

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

Seminar: Wed 5:00-8:00pm

Place: MCG310

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Email: mberman@BrockU.CA

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);
The Primacy of Perception, “An Unpublished Text” (3-11), “Primacy of Perception” (12-27).
- *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way, Nagarjuna’s*
Mulamadhyamakakarika, J. Garfield, trans. (MMK)

<p>Recommended Readings and Secondary Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty</i>, Eric Matthews• <i>Merleau-Ponty’s Ontology</i>, M.C. Dillon• <i>An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology</i>, P. De Silva• <i>What the Buddha Taught</i>, W. Rahula• <i>The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>, I. Kant
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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

Term Paper	40%
Presentations & Presentation Papers	40%
Seminar Participation & Attendance	20%
TOTAL	100%

Syllabus: Fall 2010

Week	Readings and Presentations
9/15	Introduction: Merleau-Ponty & Phenomenology, Nagarjuna & Buddhism <i>Phenomenology of Perception</i> , "Preface" (vii-xxi)
9/22	<i>MMK</i> : Part I & II Introduction and Chapters 1-5 Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____
9/29	<i>MMK</i> : Part I & II Chapters 6-10 Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____
10/6	<i>MMK</i> : Part I & II Chapters 11-15 Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____
10/13	<i>MMK</i> : Part I & II Chapters 16-20 Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____

10/20	<i>MMK: Part I & II Chapters 21-27</i> Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____
10/27	<i>The Primacy of Perception, “An Unpublished Text” (3-11),</i> Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____
11/3	<i>The Primacy of Perception, “Primacy of Perception” (12-27).</i> Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____
11/10	<i>Sense and Non-sense, “The Metaphysical in Man” (83-98);</i> Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____
11/17	<i>Signs, “Man and Adversity” (224-226);</i> Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____
11/27	<i>Signs, “Philosopher and His Shadow” (159-182)</i> Presenter: _____ Presenter: _____
12/1	Wrap-Up and term paper thesis presentations (10 minutes per student).
12/17	Term Papers Due!!!