PHIL 5150 Topics in Western Philosophy:

Merleau-Ponty: *The Visible and the Invisible*

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Time： Thur 10:30-13:15 Venue: UCC C4

Assessment method:

for Post-Graduate students: presentation and class discussion: 40%; Final Essay: 60%;

for Final Year Undergraduate students: presentation and class discussion: 40%; mid-term essay: 20%; Final essay: 40%.

Teaching language: English + Cantonese/Putonghua + some working French

A. Object: This seminar studies the last philosophy of Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) developed around his posthumous unfinished treatise *The Visible and the Invisible* (*Le visible et l’invisible*, 1964) and related writings. The ontological thought expressed in this group of writings, commonly known as ontology of the flesh (*l’ontologie de la chair*), is on the one hand the radicalization of the genetic phenomenology, phenomenology of the body, developed in the *Phenomenology of Perception* (*Phénoménologie de la perception*, 1945), and on the other a coming-to-terms with Sartre’s ontology of nothingness in *Being and Nothingness* (*L’être et le néant*, 1943). We aim to show that Merleau-Ponty has appropriated important insights from Husserl’s phenomenological writings neglected by Heidegger, namely *Ideas II*, the *Crisis*, and the *Origin of Geometry*, to develop his conception of the flesh which enquires into the pre-objective order of things. The ontology of the flesh, being an ontology of chiasm between the visible and the invisible articulated through the concepts of reversibility and écart, is a philosophy which assigns a positive role to difference and negativity. Thus Merleau-Ponty’s final phenomenological ontology, though unfinished, accommodates well the challenge of structuralism (e.g. of Lévi-Strauss) and announces the philosophies of difference of Derrida and Deleuze presented under the label of post-structuralist thought.

B. Outline (tentative)

1. Introduction:
   a) Merleau-Ponty’s conception of phenomenology in 1945


2. Merleau-Ponty’s reflections on language and phenomenological reduction in the 1950s
   Readings:
   b) “The Philosopher and his Shadow”, in *Signs*.

3. Ontology of the flesh in *The Visible and the Invisible*
   Readings:
   a) Ch. 1. “Reflection and Interrogation”, pp. 3-49
   b) Ch. 2. “Interrogation and Dialectic”, pp. 50-104
   c) Ch. 3. “Interrogation and Intuition”, pp. 105-129
   d) Ch. 4. “The Intertwining— The Chiasm”, pp. 130-155
   e) Ch. 5. [appendix] “Preobjective Being: The Solipsist World”, pp. 156-162
   f) Selections from working notes

4. Ontology of the sensible and Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenological Aesthetics
   Readings:

C. References (to be augmented)
   a) Merleau-Ponty’s works


b) Work’s on Merleau-Ponty


25. 劉國英：<梅洛龐蒂: 以人文科學改造現象學(編者序)>，《現象學與人文科學》第 6 期，<梅洛龐蒂：以人文科學改造現象學>專輯， 2016，頁 vii-xxix。

26. 劉國英：<肌膚存在——從存在論層面到跨文化層面的運用>，《現象學與人文科學》第6期，<梅洛龐蒂：以人文科學改造現象學專輯>，2016，頁75-108。

27. 劉國英：<梅洛龐蒂錯解海德格？——重探《存在與時間》與胡塞爾的關係及基本存在論計劃的一些缺失>，《現象學與人文科學》，第3期，<海德格：詮釋現象學及其蛻變－《存在與時間》專輯>，2014，頁 163-192。

28. 劉國英：<梅洛龐蒂的肉身主體現象學及其哲學意涵>，刊《修遠之路——香港中文大學哲學系六十周年系慶論文集·同寅卷》，劉國英、張燦輝編（香港：中文大學出版社），2009，頁491-532。

29. 劉國英：<視覺的瘋狂——梅洛龐蒂哲學中畫家作為現象學家>，刊《視覺的思想：現象學與藝術國際學術研討會論文集》，孫周興、高士明編（杭州：中國美術學院出版社，2003），頁 26-40。

30. 劉國英：<梅洛龐蒂的現象學方法>，《中國現象學與哲學評論》第二輯，《現象學方法》（上海：上海譯文出版社，1998），頁243-257。