UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

History of Philosophy

2425-2-E2401P076

Learning area

Interdisciplinary competences.

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Fundamental concepts and themes in the history of Western philosophical and scientific thought from its origins to the 20th century
- Intellectual, social and economic factors that have characterised the development of Western philosophical and scientific thought in different historical periods
- Epistemological, social and cultural implications of different philosophical and scientific theories and traditions

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Improvement of the student's cultural background, increasing his critical attitude and awareness of scientific investigation as a tool for the management and solution of collective issues
- Development of the ability to detect the complexity of philosophical and scientific questions in the humanities and in a broader social and cultural perspective
- Development of the ability to read and analyse a philosophical and scientific text, as well as the ability to contextualise it within a specific tradition of thought and a specific cultural and social issue
- Development of an adequate capacity for conceptual thinking
- Development of the ability to define, from the point of view of the history of ideas, a theoretical question and to use the acquired theoretical competences also in different theoretical-operational contexts

Contents

Title > **From the closed world to the infinite universe: an history of concept of space**

The course is divided into two parts.

a) After some preliminary considerations on the nature of philosophical enquiry and its conceptual specificities, the **first** insitutional part will analyse some of the main moments in the history of Western philosophical and scientific thought from antiquity to the 20th century.

b) In the **second** (monographic) part, some particular conceptions of space and spatiality from the Greek world to general relativity will be examined in an interdisciplinary framework encompassing philosophy, physics, mathematics and psychology.

Detailed program

General part > **Fundamentals of history of philosophical and scientific thought**

- Preliminary considerations and fundamental concepts.
- The origins of Greek thought.
- Plato's philosophical-scientific ideal.
- Philosophy and science in Aristotle.
- Greek philosophy and Christianity: St Augustine.
- Methodological perspectives in the Medieval Age.
- Renaissance philosophy (Telesio, Bruno, and Campanella) and the birth of modern science.
- The debate on "saving phenomena" in the Modern Age: Copernicus and Kepler.
- Galileo Galilei and the experimental method.
- Francis Bacon.
- Descartes and mechanism.
- Isaac Newton's natural philosophy.
- Rationalism, empiricism and the Kantian solution.
- Will, reason and suffering: Schopenhauer.
- Positivism and Evolutionism: Comte, Mill, Darwin, and Spencer.
- Communism and the critique of praxis: Karl Marx.
- Nietzsche and Bergson: becoming, consciousness and life.
- Spengler and the decline of the West.
- Karl Jaspers between psychopathology and philosophy of exsistence.
- The crisis of foundations.
- Logical positivism (the Vienna Circle).
- Popper and falsificationism.
- Change and revolution in science: Kuhn, Lakatos, Feyerabend.

Monographic part > **From the closed world to the infinite universe: ah history of concept of space**

- Preliminary considerations on the concept of space.
- Space, nature and motion in Greek thought and in the Middle Age.
- The new Renaissance cosmologies and the problem of infinite space.
- Newton's absolute space and Leibniz's critique.
- English empiricism, Kant and 20th century developments of the concept of space.
- Spaces and possible worlds: non-Euclidean geometries and the concept of curvature of space.

- The field concept in Faraday and Maxwell's electromagnetism.
- Einstein, the theory of relativity and four-dimensional space-time.

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge (high school) of the history of Western philosophy.

Teaching methods

28 in-person lecture-based classes.

Teaching methods consist in direct exposure, group discussion, analysis of historically and scientifically significant texts, and possible in-depth seminars. The course is held in Italian.

Class attendance is strongly recommended.

Assessment methods

The verification of learning will be carried out through a **oral examination**. The questions are aimed at testing the effective acquisition of the topics illustrated during the course, as well as to ascertain the ability to manage the contents of the proposed bibliography and the capability to critically deal with them.

There is no midterm exam.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

- Jaspers, K. (2010 [1949]). *Introduzione alla filosofia*, a cura di P. Chiodi. Milano: Raffaello Cortina (pp. 1-122).
- Severino, E. (2004). *La filosofia dai Greci al nostro tempo: la filosofia antica e medioevale*. Milano: BUR Rizzoli (pp. 19-76, 85-97, 109-116, 121-181, 191-194, 273-282, 294-307).
- Severino, E. (2004). *La filosofia dai Greci al nostro tempo: la filosofia moderna*. Milano: BUR Rizzoli (pp. 23-68, 91-142, 197-240, 247-249, 276, 283-330).
- Severino, E. (2004). *La filosofia dai Greci al nostro tempo: la filosofia contemporanea*. Milano: BUR Rizzoli (pp. 27-41, 87-104, 121-149, 153-187, 233-235, 281-299, 311-316, 325-330, 333-341, 354-362).
- Molaro, A. (2024). *Storia del concetto di spazio: dai Greci alla relatività generale*. Roma: Carocci (pp. 9-156, 165-192, 203-245, 264-307).
- Slides and further readings.

Foreign students (Erasmus) may contact the lecturer to arrange an examination programme in English or French.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS