

**Western University  
Department of Philosophy  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2023-2024**

**Philosophy 4091F  
Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception**

Fall Term 2023

Instructor: N/A

**DESCRIPTION**

This grad/undergrad course will focus on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's important mid-twentieth century work on embodied perception, *Phenomenology of Perception*. We will also briefly consider his ontological work *The Visible and the Invisible*. The course will be taught from within a feminist and critical phenomenological framework. It might also be of interest to those pursuing contemporary research in philosophy of neuroscience and enactivism. Merleau-Ponty's approach in his pivotal phenomenology is to show, drawing on the psychological research of his day, how neither representational nor strictly empirical approaches actually account for the ways humans encounter reality, that is, perceive. Perception is always situated and contextual.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course will enable students to:

- Understand how embodiment contributes to perception and thinking
- Understand and apply a phenomenological approach
- Hone reading, questioning, and critical writing skills
- Understand the ways in which we are corporeally shaped by language, culture and our material world.

**TEXTS**

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. D. Landes (Routledge, 2012).

\_\_\_\_\_ *The Visible and the Invisible* (Northwestern, 1968)

Other readings will be provided through Weldon Library accessible through OWL.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course will enable students to:

- Understand how embodiment Supports thinking
- Understand and apply a phenomenological approach
- Hone reading, questioning, and critical writing skills

- Understand the ways in which we are corporeally shaped by language, culture, and our material world.
- Consider the ways social, political and cultural structures shape our embodied thinking

### **EVALUATION**

Phenomenological description	25% (5-6 pages)
Or text analysis	
Final Essay	40% (10-12 pages)
Participation	10%
Reading Journal	25% (10% + 15%)

### **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Neutral peoples, on lands connected to several Treaties including Treaty 6 London Township, Treaty 7 Sombra Township, Treaty 21 Longwoods and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This place continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples who are recognized as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors to society.