UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Philosophy of Human Rights and Pluralism

2627-4-A5810254

Learning objectives

The course offers students the opportunity to explore the variety of legal-philosophical dimensions of human rights with reference to selected areas of reflection, in particular environmental ethics and ethics of new technologies. The course will help students develop rational instruments for developing critical thinking, fostered by a strong interdisciplinary approach, and for understanding the complex legal-philosophical questions raised by the modern challenges to human rights.
By the end of the course the students will acquire:

- Knowledge and understanding of the main philosophical-legal issues stemming from technological development and the environmental crisis that challenges the human rights framework
- Ability to apply knowledge and understanding of the subject by the elaboration of ethical-philosophical analysis applied to the legal field
- Independent judgment in interpreting the main legal and philosophical principles of the human rights discourse and in finding the most appropriate legal solution
- Communication skills through the guided discussion on important case law, scientific papers, and other materials during class activities.
- Capacity of autonomous learning, thanks to the ability to research, study, and critically assess guidelines, international instruments, scientific papers, and other sources discussed during the course.

Contents

The course of Philosophy of Human Rights and Pluralism deals with the ethical-legal questions stemming from the new challenges to the human rights framework. The course will critically examine how the human rights framework adapts to the complex challenges of climate change, sustainability, artificial intelligence, and neurotechnologies. New legal proposals will be analysed within the value-laden framework of fundamental rights to address the challenges of the digitalisation of society and of ecological transition.
The course is taught in English.

Detailed program

The course deals with the ethical-legal questions rised by the intersection between environmental and climate issues with technological innovation. New legal proposals will be analysed within the value-laden framework of fundamental rights to address the challenges of the digitalisation of society and of ecological transition.
To do so, key aspects of the debate will be analysed, such as: how the concept of sustainable development, and its evolution, can be used to evaluate the impact of technological innovation on our society; how climate change issues force us to think of globals solution that involve the whole international community; how technological innovation is shaping a new balance between power and human rights in our society.
The course aims to give students the critical instruments to autonomously understand and independently evaluate the modern challenges that the human rights framework has to face

The language of the course is English

Prerequisites

None

Teaching methods

The didactic activity will consist of frontal lectures and a given number of interactive lectures where concrete cases will be discussed in class. Throughout the course, select lectures will feature guest presentations by international experts in the fields of Philosophy, Ethics of emerging technology and Human-Rights Law.
The material for discussion will be made available in advance on the e-learning platform.
Didactic tools:
-e-learning platform
-case analysis
-paper analysis

Assessment methods

Assessment criteria will include:
the verification of the knowledge of course content through the materials referenced and discussed during the course and on the textbook referenced in the last section of the Syllabus.
The evaluation of students will be measured with regards to the Learning Objectives of the course, with a particular focus on:

- The knowledge of the main philosophical accounts of the relationship between Law and Emerging technologies
- The acquisition of the ability to develop autonomous and rigorous critical reflection on the philosophical, ethical, and legal issues surrounding the new challenges to Human Rights.
- Acquisition of the fundamental methodological instrument, categories and skills to develop independent critical thinking

- Development of the ability to analyse and present arguments based on interdisciplinary knowledge in a rigorous manner, working with the appropriate sources
- Development of critical instruments and skills to autonomously evaluate new technological advancements and their challenges to Human Rights

During the course, there will be the possibility to take part in discussions of practical cases or article contents, with the possibility to score 5 points
Students who achieve the max. score of 5 will have the possibility to participate in a final presentation presenting a case study.

Assessment criteria of the discussions and final test:
• The ability to conduct critical analysis applying theoretical-argumentative tools to solve a real-life case study
• The ability to identify and distinguish between technical issues and ethical issues
• The ability to indicate the main reference regulations (where existing) to address the ethical case in line with fundamental rights frameworks
• The use of vocabulary appropriate and relevant to the discipline
Although the overall syllabus and learning objectives of the course do not differ for attending and non-attending students, students may choose to prepare for the exam using one of the following two options:
The first option, recommended only for attending students, consists of preparing for the exam using the explanations and critical discussions held during lectures, along with the sections of the reference texts specified and discussed throughout the course and made available on the e-learning;
The second option, recommended for non-attending students, consists of preparing for the exam using the reference texts listed for non-attending students in the following section of this syllabus.
Please note that in both cases, critical reading of the texts is considered an essential requirement for achieving the course's learning objectives.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Students will be able to choose one of the two options:

1. Readings and slides necessary to prepare for the exam will be made available during the course on the e-learning platform
2. Reading the book N. BOBBIO, The Age of Rights, 1996; the essay L. FERRAJOLI, A Constitution of the Earth, to save humanity, 2026
   PLEASE NOTE: The difference in the materials used to prepare for the exam stems from the fact that current topics will be addressed during the course, which have not necessarily been systematized into dedicated textbooks yet. Attendance is therefore recommended in order to gain a perspective on this constantly evolving subject that is as up to date as possible with current institutional debate.

Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY | AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | CLIMATE ACTION | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS