UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Storia del Pensiero Filosofico e Scientifico

2627-2-E2403P015

Learning area

Interdisciplinary competences.

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Fundamental concepts and themes in the history of Western philosophical and scientific thought from its origins to the 20th century.
- Intellectual, social and economic factors that have characterised the development of Western philosophical and scientific thought in different historical periods.
- Epistemological, social and cultural implications of different philosophical and scientific theories and traditions.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Improvement of the student's cultural background, increasing his critical attitude and awareness of scientific investigation as a tool for the management and solution of collective issues.
- Development of the ability to detect the complexity of philosophical and scientific questions in the humanities and in a broader social and cultural perspective.
- Development of the ability to read and analyse a philosophical and scientific text, as well as the ability to contextualise it within a specific tradition of thought and a specific cultural and social issue.
- Development of an adequate capacity for conceptual thinking.
- Development of the ability to define, from the point of view of the history of ideas, a theoretical question and to use the acquired theoretical competences also in different theoretical-operational contexts.

Making judgements

- Development of the ability to critically analyze, evaluate and synthesize new and complex ideas (also in relation to emerging global problems) both through guided and/or personal reading of texts from the Western philosophical-scientific tradition, and through group discussions and seminars.

Communication skills

- Development of the ability to communicate information, ideas, problems, and solutions clearly and consciously to specialist and non-specialist interlocutors and in different training and work contexts.
- Development of a solid capacity for active listening, negotiation and working in interdisciplinary groups, as well as understanding and critically analyzing different points of view.

Learning skills

- Development of the ability to continue the study path independently, strengthened by a greater critical awareness and a renewed theoretical-conceptual and methodological sensitivity.

Contents

Title > **“O tell me the truth about love”: Forms and dynamics of eros from Plato to Franco Battiato**

The course is divided into two parts.

a) After some preliminary considerations on the nature of philosophical and scientific enquiry and its conceptual-methodological specificities, the **first** insitutional part will analyse some of the main moments in the history of Western philosophical and scientific thought from antiquity to the 20th century.

b) The **second** (monographic) part will begin with an introduction to the phenomenon of love in its various semantic, conceptual, and existential dimensions. Through the close reading of key texts, it will examine the relationship between eros and knowledge in Plato, Augustine’s understanding of love, the dialectic between love and death in Freud, and the connection between love, duality, and care in Ludwig Binswanger’s *Daseinsanalyse*. The analysis will also be enriched by the listening to and discussion of selected songs by the Sicilian singer-songwriter Franco Battiato, whose poetic and musical work is widely recognized for its philosophical and scientific sensitivity, as well as for its strong spiritual and metaphysical tension.

Detailed program

General part > **Fundamentals of history of philosophical and scientific thought**

- Philosophical and scientific inquiry: preliminary considerations and key concepts.
- The origins of Greek thought: nature and becoming.
- Plato’s philosophical and scientific ideal.
- Philosophy and science in Aristotle.
- Greek philosophy and Christianity: Augustine of Hippo.
- Faith, reason, and science in the Middle Ages: Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham.
- Renaissance naturalism: Telesio, Bruno, and Campanella.
- Galileo Galilei and the new science of nature.
- Francis Bacon as prophet of technology.

- Cartesian rationalism and mechanism: God, the world, and the human being.
- Physics, reason and emotion in Blaise Pascal’s work.
- Rationalism, empiricism, and Kant’s solution.
- Will, reason, and suffering in Schopenhauer.
- Positivism and evolutionism: Comte, Mill, and Darwin.
- Nietzsche and Bergson: becoming, consciousness, and life.
- Husserlian phenomenology and *The Crisis of European Sciences*.
- Karl Jaspers between psychopathology and the philosophy of existence.
- The philosophical and scientific ideal of logical positivism.
- Oswald Spengler and *The Decline of the West*.
- Existence and temporality in the work of Martin Heidegger.

Monographic part > **“O tell me the truth about love”: Forms and dynamics of eros from Plato to Franco Battiato**

- Preliminary considerations on the concept of *love*.
- Eros and truth in Plato’s *Symposium*.
- Love and transcendence in Augustine of Hippo.
- Libido, erotic life, and the death drive in Freud.
- Love, duality, and care in Ludwig Binswanger's *Daseinsanalyse*.
- Metaphysical nostalgia and spiritual tension in Franco Battiato’s poetic and musical work.

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge (high school) of the history of Western philosophy.

Teaching methods

28 in-person lecture-based classes.

Teaching methods consist in direct exposure, group discussion, analysis of historically and scientifically significant texts, and possible in-depth seminars. The course is held in Italian.

Class attendance is strongly recommended. Non-attending students are required to attend a preliminary meeting in preparation for the exam.

Assessment methods

The verification of learning will be carried out through a **oral examination**. The questions are aimed at testing the effective acquisition of the topics illustrated during the course, as well as to ascertain the ability to manage the contents of the proposed bibliography and the capability to critically deal with them. For this reason, during the oral examination students must have with them all required texts and materials listed in the course bibliography (print or e-book version).

There is no midterm exam.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

General part:

- Ferber, R. (2009). Filosofia. In R. Ferber, *Concetti fondamentali della filosofia* (vol. 1, pp. 3-21). Torino: Einaudi [*scanned PDF*].
- Jaspers, K. (2010). *Introduzione alla filosofia*, a cura di P. Chiodi. Milano: Raffaello Cortina (pp. 1-19) [*scanned PDF*].
- Berti, E., & Volpi, F. (2007). *Storia della filosofia dall'antichità a oggi*. Roma-Bari: Laterza (tomo A: pp. 3-30, 38-45, 50-82, 89-98, 104-119, 179-186, 229-235, 250-253, 261-263, 301-319, 325-346, 359-364, 388-394, 422-432, 477-480, 483-496; tomo B: pp. 78-85, 140-145, 149-157, 169-175, 186-187, 198-200, 223-229, 233-235, 242-255, 269-273).

Monographic part:

- Platone. (2026). *Simposio*, a cura di G. Reale. Milano: Bompiani.
- Agostino. (2000). Commento alla Prima Lettera di Giovanni. In *Amore assoluto e "Terza Navigazione"*, a cura di G. Reale (VII discorso: pp. 329-357). Milano: Bompiani [*scanned PDF*].
- Freud, S. (1976). *L'Io e l'Es*. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.
- Civita, A. (2018). Sigmund Freud e la nascita dell'amore. In A. Civita, *Psicoanalisi e psichiatria: Storia ed epistemologia*, a cura di A. Molaro (pp. 71-113). Milano-Udine: Mimesis [*scanned PDF*].
- Binswanger, L. (2018). *Daseinsanalyse, psichiatria, psicoterapia*, a cura di A. Molaro. Milano: Raffaello Cortina (pp. 7-33, 47-87, 205-238).
- One reading chosen from:
    1. Molaro, A. (2024). Spazio, tempo, dualità: Sulla fenomenologia dell'amore di Ludwig Binswanger. In V. Costa, S. Galanti Grollo, L. Guidetti, & E. Mariani (Eds.), *Fenomenologia e realtà* (pp. 427-446). Milano-Udine: Mimesis [*scanned PDF*];
    2. Molaro, A. (2026). Within and beyond the world: Ludwig Binswanger's phenomenology of love. *History of Psychology*, *29*(4), 317-339 [*scanned PDF*].

Additional supplementary materials (such as slides and selected excerpts) will be made available by the instructor on the University's e-learning platform by the end of the course. Although these materials form an integral part of the exam syllabus, they *supplement* - and therefore *do not replace* - the required readings listed in the bibliography.

Students enrolled in degree programs affiliated with the School of Science (Mathematics, Physics, Biology, etc.) may, upon agreement with the instructor, replace the texts concerning the monographic section only with the following volume:

- Molaro, A. (2024). *Storia del concetto di spazio. Dai Greci alla relatività generale*. Roma: Carocci.

Foreign students (Erasmus) may contact the lecturer to arrange an examination programme in English or French.

Please note that it is strictly prohibited to distribute and/or reproduce, online or elsewhere, any course materials (slides, texts, audio, and video) or lecture recordings without explicit written authorization from the instructor. Any violation will be reported to the University's Legal Office and the competent authorities.

Sustainable Development Goals

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