric Matthews
• Merleau-Ponty’s Ontology, M.C. Dillon
• An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology, P. De Silva
• What the Buddha Taught, W. Rahula
• The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals, I. Kant

Requirements

ONE
There are assigned readings for each seminar. Given that the course meets for three hours, the instructor will, for the most part, lead the seminar for the first half, and then after a 10-minute break, finish the evening with class presentations and discussions. As a seminar, much of the work is expected to fall on you, the student. Keep up with the readings and be prepared to discuss them in class.

TWO
Over the course of the fall session there are two (2) major kinds of written assignments due:

A. The readings for the first of these assignments will be found in the syllabus below. Each student will choose presentation readings from the course readings. The students are expected to give presentations in seminar on a rotating basis depending on the course enrollment. Each presentation must
include a critical presentation paper on that specific week’s readings (no extra research outside of the assigned reading is required for this paper). The student(s) will then lead the discussion during that part of the evening’s class meeting. The presentation papers must be about five (5) pages in length. These essays are due the evening of their presentation in class (late papers will be penalized accordingly).

B. The second written assignment is a researched term paper. The length of the paper must be between fifteen and seventeen (15-17) pages in length (do not exceed this upper limit). The topic for this paper must be of a comparative nature (on Merleau-Ponty and Nagarjuna). Given the broad range of issues that we will be dealing with, it is highly recommended that the instructor approve your paper topic. Your research paper must have seven (7) sources; none may be from the internet, unless they are peer-reviewed published journals. The due date for the term paper is 12noon, December 17, 2010 in Dr. Berman’s office.

Some notes on paper style, format, and writing:

Any time you quote directly from a book or text, you must cite the quote properly. You must use either footnotes or endnotes. (It is recommended that you follow the Chicago MLA style so that your papers are in the proper format for journal submission. All term papers should be submitted to a journal. The first to publish a paper will be rewarded with a dinner!)

As a rule of thumb, any time you quote from a source, you should provide an explanation of that quote in your own words, showing why it is relevant to your paper’s thesis. Your explanation should be as long, if not longer than the quote itself.

Papers must be typed and double-spaced.

Plagiarism is expressly forbidden by the rules of Brock University. If you hand in a plagiarized paper, the Dean’s Office may be informed, and it may result in a failing course grade. Please refer to the following webpages:

• In the Faculty Handbook, section III, part #15. Academic Misconduct at: <http://www.brocku.ca/secretariat/facultyhandbook[section3.php#_genIndex95].

• Code of Student Academic Conduct at:
  < http://www.brocku.ca/academicintegrity/policy>.

THREE

Attendance for seminars is mandatory according to the rules of Brock University. Each student may only miss one (1) class during the fall session. Any additional absences will result in grade penalties for the final course grade. Only valid medical excuses (with written confirmation) will prevent this.

FOUR

Class participation is expected and mandatory. Some of the material that we will cover during the course will be new and unfamiliar. Ask questions and express your ideas. All views are welcomed and encouraged. Communication, both written and
oral, is a key goal of the course. Discussion and dialogue are important ingredients for all classes, especially in philosophy courses.

**Grading**

Grading for each student will be a combination of the following scores over the course of the semester:

**Fall 2010**

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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
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<td>Presentations &amp; Presentation Papers</td>
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<td>Seminar Participation &amp; Attendance</td>
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**Syllabus: Fall 2010**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Readings and Presentations</th>
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| 9/15 | Introduction: Merleau-Ponty & Phenomenology, Nagarjuna & Buddhism  
*Phenomenology of Perception*, “Preface” (vii-xxi) |
| 9/22 | *MMK*: Part I & II Introduction and Chapters 1-5  
Presenter:_________________________________  
Presenter:_________________________________ |
| 9/29 | *MMK*: Part I & II Chapters 6-10  
Presenter:_________________________________  
Presenter:_________________________________ |
| 10/6 | *MMK*: Part I & II Chapters 11-15  
Presenter:_________________________________  
Presenter:_________________________________ |
| 10/13| *MMK*: Part I & II Chapters 16-20  
Presenter:_________________________________  
Presenter:_________________________________ |
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Material</th>
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<td>10/20</td>
<td><em>MMK</em>: Part I &amp; II Chapters 21-27</td>
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<td>10/27</td>
<td><em>The Primacy of Perception</em>, “An Unpublished Text” (3-11),</td>
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<td>11/10</td>
<td><em>Sense and Non-sense</em>, “The Metaphysical in Man” (83-98);</td>
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<td>12/1</td>
<td>Wrap-Up and term paper thesis presentations (10 minutes per student).</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/17</td>
<td>Term Papers Due!!!</td>
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