



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

### **Freedom of research and public use of reason: developing critical thinking through four philosophical approaches**

2324-102R-06

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#### **Title**

**Freedom of research and public use of reason: developing critical thinking through four philosophical approaches**

#### **Teacher(s)**

Prof. Mario Vergani  
Prof. Giorgio Bertolotti  
Prof.ssa Claudia Baracchi  
Dr. Marco Vanzulli

#### **Language**

English

#### **Short description**

The cycle of lectures is designed as an exercise of critical thinking, which improves reflexive and argumentative abilities.

Which social and institutional conditions affect research practices? What effects in the political sphere and in the context of public communication does the exercise of different research practices have to deal with?

This year, the seminar will provide PhD students with some philosophical approaches to analyse in depth this classical subject with reference to some issues of the current public debate. Each lecture will start with a brief presentation of some fundamental theses and models of analysis of the topic by the speakers, followed by a discussion.

The lectures are open to first, second, and third year doctoral students working in scientific, humanistic, and technological areas of research. The cycle of lectures is organized in the context of the PhD program "Education in the Contemporary Society", Department of Human Sciences for Education. The speakers will provide the attendants short texts and/or video material to read before the lecture.

Lessons will be in English.

**\*\*1) Who are the intellectuals and what are they for?**

**Dr. Marco Vanzulli - 23/02/2024 (14:00-18:00)**

We will deal with the question of the function of intellectuals in contemporary class societies, taking as a reference for discussion some paradigmatic and alternative positions, Gramsci, Mannheim, Benda and others, hinting then at some contemporary theorisations (Bauman, Chomsky et al.), trying to engage the participants on the question of the current extension of the concept of 'intellectual', keeping in mind the historical changes to which this figure has been subjected in the passage of the 20th century up to the present day, which are more difficult to conceptualise, but it is an unavoidable task to give substance to the question and to attempt together a sketch of a synthesis starting from the many examples that can be drawn from the media and news narrative.

**\*\*2) Critique as a virtue**

**Prof. Giorgio Bertolotti - 8/03/2023 (14:00-18:00)**

This talk will address just one question: What are we to understand by « critique » with respect to other bodies of knowledge, or ideas or policies?

A manageable reading list will be given a month prior to the talk.

**\*\*3) Freedom of research without conditions and university institutional conditions**

**Prof. Mario Vergani - 19/04/2024 (14:00-18:00)**

The university enunciates its mission as unconditional freedom of research, but this is realised under certain conditions, institutional, pedagogical, legal, economic, political in the broadest sense, which bind its practice and make its exercise effective. Where are they given and how can they be perceived in one's own activity? In a complex society, it is more difficult than in the past to recognise these constraints and the conflicts arising from them - between the political realm and the research system, between the different forms of knowledge, both scientific and of the human and social sciences. The discussion will be conducted on the basis of some examples relating to the organisation and functioning of the university system and by comparing it with some relevant moments of contemporary philosophical reflection on the theme.

**\*\*4) "Episteme and sophia: Philosophical Reflections and Human Sciences"**

**Prof.ssa Claudia Baracchi (15/05/2024 - date tbc) (14:00-18:00)**

The word "wisdom" disappeared from academic discourses and practices. A broad range of cultural registers (from pop to "high") take it as obsolete, or at best eccentrically quaint. Meanwhile, knowledge, scientific knowledge, has established itself as the idiom of power, i.e. in power and empowering. Its style has become the condition for success and attribution of resources (fellowships, research funds)—and not only in the techno-sciences, which clearly attract enormous interests. Other disciplines have struggled to present themselves in a "rigorously scientific" garb, so as to find a degree of legitimacy and subsistence ("social sciences," "human sciences"...). The

process has been underway for a long time, but we may now perceive its all-encompassing character and political stakes.

## **CFU / Hours**

2 CFU (16 hrs)

## **Teaching period**

23/02/24 2pm - 6pm U3-10

21/03/24 2.30pm - 6.30pm U6-41

19/04/24 2pm - 6pm U6-22

15/05/24 2pm - 6pm U9-08

**course registration on “Segreteria online”:** 05/02/2024 - 18/02/2024

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

QUALITY EDUCATION

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