PHI 505: Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Perception
Class Number 57506, 3.0 Credits

TIME/LOCATION
Thursdays 1:00-3:50pm
Harriman Hall 249

INSTRUCTOR
Gabrielle Benette Jackson
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Office Location: Harriman Hall 203
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1pm-3pm or by appointment

COURSE TOPIC
“The basic course will investigate some of the most important and influential theories of art in the West from Plato to the present. Readings and discussion in depth of major figures will make up the content of the course: e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Collingwood, Langer, Merleau-Ponty, Dufrenne. The focus throughout will be on central issues in aesthetics such as imitation, truth, beauty, expression, emotion, and imagination.”

In this seminar, we will read a classic text of phenomenology, Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Perception. The focus of our investigation will be on the content of perceptual experience, the structure of motor intentionality, and their relation in ordinary life.

REQUIRED TEXTS
1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, translated by Donald Landes

(SOMEWHAT) RECOMMENDED TEXTS
1. Katherine Morris, Starting with Merleau-Ponty
2. Taylor Carman, Merleau-Ponty.
3. Komarine Romdehn-Romluc, Merleau-Ponty and Phenomenology of Perception
4. Martin Dillon, Merleau-Ponty’s Ontology
5. Renaud Barbaras, The Being of the Phenomenon: Merleau-Ponty’s Ontology
PHI 508: Movement, Art, Time  
Professor Bob Crease  
Monday, 2:30-5:20  
SBU Manhattan

If painting, as Merleau-Ponty writes, is the art that shows us how things become things and world becomes world, dance may be said to be the art that shows us how bodies become bodies. It is the art that, as Merce Cunningham wrote, gives you no objects, nor things to hang on the wall to look at, nor texts to read, but only “that single fleeting moment when you feel alive”. Dance explores and exposes the body in its temporality, finitude, and mortality. Its medium is the ecstatic body, always already beyond itself in the world and the world in us. This course examines the origin and nature of dancing, and explores it as a medium in which to rethink embodiment. The course also examines why philosophers’ evasion of dancing as a topic is at once a scandal, mystery, and opportunity. Topics entwined with dancing include improvisation, play, rhythm, style, bipedality, and apprenticeship learning.

PHI 507: Film/Phenomenology  
Dr. Ilan Safit  
Tuesday, 2:00-5:00  
SBU Manhattan

This seminar explores the relationships between phenomenology and film. On the one hand we will be tracing a phenomenological understanding of film and the cinematic experience. On the other hand, we shall explore the idea that film can illuminate, illustrate, and demonstrate phenomenological thinking in itself, pushing this idea all the way to suggest that film performs a phenomenology of phenomenology. The seminar will proceed by looking at some relevant sample texts from the key phenomenological thinkers – Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty – and some of their precursors: Aristotle, Descartes, and Berkeley. We will continue with a glance into phenomenological aesthetics (Mikel Dufrenne) before turning to a full-blown phenomenological study of the cinematic experience (Vivian Sobchack’s The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience). Finally, we will take our understanding of film/phenomenology – both film as phenomenology and a phenomenology of film – for a couple of thematic explorations. These would ask: what can a film-phenomenology reveal to us about (our understanding of) the world of nature, on the one hand, and about the technological world of cyborgs and Artificial Intelligence, on the other.