DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
PHIL 497/604

BADIOU, BEING AND EVENT

Fall 2016
W 2:00-4:30

Instructor: Jay Lampert lampertj@duq.edu
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Badiou is probably the most important French philosopher following the generation of Derrida and Deleuze. Being and Event is his most important book. Like other recent French philosophers, Badiou emphasizes multiplicity. Almost every page of this long, fascinating, and difficult book develops brilliant and original concepts of ontology and ethics. The core of his argument is that “events” (whether they emerge from philosophy, politics, poetry, mathematics, or love) surpass “Being”. Badiou is a political activist as well as a novelist, and he draws on political as well as aesthetic sources. In addition, Badiou uses a unique approach to the logic of set theory to express his ontology. (Students do not need any background in mathematics to take this course.) There are many controversial ideas in Badiou’s philosophy, and studying this book is essential for anyone who wants to know what is happening in Continental philosophy today. Part way through the course, we will take time out of his difficult masterwork Being and Event to read his more popular, but equally intriguing, book on Ethics and the problem of evil.

Texts:

Badiou, Being and Event
----- Ethics

Grading scheme:

Final term paper 50% Due end of classes
Explication paper 25%
Presentation of final papers 10%
Micropresentations (4 per person) 15%