



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Filosofia Politica

2627-2-E2002R013

Course title

Metamorphoses of Power: From Marx to Algorithmic Power

Topics and course structure

Part I. Ideology and Reproduction from Marx to Althusser

Part II. Neoliberalism, Biopolitics, and Algorithmic Power (Foucault, Dardot and Laval, Zuboff)

This course examines the forms and metamorphoses of power within capitalist modernity, taking as its guiding thread the concept of ideology and its development within historical materialism. The first part of the course explores the concept of ideology in Marx's formulation and subsequently in Althusser's reworking, relating it to state power, institutional apparatuses, and capitalist reproduction. Particular attention will be devoted to Althusser's thesis that the power of ideology lies in its capacity to "hail"—and thereby "produce"—the subjects that we are.

The second part of the course focuses on selected contemporary forms of power (neoliberal interpellation, biopolitics, and algorithmic profiling), analysing them in relation to the transformations of contemporary capitalism. The aim is to show how different forms of power today mobilise, in novel ways, the fundamental operation of ideology identified by Althusser.

The course will be delivered in Italian

Objectives

- foster the knowledge of key concepts of modern political thought;

- promote the capacity to critically compare and analyse different theoretical perspectives;
- promote students' ability to apply abstract concepts to interpret the present predicament

Methodologies

Lectures; audiovisual material; in-class seminars

Online and offline teaching materials

Slides and selected passages will be provided during the course.

Programme and references

Assessment methods

The assessment consists of a written examination, with the option of an additional oral examination.

The written examination includes a multiple-choice test and three open-ended questions (subject to a maximum word/line limit). Students who wish to improve or supplement their written examination grade may take an optional oral examination consisting of a 10–15 minute interview.

Assessment Criteria

The combination of a written examination with an optional oral interview is consistent with the learning objectives of the course, as it enables the assessment of students' knowledge of the course material, their ability to develop written arguments and demonstrate a critical understanding of the topics covered, as well as their capacity for philosophical analysis and for connecting theoretical concepts with practical issues.

Assessment will be based on the **Dublin Descriptors**.

Low Level (0–17/30): Fail

Knowledge and Understanding: The student demonstrates limited and fragmented knowledge of the assigned texts and topics, with significant misunderstandings of the readings.

Applying Knowledge and Understanding: The student is unable to identify and discuss the philosophical concepts studied within the assigned texts. They show only a very limited ability to summarise the readings and are unable to contextualise or compare them.

Making Judgements: The student displays little or no critical thinking or independent judgement, relying exclusively on information provided by the instructor or secondary literature.

Communication Skills: Oral expression is hesitant, imprecise, and formulaic, with poor command of the discipline-specific terminology.

Learning Skills: The student demonstrates limited ability to elaborate independently on acquired knowledge or relate it to broader contexts and personal experience.

Intermediate Level (18–24/30): Satisfactory–Good

Knowledge and Understanding: The student demonstrates a general knowledge of the assigned texts and topics, although with some gaps, inaccuracies regarding non-essential aspects, or occasional misunderstandings in textual analysis.

Applying Knowledge and Understanding: With some guidance from the instructor, the student is able to identify philosophical concepts in the assigned texts. They can adequately summarise, interpret, contextualise, and compare the readings.

Making Judgements: The student shows a degree of independent critical judgement, although evaluations often remain close to established interpretations.

Communication Skills: Expression is clear and reasonably precise, with a satisfactory command of the discipline-specific vocabulary. The student demonstrates awareness of the need to adapt linguistic register to different communicative contexts.

Learning Skills: The student shows a satisfactory ability to elaborate on acquired knowledge and relate it to broader contexts and personal experience.

High Level (25–30/30): Very Good–Excellent

Knowledge and Understanding: The student demonstrates thorough and well-grounded knowledge of the assigned texts and topics, analysing and interpreting them with confidence and accuracy.

Applying Knowledge and Understanding: The student is able to identify and discuss philosophical concepts in the texts confidently, offering effective and well-reasoned personal observations. They analyse, synthesise, interpret, contextualise, and compare the readings with sound argumentative skills, including, where appropriate, interdisciplinary connections.

Making Judgements: The student demonstrates excellent critical thinking, independent judgement, and originality in analysing and interpreting philosophical texts and problems.

Communication Skills: Expression is clear, rigorous, fluent, and appropriate. The student is fully aware of the need to adapt linguistic register to different communicative contexts.

Learning Skills: The student demonstrates excellent independent learning skills, showing the ability to elaborate critically on acquired knowledge and relate it effectively to broader contexts and personal experience.

Students with certified accommodations are required to email the relevant documentation to the instructor before the examination. In addition to implementing the accommodations formally approved by the University's disability and learning support services, the instructor is available to discuss course content and provide clarification during office hours, either in person or online by appointment.

Office hours

TBC in September

Programme validity

Two academic years

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
