UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Aesthetic Experience and Education

2526-2-F5702R015

Course title

Pedagogy of Aesthetic Experience

Topics and course structure

The course will explore and reclaim the role and the tacit pervasiveness of what María Zambrano calls the logos of feeling.
Through a process of re-appropriating the dimension of feeling and the relationship between the senses, sensitivity, and learning, we will traverse the terrain of aesthetics understood as a philosophy of experience.

Starting from the recognition and appreciation of aesthetic experience in various contexts—such as educational environments, domestic spaces, nature, everyday objects, social interactions, cultural habits, and the media—we will engage with and reanimate the aesthetics of the everyday.
In doing so, aesthetic experience will be encountered both as a space for self-formation (from the potential of aesthetic experience to foster feeling, creativity, critical thinking, and a constructive/narrative awareness of self), and as a pedagogical gesture, namely: the act of seeing.

Following a path that intersects with various arts—ranging from cinema to photography (with a specific focus on the bio-photo-narrative method), from painting to land art, from voice to writing—we will enter into the realm of canon, proportion, improvisation, and deviation from the norm, in order to experience (and thus to learn) the “grammar of aesthetic experience.”

This journey will move across semiotics and visual signs, rhetoric and the generative power of silence, attention as a semiotic act, and art (including expressive writing) as a pedagogy of attention.

Objectives

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes
The course aims to guide students in the development of critical thinking by enabling them to acquire a systematic understanding of key epistemological and methodological issues related to aesthetic experience, with particular attention to the poietic gesture as a formative movement of thought.

Among the main objectives:

Acquiring skills in observation;
Recognizing and critically interpreting emerging data in educational contexts, and comparing them with the theoretical knowledge acquired throughout the course;
Expressing and supporting well-reasoned, independent judgments using appropriate conceptual and pedagogical language.
Above all, the course seeks to:

Promote awareness of a multimodal and sensitive approach (in the Zambranian sense), allowing students to experience a pedagogy of aesthetic experience as living thought—a constant questioning of lived experiences and the existential and educational dynamics that shape them.
Summary of Learning Objectives

1. Knowledge and Understanding as an Opening to Symbolic Experience

– Develop a critical understanding of the cultural, linguistic, and educational forms through which human beings experience the world and themselves, recognizing that all knowledge is embedded within a symbolic network of discourses, gestures, and imaginaries.
– Acquire theoretical tools to interpret educational experience as an aesthetic and linguistic event—where thought takes form through language, signs, rituals, and the rhythms of lived life.

2. Applied Understanding as Experiential Practice of Thought

– Apply acquired knowledge to critically inhabit real educational contexts, reading in them the forms of experience, language, gesture, and relationship.
– Design and assess learning pathways in which education is conceived as an exercise in meaning-making and embodied speech, capable of generating awareness, dialogue, and transformation in all involved subjects.

3. Autonomous Judgment as Linguistic Exercise of Feeling and Speaking

– Cultivate the capacity to critically reflect on educational theories and practices in light of the symbolic, corporeal, and poetic nature of human experience.
– Take ethical and epistemological positions rooted in the responsibility of language and the deep listening to others, to artworks, and to the world as sites of meaning and existential appeal.

4. Communication as Aesthetic and Dialogical Gesture

– Develop the ability to communicate educational thoughts, practices, and forms of knowledge, recognizing language as an embodied gesture, shaped by rhythm, imagery, and ethical implication.
– Use the specific languages of pedagogy in a conscious and creative way, valuing the poetic, rhetorical, and symbolic dimensions of communication as tools for relation and transformation.

5. Learning as a Living Practice

– Strengthen the capacity to learn not as the accumulation of content but as a lived and transformative experience, involving body, memory, imagination, and thought.
– Support personal and professional development as a reflective practice, generating new perspectives, authentic

questions, and gestures of openness toward others and the world.

Additionally, the course will:
– Equip students with methodological tools to critically explore and problematize experience, in order to support their academic and professional growth at every stage of their path.

Expected Learning Outcomes
Through active and regular participation in classes and course activities, students are expected to develop:

The ability to connect diverse bodies of knowledge in meaningful ways;
The capacity to apply theoretical models to the observation of lived experiences and educational practices, while drawing philosophical insight from those same practices;
The ability to move beyond common misunderstandings and prejudices about emotional life, recognizing its ethical and existential relevance in light of phenomenology and María Zambrano's logos of feeling;
The capacity to distinguish between different emotional phenomena: sensations, emotional tones, emotions properly speaking, feelings, etc.;
The ability to name, express, understand, and process emotions and feelings;
The ability to observe and document emotional learning and support interventions using appropriate tools and methods;
The development of a conscious sensitivity in observing and articulating capacities such as: looking, waiting, desiring, hoping, recognizing bias, illusion, and shifting perspectives.
Students will also be asked to:
Experiment on themselves with the methodological tools acquired;
Connect theoretical knowledge with expressive, poetic, visible, and communicable educational practices;
Convey the meaning and value of pedagogical attention in various situations presented in class (through videos, guest interventions, readings);
Interpret and reflect upon the experience of a poetic, theatrical, or cinematic text, and be able to communicate its educational significance.

Methodologies

teaching lessons are in Italian.

The teaching activities will be conducted in person, alternating and interweaving moments of lecture-based teaching with moments of interactive teaching (50% lecture, 50% interactive), and will be carried out using methodological approaches aligned with the following differentiation:

Participatory lectures
Reflection and collaborative writing activities
Meetings and conferences
Expert interventions
Analysis of literary, artistic, and cinematic texts
Exercises
Group deepening sessions
Educational field trips
Attendance at exhibitions, theatrical performances, and film screenings
Depending on the needs of the course—which arise from interaction with participants and their specific group dynamics—as well as contextual contingencies, it may be necessary, as a supplement to the course structure and methodological distribution of lessons, to deliver no more than four lessons remotely in asynchronous mode.

Online and offline teaching materials

Students are kindly invited to register for the course via the e-learning platform (Moodle) in order not to miss any lectures, announcements, or course materials. These materials may include supplementary readings, guidelines, and suggestions to support individual study and reflection.

Programme and references

Bibliographical references in other languages (english, portuguese, spanish) will be arranged during specific conversations between visiting students and teacher

Assessment methods

No midterm exams are scheduled.

Students are invited to:

Conduct research, conceive, prepare, and submit a "project" that can take the form of an image-based investigation, photographs, interviews, videos, artistic elements, accompanied by a brief text of personal elaboration. The project theme must be agreed upon with the instructor. This material should be submitted a few days before the exam. The exam will consist of an argumentation and presentation of the project, connecting it to the studied texts and personal reflections.
The evaluation will consider, in any case:

Originality
Clarity of exposition
Conceptual accuracy
Argumentative ability (structure and coherence of arguments)
Expressive ability (knowledge and use of pedagogical language)
Reflective capacity (scientifically grounded expression of a personal position)
Critical capacity
In general, the criteria used are defined as follows:

Minimum level requirements: To pass the exam, it is essential to demonstrate knowledge of and orientation within the exam topics, along with the relevant specialized vocabulary.
Excellent level requirements: To pass the exam with excellence, one must demonstrate in-depth study and understanding of the program content, the ability to connect topics with each other, and the capacity to argue consciously, autonomously, and appropriately the distinctive aspects.
Specifically:

Insufficient (0–17)
Preparation is inadequate regarding the fundamental thematic nuclei of the course and the texts addressed.
There is a lack of autonomous thinking, with significant difficulties in arguing, critically analyzing, and meaningfully interpreting content.
Connections between theory and practice, as well as between texts and philosophical-educational questions, are absent or irrelevant.
Expressive skills and use of specific vocabulary are confused, approximate, or inadequate and do not reveal any engagement with the symbolic and reflective experience of education.
Sufficient – More than sufficient (18–23)

Preparation appears generic and partial, with uncertainties or gaps on some central course topics.
Critical capacity is uncertain, with reflections still little autonomous and discontinuous in personal elaboration.
Connections between theoretical and experiential dimensions are present but not always coherent or in-depth.
The exposition is essentially understandable but with imprecise use of philosophical-pedagogical language.
Fair (24–27)
Preparation is adequate and overall correct, with good knowledge of the main topics treated, though not always in-depth on the more complex nuclei.
There is autonomous reflective and interpretative capacity, though sometimes not fully developed or coherent.
Connections between texts, concepts, and educational practices are significant, showing growing sensitivity to the symbolic nature of experience.
The exposition is clear and orderly, with appropriate use of disciplinary vocabulary.
Good – Excellent (28–30 with honors)
Preparation is complete, thorough, and conscious, with full mastery of the topics, texts, and proposed perspectives.
Thinking capacity is critical, articulated, and autonomous, capable of generating original insights and philosophical dialogue rooted in experience.
Connections between theory and practice, among concepts, texts, and educational situations, are effective, pertinent, and creative.
Expression is rich, precise, and reflective, with mature command of philosophical-educational language, oriented toward grasping the aesthetic-linguistic dimension of education.

Office hours

Office hours should be scheduled in agreement with the instructor and course collaborators.

Programme validity

2yrs

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION