UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Politica, Diritti e Società

2526-1-F8805N005

Learning objectives

This course aims to provide students with a solid theoretical and analytical foundation in political and social philosophy, with particular emphasis on conceptions of citizenship and theories of human rights. These themes will be explored in their historical, legal, and political dimensions, with special attention to issues of rights protection and violations within the context of contemporary public debate and ongoing processes of democratic erosion. By engaging with key philosophical texts and real-world case studies, the course seeks to develop students' critical capacities to interpret and understand the complex relationship between politics, rights, and society in consolidated democracies, transitional contexts, and situations marked by conflict or authoritarianism.
Specific Learning Outcomes (D1–D5)
• D1 – Knowledge and Understanding:
Acquire an in-depth understanding of the main concepts of political and social philosophy, particularly human rights theory, the idea of citizenship, and the historical foundations of national and supranational institutions involved in the protection of rights.

• D2 – Applying Knowledge and Understanding:
Apply theoretical knowledge to the analysis of real-world cases involving human rights violations, taking into account diverse geopolitical contexts, the emergence of new forms of authoritarianism, and global challenges such as health, environmental, economic, and military crises.

• D3 – Making Judgements:
Develop an autonomous and critical approach to evaluating political and social dynamics related to human rights, with particular attention to the manipulation of information, instrumental use of rights discourse, and the tensions between security and liberty.

• D4 – Communication Skills:
Improve oral and written communication skills, particularly the ability to present complex analyses and critical reflections clearly and coherently in both academic and professional settings.

• D5 – Learning Skills:

Promote autonomy in learning, the ability to stay informed on emerging issues, and the capacity to work collaboratively, while developing effective research, source evaluation, and critical interpretation strategies.

Contents

The course explores the relationship between politics, rights, and society by analyzing the historical and theoretical development of citizenship and human rights in their various forms and contexts. Focus will be placed on the challenges to rights within consolidated democracies, transitional states, and conflict zones, with special attention to the dynamics that facilitate the rise of authoritarian regimes and the weakening of the rule of law.
Current global issues such as overlapping and interlinked crises—health, environmental, military, and economic—will also be examined, with a focus on their impact on fundamental rights, human security, and international governance.

Detailed program

Module 1: Theoretical and Historical Foundations – Human Rights and Citizenship
• The history and philosophy of human rights and the idea of citizenship.
• Analysis of major declarations, conventions, and constitutional charters, with reference to the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union, and national legal systems.
• Key concepts: natural rights, positive rights, active citizenship, collective rights.
Module 2: Crises and Violations
• Analysis of human rights violations in national and international contexts.
• Examination of new forms of authoritarianism and democratic crises in a global perspective.
• In-depth study of health, environmental, economic, and armed conflict emergencies.
• Special focus topics: forced migration, access to healthcare, environmental rights, repression of dissent.
Module 3: Workshops, Seminars, and Educational Visits
• Case study analysis, group exercises, presentations.
• Educational visit to a museum or cultural center (chosen by the students).
• Potential meetings with experts and practitioners in the field of human rights.

Prerequisites

• Basic knowledge of political theory and the functioning of democratic institutions.
• Interest in critical debate and argumentative reasoning.
• Willingness to work in groups and develop independent learning skills.
• Ability to read theoretical texts in Italian or English.

Teaching methods

The course consists of 56 total hours, structured as follows:
• 60% traditional lectures, supported by slides and multimedia tools for the presentation of theoretical content.
• 40% interactive activities, including group work, seminars with Italian and international experts, case study analysis, individual and group presentations, and an educational field visit.

Depending on the composition of the student cohort, parts of the course may be conducted in English or another agreed language.

Assessment methods

The final assessment consists of an oral exam based on a written paper agreed upon with the instructor.
• The paper must comply with detailed guidelines available on the e-learning platform and include a relevant, up-to-date bibliography.
• Students may choose to write and present their paper in English or another agreed-upon language.

Evaluation criteria include:
• Learning capacity and ability to stay up to date on relevant topics (D5)
• Clarity and argumentative effectiveness in oral and written communication (D4)
• Relevance and depth of the selected topic
• Critical and analytical skills in engaging with texts and cases (D1, D2, D3)
• Coherence, clarity, and completeness of the presentation
• Rigorous and comprehensive use of bibliographic sources
A detailed schedule outlining deadlines and submission procedures for the final paper will be published during the first week of the course.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

• Hannah Arendt, Le origini del totalitarismo, Einaudi, Torino, 2009.
• Lorella Cedroni, Marina Calloni, Filosofia politica contemporanea, Le Monnier, Firenze, 2012.
• Paolo Costa, Cittadinanza, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2005.
• Stefano Petrucciani, Democrazia, Einaudi, Torino, 2014.
• Stefano Rodotà, Il diritto di avere diritti, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2012.

Additional materials, including official declarations and constitutional documents, will be available on the e-learning platform. Supplementary readings on emerging topics such as digital rights, climate crises, and contemporary authoritarianism will be recommended as needed.

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS