ANAGRAFICA
The Western Tradition: Moral and Political Values
Nome insegnamento: Attila TANYI
Nome tutore: Michael WALSCHOTS
Time and day: Monday to Thursday, 14.30-16.30
Team code:
TBA
Teams Link:
TBA
Locations:
TBA

RIGUARDO AL CORSO
The course takes as its subject what is often called the Western tradition or, even more broadly perhaps, Western culture. This is a diffuse and hard to delimit concept and period, both historically and philosophically. Its beginnings are standardly associated with the cultures of Greco-Roman antiquity, but the influence of Ancient Egypt or near-Eastern cultures can also not be denied. From then on, the Western tradition had incorporated numerous other elements including early Christianity, the Italian and other medieval renaissances, the Enlightenment, the Industrial revolution, the spread of liberal democracy and so on.

During the course we will focus on the values that have dominated these historical epochs with particular attention to more recent developments. The course will thus be an exercise in the history of ideas and in philosophy as well as contain contemporary analyses of the values under discussion.

Prerequisites: no prerequisties are required for this course.

METODI DIDATTICI
The course is a mix of lectures and seminar discussion. Each week four two-hour sessions will take place. Two of these sessions, in the first 8 weeks of the course, will be lectures: maximum one hour followed by a short break and a Q/A (open plenum discussion). The other two sessions will be devoted to the discussion of readings, typically one per session. One half of the lectures and seminar discussion will be historically focused; the other half will concentrate on contemporary analysis. The week will begin with the historical part (lecture and seminar) and end with the contemporary part (lecture and seminar).

For each week, there are assigned main readings that are compulsory and will form the topic of seminar discussion; and complementary readings that are not compulsory and can be

used to deepen one's knowledge of the topic (and, for example, to base their final essay submission on).

In the last two weeks of the course, students will give brief presentations in the seminars in course toward preparing their written essays and to receive feedback. Depending on student numbers and organization, these presentations might be integrated into regular teaching sessions. If this means that the last two weeks of the course won't be used for presentations, a further, fifth value will be added to the syllabus in consultation with students.

The course will be taught by Attila Tanyi (https://www.unimi.it/it/ugov/person/attila-tanyi) and Michael Walschots (https://www.unimi.it/it/ugov/person/michael-walschots). Tanyi is the course leader and will teach the contemporary part of the course; Walschots is responsible for the historical part.

MODALITA' DI VERIFICA DELL'APPRENDIMENTO

Students attending at least 70% of the sessions will be assessed on the basis of:

- a short essay of 3000 to 5000 words. Students are required to submit a one-page outline for feedback prior to writing the essay.
- a presentation on a topic of their choice. This should be roughly the same topic as their eventual essay submission.
- Note that attending students must sign up for an oral exam date in order to receive a grade, but they will not actually come to the exam (in other words, the sign-up is purely a formality).

Non-attending students (i.e. students who have attended less than 70% of the sessions) will be assessed on the basis of:

- a short essay of 3000 to 5000 words. Students are required to submit a one-page outline for feedback prior to writing the essay.
- an oral examination in which their essay will be discussed with them.

Due Dates:

- For the essay: one week before the date of the oral exam to which the student signs up.
- For outlines: one month before the date of the oral exam to which the student signs up.

Students will get a bonus based on active participation.

PROGRAMMA DI INSEGNIMENTO

Week 8 (teaching week 1; w/c Feb 16): Freedom 1

Date (16 Feb), first session: lecture (history), title (TBA)
Date (17 Feb), second session: seminar (history), readings below
Date (18 Feb), third session: lecture (contemporary)
Date (19 Feb), fourth session: seminar (contemporary), readings below

Main reading:

- Kant, I. 'An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?' URL: https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/kant_whatisenlightenment.pdf
- Berlin, I. 'Two Concepts of Liberty', **CPP, Chapter 26** [fourth session]

Week 9 (teaching week 2; w/c Feb 23): Freedom 2

Date (23 Feb), first session: lecture (history), title (TBA)
Date (24 Feb), second session: seminar (history), readings below
Date (25 Feb), third session: lecture (contemporary)
Date (26 Feb), fourth session: seminar (contemporary), readings below

Main reading:

- Mill, J.S. *On Liberty,* Chapters I and II, **CMPT** [second session]
- MacCallum, G.C. (1967), 'Negative and positive freedom', *The Philosophical Review*, 76 (3), 312–34. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2183622 [fourth session]

Complementary reading (both weeks):

- Constant, B. 'The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns', in. Constant: *Political Writings*, Cambridge UP, 1988, pp. 309-28.
- Pettit, P. (2011), 'The Instability of Freedom as Noninterference: The Case of Isaiah Berlin', *Ethics*, 121 (4), 693–716. https://doi.org/10.1086/660694
- Taylor, C. 'What is Wrong with Negative Liberty?', **CPP Chapter 27**

Week 10 (teaching week 3; w/c March 2): Justice 1

Date (02 March), first session: lecture (history), title (TBA)
Date (03 March), second session: seminar (history), readings below
Date (04 March), third session: lecture (contemporary)
Date (05 March), fourth session: seminar (contemporary), readings below

Main reading:

- Mill, J.S., *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 5: 'Of the Connexion between Justice and Utility', **CMPT** [second session]
- Rawls, J. 'A Theory of Justice', excerpts from *A Theory of Justice*, **APP, Chapter 10** [fourth session]

Week 11 (teaching week 4; w/c March 9): Justice 2

Date (09 March), first session: lecture (history), title (TBA)
Date (10 March), second session: seminar (history), readings below
Date (11 March), third session: lecture (contemporary)
Date (12 March), fourth session: seminar (contemporary), readings below

Main reading:

- Hume, D. 'Of Justice and Injustice', *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part II, **CMPT** [second session]
- Wood, A., 'The Marxian Critique of Justice', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1(3): 244-282, 1972. URL: https://doi.org/10.1086/660694 [fourth session]

Complementary reading (both weeks):

- Cohen, G. A. (1989), 'On the currency of egalitarian justice', *Ethics*, 99 (4), 906–44. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2381239?origin=JSTOR-pdf
- Hayek, F.A., 'The Atavism of Social Justice', **APP (2nd edition) Chapter 30**
- Nozick, R. 'The Entitlement Theory of Justice', excerpt from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, **APP (2nd edition) Chapter 29**
- van Parijs, P., 'A Basic Income for All', **APP (2nd edition) Chapter 32**

Week 12 (teaching week 5; w/c March 16): Rights 1

Date (16 March), first session: lecture (history), title (TBA)
Date (17 March), second session: seminar (history), readings below
Date (18 March), third session: lecture (contemporary)
Date (19 March), fourth session: seminar (contemporary), readings below

Main reading:

- Locke, J., *Second Treatise of Government*, Chapters I, II, V, VII, IX, **CMPT** [second session]
- Dworkin, R. (1981), 'Is there a right to pornography?', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 1 (2), 177–212. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/764457?origin=JSTOR-pdf [fourth session]

Week 13 (teaching week 6; w/c March 23): Rights 2

Date (23 March), first session: lecture (history), title (TBA)

Date (24 March), second session: seminar (history), readings below
Date (25 March), third session: lecture (contemporary)
Date (26 March), fourth session: seminar (contemporary), readings below

Main reading:

- Bentham, J. *Anarchical Fallacies*, in. *Nonsense upon Stilts*, ed. Jeremy Waldron, Routledge, 2019 (1987). [second session]
- H.L.A. Hart, 'Are There Any Natural Rights?' **CPP Chapter 20** [fourth session]

Complementary reading (both weeks):

- Hohfeld, W.N. (1913), 'Some Fundamental Legal Conceptions as Applied in Judicial Reasoning', *Yale Law Journal*, 23(1): 16-59. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/785533
- Nickel, J. 'Making Sense of Human Rights', **APP (2nd edition) Chapter 13**
- Sajó, A., *Limiting Government*, Chapter 8: Fundamental Rights, CEU Press
- Schmidtz, D. 'The Institution of Property', **APP Chapter 21**
- Sen, A (2004), 'Elements of a theory of human rights', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 32 (4), 315–56. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2004.00017.x
- Thompson, M. (2004). "What Is It To Wrong Someone?: A Puzzle About Justice," In Reason and Value: Themes from the Philosophy of Joseph Raz, eds., R. Jay Wallace, Philip Pettit, Samuel Scheffler, Michael Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Wenar, L. (2005), 'The nature of rights', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 33 (3), 223–53. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.2005.00032.x

NOTE: NO CLASSES WEEKS 14 & 15 (March 30 - APRIL 12)

Week 16 (teaching week 7; w/c April 13): Equality 1

Date (13 April), first session: lecture (history), title (TBA)
Date (14 April), second session: seminar (history), readings below
Date (15 April), third session: lecture (contemporary)
Date (16 April), fourth session: seminar (contemporary), readings below

Main Reading:

- Rousseau, J.J. *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (excerpts), **CMPT**
- Williams, B. 'The Idea of Equality', in *Problems of the Self*, Chapter 14, Cambridge University Press, 2009

Week 17 (teaching week 8; w/c April 20): Equality 2

Date (TBA), first session: lecture (history), title (TBA)
Date (TBA), second session: seminar (history), readings below

Date (TBA), third session: lecture (contemporary)
Date (TBA), fourth session: seminar (contemporary), readings below

Main reading:

- Olympe de Gouges, 'The Declaration of the Rights of Woman', URL: https://revolution.chnm.org/d/293/ ; Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (excerpts), URL: https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/wollstonecraft-a-vindication-of-the-rights-of-woman
- Anderson, E., 'What is the point of equality?', **CPP Chapter 35**

Complementary Reading (both weeks):

- Sen, A. 'Equality of What?', **CPP Chapter 32**
- Frankfurt, H. 'Equality as a Moral Ideal', **APP Chapter 16**
- Walzer, M. 'Complex Equality', **CPP Chapter 31**
- Barry, B., 'Chance, Choice, and Justice', **CPP Chapter 34**
- Parfit, D. 'Equality and Priority', **CPP Chapter 33**
- Arneson, R. 'Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare', **APP Chapter 15**

*more to be added later

NOTE: NO CLASSES WEEK 18 & 19 (APRIL 27 – MAY 10)

Week 20 (teaching week 9; w/c May 11): Student presentations

Date (11 May), first session: presentation slot (TBA)
Date (12 May), second session: presentation slot (TBA)
Date (13 May), third session: presentation slot (TBA)
Date (14 May), fourth session: presentation slot (TBA)

Week 21 (teaching week 10; w/c May 18): Student presentations

Date (18 May), first session: presentation slot (TBA)
Date (19 May), second session: presentation slot (TBA)
Date (20 May), third session: presentation slot (TBA)
Date (21 May), fourth session: presentation slot (TBA)

NB: Changes to this programme are possible.

Most of the material above can be found in the following anthologies:

- *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, ed. Michael L. Morgan, 5th edition, Hackett Publishing Company, 2011 [**CMPT**]
- *Arguing about Political Philosophy*, eds. Matt Zwolinski, Mario I. Juarez-Garcia, 3rd edition, Routledge, 2025 (if it doesn't appear on time, we will use the second edition) [**APP**]
- *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, eds. Robert E. Goodin, Philip Pettit, 3rd edition, Wiley, 2019 [**CPP**]

Individual articles that are not in these volumes can mainly be reached via the DOI numbers and URL links provided. The course has an Ariel site where some of the readings are uploaded.

The three textbooks were ordered for the Library. If they don't arrive on time or there is problem with access, teachers will provide scanned copies uploaded to the course's Ariel site.

If you have any problem accessing the course material, feel free to contact Attila Tanyi (attila.tanyi@unimi.it) or Michael Walschots (michael.walschots@unimi.it).