



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

### Filosofia della Relazione

2425-1-F8501R065

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#### Course title

**Ethical Choice in Relation: Citizenship, Interculturalism, Artificial Intelligence**

#### Topics and course structure

*"How do our social relationships with others relate to our individual choices and actions? "*

*"By what criteria do we ascribe to others the status of citizens? On what grounds do we recognize or deny rights? "*

*"Where do the experiences of conflict between cultures and religions in our communities originate? What models of secularism do we have to deal with them? "*

*"Do artificial intelligences decide and act with us or for us? Who is accountable for their influence on our choices and discourse? "*

These questions cut across some increasingly critical areas of relationship for anyone working in and about society: old and new relations of citizenship, the phenomena of inclusion and conflict related to cultural and religious diversity, and the growing influence on our choices and imaginaries of generative Artificial Intelligences.

In an attempt to answer these questions, moral philosophy offers conceptual resources, interpretive approaches, and models of individual and group decision-making that can be useful for making ethically responsible choices in the contexts of civic engagement and professional pedagogical activity.

#### EXPECTED LEARNING RESULTS

##### *Knowledge and Understanding*

Upon completion of the course, the student will know the concepts underlying the main philosophical models of understanding social relations, with reference to their origin in the work of classical and modern authors such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Kant, and Bentham. Will be able to distinguish between public and private spheres, between ethical and legal dimensions. Will be able to appreciate the ethical-political relevance of the concepts of

social practice, public reason, social imaginary.

#### *Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to analyze critical issues emerging within citizenship relations, exclusionary dynamics based on cultural and religious difference. Explain emerging ethical issues within cases drawn from concrete experiences of civic and professional engagement in the field. Identify emerging ethical issues within human interactions with generative artificial intelligences. Deliberate, individually and in groups, about the course of action to take when faced with ethically problematic and dilemmatic situations.

#### *Autonomy of judgment*

At the end of the course, the student will be able to offer ethical justifications for their social conduct and to reflectively evaluate their role as a professional in the field of education in the light of a plurality of ethical-political ideals and values.

### **EXTENDED COURSE PROGRAM**

The course program is divided into sections which, in succession, make up the proposed path.

#### **1. Being and acting in public space**

This introductory section identifies some fundamental philosophical issues for understanding the specificity of ethical choice within the relationship between individual and community. Starting with the problematization of some conceptual distinctions used in this area (public and private, freedom and equality, justice and the common good), we consider the reflection on social bonding of some classical authors (Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Bentham) and examine some concepts typical of contemporary philosophical and sociological debate (social practice, public reason, social imaginary).

#### **2. Citizenship Relations.**

This section examines a first area of relations that manifests emerging criticalities in contemporary democratic societies: that of citizenship relations. Starting with some passages from Aristotle's *Politics*, we will problematize the basic features of the typical citizen's social action, placed between cooperative and deliberative relations. Discussing some examples of contemporary crisis of democratic citizenship (difficulty of integration of new citizens, disaffection for democratic processes, rise of authoritarian movements, polarization of political opinions) we will look for some possible response strategies in the texts of authors such as Hannah Arendt, Martha Nussbaum and Michael Sandel.

#### **3. Intercultural Relations**

This section examines a number of relationship domains where the ethical problem of the threshold between inclusion and exclusion on cultural and religious grounds is raised. In relation to these issues, philosophical reflection on the crisis of multiculturalism, the rise of intercultural and postsecular paradigms, and contemporary reformulations of the principle of secularism will be examined. Some concrete cases of normative controversy over religious dress and symbols in schools and food prohibitions in public canteens will also be discussed. Texts by philosophers such as Charles Taylor, Jocelyn Maclure, Jürgen Habermas, and Judith Butler will provide theoretical and practical insights to discuss some ethically problematic cases drawn from the field experience of educators and social workers who have had to confront tensions and conflicts rooted in cultural difference.

#### **4. Relations with Artificial Intelligences.**

This section will offer a preliminary philosophical reading of the impact of generative Artificial Intelligences on social life, with particular attention to the unprecedented transformations they are having on the formation of ideas and values in various spheres: care, education, political life. Some texts by Luciano Floridi and ... will offer useful suggestions for discussing how interactions with AI-based systems are challenging traditional categories of creativity, authorship, responsibility. Emerging approaches in the ethical analysis of these systems, starting with the value alignment model, will also be specifically considered.

#### **Conclusions: Toward an ethical profile for the pedagogue**

In this last, short section of the course, we question the public role of the figure of the pedagogue, starting with a

systematic and reasoned analysis from the ethical charters and codes of ethics of Italian associations of pedagogists and educators. In a comparison with the international debate on the ethics of the educational and care professions, we will conclude the course by trying to outline some open perspectives on the ethical responsibility proper to the pedagogist in a scenario of profound social and cultural transformations.

## Objectives

The course aims to provide advanced philosophical tools for **analyzing difficulties and dilemmas of ethical decision-making within certain areas of constantly changing social relations.**

Specifically, a course is offered to students that:

- (i)** considers the specificity and criticality of **citizenship** relations;
- (ii)** investigates the value choices underlying the phenomena of inclusion and exclusion related to experiences of **cultural and religious diversity**;
- (iii)** problematizes the impact on individual and collective choices of **artificial intelligence**.

In general, from the analysis of ethical cases and public controversies, we aim to develop, individually and in groups, the capacity for ethical reflection and deliberation in these different areas, with particular attention to their impact on public education contexts.

## Methodologies

The course uses a combination of different teaching methods. **All lectures consist of a part in which ideas, authors and texts are presented** (delivery mode for about **60%** of the lecture) and **a part devoted to critical discussion of lecture topics and group deliberation on ethical cases** (interactive mode for about **40%** of the lecture).

Overall therefore, the teaching consists of **18 lectures of 3 hours and 1 concluding lecture of 2 hours for a total of 56 hours divided into approximately 33 hours of didactic delivery and 23 hours of interactive teaching.**

**All activities are conducted in presence but at the same time a curated selection of the teaching conducted in class is video-recorded and made available** to non-attending students to support their study activities.

Teaching is delivered in **Italian**, but the professor is available to support students speaking in **English and French** outside of class.

**The entire course bibliography is also available in English.**

The **final exam** can be taken by international students **also in English and French.**

## Online and offline teaching materials

**The materials used during the course will be made available to students** in parallel with the lessons.

Open discussion, the answer to shared questions and the discussion of ethical cases drawn from the field experience of professionals and educators constitute a central element of the course. In this sense, **the presence and interactive participation of the greatest number substantially enriches everyone's learning experience.**

At the same time, for **working and non-attending students**, audio-video recordings will be made available to support personal study: these will be short videos dedicated to the presentation and discussion of the texts included in the bibliography. The **purpose of this approach is to ensure to all those who cannot attend the course that they can still access a selected collection of small video-lessons** which facilitate them in the choice of texts to present for the exam and support them in their reading.

## Programme and references

The course bibliography includes **one choice reading for each of the course sections**.

The study of these texts complements that of the **materials used in class and always made available online, as they are for all intents and purposes study materials and subject to assessment for all**.

The texts listed in the bibliography will all be presented during the course, thus facilitating choice according to each individual's interests. No pre-readings are required for the course itself.

### 1. For the section "Being and Acting in Public Space"

Michael Sandel, *Justice. What's the Right Thing to Do?*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York 2010, ch. 6-7, 9-10.

### 2. For the section "Citizenship relationships"

Hannah Arendt, *We Refugees*, in *The Jewish Writings*, Schocken Books, New York 2007.

OR

Martha C. Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity. A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1998, Introduction and ch. 1-4.

### 3. For the section "Intercultural Relationships"

Jocelyn Maclure, Charles Taylor, *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 2011.

OR

Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Judith Butler, Cornel West, *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, Columbia University Press, New York 2011.

### 4. For the section "Relationships with Artificial Intelligence"

Luciano Floridi, *The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2023, ch. 1-5, 11.

OR

Frank Pasquale, *New Laws of Robotics. Defending Human Expertise in the Age of AI*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 2020, cap. 1-3, 8.

**Programme and course bibliography are the same for attending and non-attending students.** Audiovisual materials will be available to support the non-attending students in choosing and approaching the books in bibliography.

For non-attending students who seek further support to their understanding of the course framework , it is possible to read:

5. Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, Anansi, Toronto 1991.

## **Assessment methods**

### **Methodologies of learning assessment**

Assessment is through a **final oral-only test**, structured in four questions, each of which tests a specific area of learning, as follows: a question on the introductory course section on Being and Acting in Public Space, a question on the section on Citizenship Relations, a question on the section on Intercultural Relations, and a question on the section on Relations with Artificial Intelligences. There are no intermediate exams.

**The final exam can also be taken by international students in English and French.**

### **Evaluation criteria**

The final grade is expressed in thirtieths and takes into account, according to a weighted average, the evaluation of three areas of knowledge and competence:

**(a)** Knowledge of the basic theoretical elements contained in the lecture materials and texts in the bibliography (40% of the grade);

**(b)** Argumentation and analysis skills applied to the connections between the course topics and the ethical cases considered (35% of the grade);

**(c)** Ownership of language, precision and order in the exposition of the topics during the colloquium (25% of the grade).

## **Office hours**

The teacher is gladly available to students to arrange a meeting by appointment, in person or remotely.

## **Programme validity**

The programs are valid for two academic years.

## **Course tutors and assistants**

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## **Sustainable Development Goals**

NO POVERTY | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH |  
REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS

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