



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Theoretical Philosophy - A-L

1920-1-E1901R016-AL

Course title

On violence. Philosophical categories and educational action

Topics and course structure

Why does pedagogy today investigate the phenomenon of violence? The course explores two different aspects of the link between violence and education: on the one hand, what can education do about violence? on the other, in what sense might education be complicit with violence? To this end, the course will offer a philosophical analysis in three parts:

1. The structural dimensions of violence spanning nature and culture, social, institutional and linguistic dispositives.
2. Elements for a theory of violence: violence, force, power, authority.
3. Violence, intersubjective relationships and educational practices.

Objectives

Knowledge and understanding

The first objective of this course in theoretical philosophy is to accustom students to a style of inquiry suited to

critically analysing the categories of thought that explicitly or implicitly underpin discourses in the human sciences and the associated research practices and forms of intervention. Students will be led to recognize and problematize the interpretive approaches and conceptual distinctions underpinning understandings of the world in real-life contexts.

Application of knowledge and understanding

The second objective of the course is to help students develop the capacity to reflect on the less obvious, and thus even more crucial, assumptions underlying their actions (whether theoretical or practical) in typical educational situations and settings. The expected learning outcome is enhanced awareness of the horizons of meaning that come into play in diverse sociocultural contexts and the main cognitive and normative structures underpinning mutual expectations in educational settings, which in turn will inform educational action.

Transferable learning outcomes

The third objective of the course is to enhance students' capacity to revisit and organize their knowledge, using their own independent judgement, while attending to underlying concepts, the layers of semantic meaning implicit in key terms, the logical-formal structure of arguments, and different possible regimes of truth.

Methodologies

Introductory lectures and discussions on the course's key themes and theoretical bases; guided analysis of the course books; active learning sessions based on audio-visual materials and worksheets; joint recap sessions based on outlines presented in PowerPoint or guest lectures.

Online and offline teaching materials

Course books, PowerPoint presentations, worksheets and other documents for individual exercises and group work, audio-visual materials.

Programme and references for attending students

1. After an introductory presentation of the different meanings of the concept of violence, the course begins with an exploration of the structural dimensions of violence in the field of education, presenting and discussing documentary materials in the classroom.

2. Second, we examine a range of interpretative approaches to the phenomenon of violence, including phenomenological analysis, critical thinking and sociological research, following the course book by Rebughini.
3. Third, a discussion of Freud's work, "Civilisation and its Discontents" will guide our reflection on the historical and anthropological dimensions of violence and the roles of nature and culture.
4. Fourth, Hannah Arendt's work "On violence" and Michel Foucault "Micro-physics of Power" will be drawn on to explore forms of social and political violence, as well as the conceptual distinctions between violence and other related phenomena such as force and power. Then thanks to J. Butler's essay, it will be analyzed the relationship between violence and language.
5. Fifth, a reading of Sartre's book "The Universe of the Violence" will suggest an understanding of violence and the figure of the violent person as a relational form that is an inherent aspect of human nature.

Bibliography

1. P. Rebughini, *La violenza*, Roma, Carocci 2004 (tot. 120 pages).
2. S. Freud, *Il disagio della civiltà* (1929), Einaudi, Torino 2010 (tot. 93 pages)
3. H. Arendt, *Sulla violenza* (1969), Guanda, Parma, 2011 (tot: 111 pages)
4. M. Foucault, *Microfisica del potere*, Einaudi, Torino 1977, only pages 163-194.
5. J. Butler, *Parole che provocano*, Cortina, Milano 2010, only pages 1-60.
6. J.-P. Sartre, *L'universo della violenza* (1947-48), Edizioni Associate, Roma 1997 (tot. 130 pagine).

Programme and references for non-attending students

1. After an introductory presentation of the different meanings of the concept of violence, the course begins with an exploration of the structural dimensions of violence in the field of education, presenting and discussing documentary materials in the classroom.
2. Second, we examine a range of interpretative approaches to the phenomenon of violence, including phenomenological analysis, critical thinking and sociological research, following the course book by Rebughini.
3. Third, a discussion of Freud's work, "Civilisation and its Discontents" will guide our reflection on the historical and anthropological dimensions of violence and the roles of nature and culture.
4. Fourth, Hannah Arendt's work "On violence" and Michel Foucault's "Micro-physics of Power" will be drawn on to explore forms of social and political violence, as well as the conceptual distinctions between violence and other related phenomena such as force and power. Then thanks to J. Butler's essay, it will be analyzed the relationship between violence and language.
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Assessment methods

Attending students: oral exam.

During the oral exam the student will be required to discuss the course themes; the examiner will evaluate both the precision of their knowledge and their ability to critically rework it.

Assessment will be based on:

- a. Pertinence of answers,
- b. appropriate use of terminology
- c. coherence of argument,
- d. ability to identify and problematize theoretical issues and open questions.

Non-attending students: oral exam.

As above, except that the questions will evaluate the student's knowledge of the prescribed reading materials without reference to the additional analysis conducted in class

Office hours

Prof. Vergani receives students on Wednesdays from 12.30 to 14.30. Tel. 4896 U6 4th Floor, Room 4146 (students requiring an appointment should request it in advance via email). Routine information may be requested via email, or before or after classes.

Programme validity

The current programme is valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Course tutor: dott. Claudio Belloni.
