UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# COURSE SYLLABUS

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

**2425-102R-19**

## 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. Didier Contadini

## 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.

All meetings will take place in presence only.

**Freedom of research without conditions and university institutional conditions**
**Prof. Mario Vergani - 21/03/2025** (14:00-18:00) - **room U7-13**

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.

**Critique as a virtue**
**Prof. Giorgio Bertolotti - 3/04/2025** (14:00-18:00) - room U6-41

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

**Truth, truthfulness et similia: critical considerations on research ethics**
**Dr. Didier Contadini - 23/04/2025** (14:00-18:00) - - room U6-22

Freedom of research is a key issue for those working in higher education and in academia. Various ethical aspects are linked to freedom of research. I shall focus on two of them: the way research work is carried out and (self-)perceived; social context as a point of origin and point of fallout of research. A crucial point is the question of the “truthfulness” inherent to research and its results, which I shall discuss by drawing on Kant’s text on truthfulness and on Foucault’s discussion on parrhesia. From here, I’ll approach the issue of FFP. I will then consider some striking historical cases that problematise the meaning, limits, and content of freedom of research. This will shed light on the oft-neglected role of socio-economic aspects. These aspects characterise the different ethical positions of researchers, who must currently come to terms with what has been called their “moral illiteracy”.

**“Art, Imagination, and the pathos of knowledge"**
**Prof. Claudia Baracchi (15/05/2025)** (14:00-18:00) - U6-41

The lecture will inceptively undertake to cast light on art as a mode of exploration, disclosure, and discovery—as a path to knowledge no less than the disciplines of scientific reason. The second part of the presentation will consider the potential for political reconfiguration inherent in the ventures of creativity.

## CFU / Hours

2 CFU (16 hrs)

## Teaching period

21/03/2025 2 pm – 6 pm U7-13
03/04/2025 2 pm – 6 pm U6-41
23/04/2025 2 pm – 6 pm U6-22
15/05/2025 2 pm – 6 pm U6-41

**course registration on “Segreterie online”**: from 27/02/2025 to 17/03/2025

## Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION