UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Thought Systems, History of Ideas

2425-1-F0101R010

Course title

Spectral Lives

Topics and course structure

In a much-quoted page of The Human Condition, Hannah Arendt talks about a "space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where humans do not merely exist like other living or inanimate things but make their explicit appearance," and defines it as "the space of appearing." By "appearing" Arendt means making oneself visible, revealing oneself publicly through speech and action.
Yet, what are the conditions that govern access to this space of appearing, determining who can be seen, heard and recognized? And, most importantly, what does it mean to exist without access to this space - to exist, as it were, without appearing?
The course intends to reflect on these questions by making use of contributions from different fields: social research, anthropological inquiry, literature, and philosophy.

Objectives

Through this teaching, by means of an active attendance to lectures, we intend to promote:

- Knowledge and understanding of the models of self-understanding of the human being - understood both as a singularity and in relation to different social formations - developed within the Western philosophical tradition, with particular reference to the ontological, ethical, political, religious and cultural variables in general that structure the fields of experience and sediment in collective mentalities;
- Ability to put into relation different paradigms, grasping the recurring tension between historical and

transcendental approaches;
- Ability to apply knowledge and models, contributing to the development of critical skills for interpreting cultural contexts, and to the autonomy of judgment with respect to the theoretical tools and research protocols deployed.

Methodologies

Lectures will be mainly in the DE mode; three lectures will be in the DI modo. Different methodologies will be deployed: traditional lectures; class discussions on materials such as texts, slide presentations, audiovisual documents provided by the lecturer or independently proposed by students; participation of scholars presenting researches in progress.

Online and offline teaching materials

Texts, PPP slides, videos.

Programme and references

Reading List:

Arendt H., *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press 2018 (only: Prologue; ch. I, II, and V (the latter to § 31 included);
Butler J., *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Harvard UP 2015;
Derrida J., *Spectres of Marx*, Routledge 1994;
Montag W., *Spirits Armed and Unarmed: Derrida's Specters of Marx*, in Sprinker M. (ed.), *Ghostly Demarcations*, Verso 1999, pp 68-82.

And one text or set of texts to be chosen from amongst the following list:

- Bhaba J. (ed.), *Children Without a State. A Global Human Rights Challenge*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 2011 (chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, and12 or 13 only)
- Cavarero A., *Democrazia sorgiva*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 2019 along with Arendt H., *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, any edition (Part II, ch. IX only).
- Dal Lago A., *Non Persone*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1999.
- Heller-Roazen D., *Absentees. On Variously Missing Persons*, Zone Books, New York 2021 (only Preface; Part I, ch. 4; Part II, ch. 8; Part III; “Being It”).
- Sayad A., *L’immigration ou les paradoxes de l’altérité. 2. Les enfants illégitimes*, Raison d’agir, Paris 2014.

Although this course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students course material can also be available in English, and students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so.

Assessment methods

The examination, which is oral only, consists of an interview designed to assess the knowledge acquired through critical study of the texts included in the examination program and the content of the lectures. The acquisition of the specific disciplinary language and the ability to make appropriate connections between the topics of the lectures and the scientific and professional expertise that the degree course aims to form will also be assessed.

Office hours

By appointment, writing to: giorgio.bertolotti@unimib.it

Programme validity

Programs are valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION