UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Theoretical Philosophy - A-L

2324-1-E1901R016-AL

Course title

Education and borderline situations

Topics and course structure

The limit is a fundamental category in education. Experiencing the limit, understanding what it means to push oneself to the limit and putting oneself to the test are constitutive elements of educational processes. What does it mean today, in the age of the absence of limits, in a historical and social context marked by the disappearance of traditional containers of meaning, to consciously and critically relate to the limit, to test oneself? For the professional educator, it is indispensable to reason about limits and learn to distinguish them.
Philosophy has elaborated a rich reflection on the subject of the limit in its different meanings: limit as a place of passage, as a barrier, as a threshold.
Pedagogy has elaborated a broad theorisation of the concept of limit as the key to developing a critical education.
The course is divided into three parts:

1. Historical, cultural and social dimensions. Conceptual and historical analysis of ideas regarding the forms of the limit, both traditional and contemporary
2. Existential dimension of the limit: the relationship with one's own limit as a distinctive character of the human condition; the human condition as conditionality and the need to overcome the given situation.
3. Educational dimension: the work on the borderline situations, as a fundamental moment of the educational intervention, in the sense of a critical elaboration of one's own personal condition, of one's own social and collective situation.

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.
The course is delivered in italian.

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

The course discusses the theme of the limit from three points of view

1. from a conceptual point of view: definition of some terms from the lexicon of philosophy and education related to the theme of the limit and its variability in historical and cultural contexts (through the text that will be indicated later)
2. from a philosophical point of view: the limit situation as a category proper to the human condition and its determinants (finitude, communication, the extremes of life, pain, the relationship with otherness); how the "passage to the limit" allows for a clarification of existence (through K. Jaspers's book)
3. from the pedagogical point of view: conscientization as a collective strategy to bring out and deal pedagogically with the conditions that impede the development of the person in his social environment

(through P. Freire's book)

Bibliography

1. K. Jaspers, Filosofia vol. 2 Chiarificazione filosofica dell'esistenza, Mursia, Milano 2019, Cap. I: Esistenza, pp. 25-42, Cap. III: Comunicazione, pp. 64-107, Cap. VII: Situazioni-limite, pp. 184-227.
2. P. Freire, Pedagogia degli oppressi, Gruppo Abele Edizioni, Torino 2011.
3. M. Vergani, Dizionarietto di filosofia per educatori, Morcelliana, Brescia 2024.

The bibliography is for everyone.

Assessment methods

Attending students: oral exam.
No intermediated tests are planned.

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.
No intermediated tests are planned.

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 11.00 to 13.00. 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.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION