UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Topics in contemporary public philosophy

2526-102R-25

Title

Topics in contemporary public philosophy

Teacher

Marco Vanzulli, Mario Vergani, Vittorio Morfino, Claudia Baracchi

Language

English

Short description

Four lessons that seek to show the breadth of philosophy, developing a theme of aesthetics, one of ethics, one of political philosophy and one of philosophy of society and which intend to stimulate discussion with the people present at the meetings.

Marco Vanzulli
February 18, 2026
Ethics. Responsibility Profiles and Research.
The lecture will allow to discuss the different aspects of responsibility between general ethics

and applied ethics. But how is the concept of responsibility developed philosophically? How do personal and collective responsibility differ and intertwine? And how do they relate to moral, legal, social and political responsibility? The lecture aims to examine how these aspects affect epistemological responsibility, i.e. the responsibility of the researcher.

Mario Vergani
February 25, 2026
Society. The Gift as a Social Fact. A Marxist Critique of Prevalent Gift Theories
Understood by anthropology as a phenomenon situated between ethics, politics, and economics and studied in archaic societies, the exchange of gifts, the gift, is a social phenomenon whose study has enjoyed a certain success, even a certain vogue, starting with Marcel Mauss's Essai sur le don. Through a critique of the most widespread interpretations of this phenomenon, we will attempt to grasp its theoretical significance and reframe its value in light of a Marxist analysis. In the background, another concept stands out as essential to understanding historical societies: that of work.

Vittorio Morfino
April 15, 2026
Politics: The marxist tradition against the grain
The classes will explore the concept of "plural temporality" within the Marxist tradition, counterposing it to the linear, stadial, and progressive view of history. Physics will be used as a starting point to introduce the idea of a multiplicity of coexisting times, in a second step analyzing how this plurality emerges as a symptom of inadequacy in Marx's own thinking (e.g., in The Eighteenth Brumaire or in the letters on the Russian rural commune) and in later authors such as Bloch (with the concept of "non-contemporaneity"), Gramsci (with his analysis of "stratified" common sense), and Althusser (with the concept of "differential temporality"). The goal is to deconstruct a deterministic philosophy of history in order to think about the complexity, contingency, and intertwining of historical times, thus opening up new spaces for emancipatory political action.

Claudia Baracchi
"Art, Sensibility, and the Pathos of Knowledge"
May 7, 2026
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 address the experience of theater and its potential for individual as well as communal formation. Sharing the experience of spectatorship (we'll watch a theatrical piece together) will provide the backdrop for an open discussion.

Target audience

studenti di dottorato

Maximum number of participans

50

Assessment method

Attendance at least 70% of the meetings is required

CFU / Hours

2 cfr 16 hour

Teaching period and mode

18/02/26 14 - 18 U6-1D
25/03/26 14-18 U6-41
15/04/26 09-13 U6-11
07/05/26 14-18 U1-02

course registration on “Segreterie online”: from 9/01/2026 to 11/02/2026

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION