

## SUBJECT ESSENTIALS

Subject details	
Name	History of the Modern Philosophy (History and its relevance today)
ECTS Credits	5
Department	Philosophy, Humanities, and Communication
Language	Spanish (The student will have the option to do the essays and the exams in English)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Philosophy is by no means a disengaged activity. Even in its most apparently detached areas, it is intensely concerned about the world. The philosopher is always seeking a better knowledge so that she can give a better account of what she finds. Thus, she hopes to obtain a more accurate guide to her activity as well as to other people's lives. In this effort throughout the centuries, philosophy has offered different proposals that have had an influence whose effects can be seen today. In this course we will study some of these proposals and its contemporary effects. Concretely, we will focus on two fields, namely: the notion of knowledge and science, on one hand, and the political ideals, on the other hand. Related to this, we will have a look as well at some current attempts of philosophy to grasp contemporary issues, such as modern technologies (internet, artificial intelligence), the notion of embodiment, and the contemporary political ideals.

It is intended to be an introductory course but it aims also to give a first oversight of some present questions in which the philosopher has played a role and is encouraged to carry on researching.

## SUBJECT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

### Prerequisites

The general ones for any student of the exchange program.

## Contribution to the professional profile of the degree

To those studying Political Sciences, International relations, Sociology or Anthropology, the topics concerning Political Philosophy and contemporary debates on Politics and Society will help them have the necessary philosophical perspective which enriches and deepens many debates in their fields of study.

Those studying Psychology and related sciences will find especially interesting the topics concerning embodiment, knowledge and the essence of human experience. It may help them especially to become more aware of the presuppositions of a good deal of the research in their fields (of their potentialities as well as of their limitations).

In all cases, the students will benefit from the study of all the topics, besides the ones more directly related to their interests. Familiarity with the challenges of modern technologies is no doubt essential for someone interested in politics, and any good psychologist needs to be informed about the great political debates and tasks of our time, not only as far as facts are concerned but also with regard to their often not so clear philosophical roots.

## SKILLS TO BE DEVELOPED

### General skills

#### Instrumental

Ability to manage information: acquisition, analysis and retrieval of information from various sources  
Oral and written communication: ability to communicate ideas in a structured and intelligible manner

#### Personal

Ability to assess and discuss both their own individual work and the work of their colleagues  
Ethical commitment

#### Systematic

Ability to update, maintain, change and adapt initial ideas in light of new information and research  
Ability to work independently and think creatively to develop new ideas and new concepts

### Subject-specific skills

#### Conceptual (knowledge)

Sufficient knowledge of the essential philosophical positions which underlie some contemporary debates in the fields of Political Theory, Psychology and Modern Technology.

Sufficient knowledge of the historical development of the main philosophical ideas which have shaped current positions in contemporary debates.

#### Procedural (practice)

Ability to discern the relevance of Modern Philosophy as far as the roots of many contemporary debates are concerned.

Capability to discern philosophical problems in contemporary issues concerning modern technologies (Internet, artificial intelligence) and political questions.

#### Professional-attitudinal (knowledge practice)

Openness and receptivity to considerations regarding the complexity of philosophical questions underlying current debates.

Healthy skepticism before apparently simple and straightforward answers to contemporary debates.

### SUBJECT BLOCKS AND CONTENT

#### BLOCK 1:

##### Topic 1: Panorama of Modern Philosophy: The roots of contemporary debates

1. Descartes:
  1. The first foundation of all sciences.
  2. The mind-body problem
2. Rationalism and empiricism: the nature of knowledge and the mind-body problem.
3. Political Philosophy in Modern Philosophy: the origin of our political ideals.
  1. Hobbes.
  2. Locke.
  3. Rousseau.

##### Topic 2: Immanuel Kant: theoretical and practical reason.

1. The Critique of Pure Reason: the essence of our knowledge
2. The Critique of Practical Reason: the essence of morality.
3. The problem of the meaning in History: how freedom can be seen to be present in the 'real world'.

#### BLOCK 2: Contemporary Philosophy

Topic 3: Political ideals in the 19th Century and beginnings of the 20th century.

1. Liberalism: John Stuart Mill.
2. Marxism and socialism.
  1. Karl Marx.
  2. The debates in early marxism and the origin of later trends in socialism.

Topic 4: The debates on the nature of knowledge.

1. Positivism and Neopositivism in the 19th and 20th Century.
2. The critique of Positivism and its alternatives: towards a wider notion of knowledge and science.
  1. Phenomenology: experience, existence and embodiment.
  2. Wittgenstein: what can and cannot be said...

BLOCK 3: The relevance of Philosophy in Contemporary debates.

Topic 5: Philosophy of knowledge and embodiment with regard to current problems

1. Embodiment, knowledge... artificial intelligence and the Internet: The Philosophy of Hubert Dreyfus.
2. Embodiment, knowledge psychotherapy and personal fulfillment: The Philosophy of Eugene Gendlin and the technique of 'Focusing'.

Topic 6: Political Philosophy and the challenge of contemporary history.

1. The challenge of Totalitarianism: The political thought of Hannah Arendt.
2. The possibilities and limits of dissent: the lessons of Patocka and Havel.
3. The challenge of globalisation and multiculturalism: contemporary liberalism and its critics.

STRUCTURE.

The course will take place during 13 weeks approximately (2 sessions of 50 min. each week). The topics will be structured thus:

**Block 1: 4 weeks (8 sessions).**

**Block 2: 4 weeks (8 sessions).**

**Block 3: 5 weeks (8 sessions).**

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

### Required reading

#### Textbooks

Haworth, A., *Understanding the Political Philosophers. From Ancient to Modern Times*, London, Routledge, 2012.

Scruton, R., *History of Modern Philosophy*, Second enlarged edition, London, Routledge, 1995.

### Additional required reading

#### Source texts

Arendt, H., *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York, Harcourt, 1976.

Arendt, H., *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil*, London, Penguin, 2003 (original edition: 1963-1964).

Dreyfus, H., *On the Internet*, Second edition revised, London, Routledge, 2009.

Dreyfus, H., *What Computers (Still) Can't Do. A critique of Artificial Reason*, Cambridge (Mass.), The MIT Press, 1992 (original edition: 1972)

Gendlin, E., *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning. A Philosophical and Psychological Approach to the Subjective*, Evanston (IL), Northwestern University Press, 1996 (original edition: 1967).

Havel, *Open Letters (1969-1990)*, London-New York, Vintage, 1992.

Kohák, *Jan Patočka, Philosophy and Selected Writings*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Rawls, J., *A Theory of Justice (Revised Edition)*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1999 (original edition: 1971)

Rawls, J., *Political Liberalism. Expanded Edition*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005 (original edition: 1993).

Sandel, M., *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Todes, S., *Body and World*, Cambridge (Mass.), The MIT Press, 2001.

#### Further reading

Arendt, H., *The Human Condition*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1998 (original edition: 1958)

Crick, B., *Democracy, A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press,

Bellamy, R., *Citizenship, A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press,

#### Films

*Hannah Arendt*, A film by Margarethe von Trotta (2014)

*Being in the World*, A documentary film by Tao Ruspoli (2012)

## TEACHING METHODS

### General methodological aspects of the subject

#### Face-to-face method: Activities

1. The central activity is the oral exposition in the class. It will be based on the presentation made by the teacher but students are highly encouraged to take part with their questions and comments.
2. Besides the presentation, part of the sessions will be dedicated to actively stimulate the debate on the debates raised by what has been explained.
3. The learning process needs the attendance to classes. Thus the concepts can be understood without difficulty. Moreover, the contents of the course are meant to stimulate personal reflection and its expression. Therefore, attendance is a requirement.

#### Non-contact method: Activities

1. The students are expected to present a brief essay on each one of the topics.
2. In addition, they are expected to present an essay about each of the films projected in class.

## SUMMARY OF STUDENT LEARNING HOURS

Activity	Contact hours	Non-contact hours	Total hours
Lectures	26	26	52
Seminars	13	13	26
Individual work		16	16
Assessment: exam	4	20	24
Assessment: exam revision	(+1)		1
Other			
<b>ECTS CREDITS :</b>			<b>6</b>

## ASSESSMENT AND QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

Activity	General Skills	Indicators	Weight in overall assessment
Individual work	<p>Ability to manage information: acquisition, analysis and retrieval of information from various sources.</p> <p>Oral and written communication skills: ability to communicate ideas in a structured and intelligible manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Originality</li> <li>• Spelling and presentation</li> </ul>	30%
Participation in lectures and classroom discussions	<p>Ability to assess and discuss both their own work and the work of their colleagues</p> <p>Ethical commitment</p>	Quality / relevance of the questions and participation	20%
Assessment: written exam	<p>Ability to update, maintain, change and adapt initial ideas in light of new information and research</p> <p>Ability to work independently and think creatively to develop new ideas and new concepts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mastery of concepts</li> <li>• Clarity of explanation</li> <li>• Conceptual relationship</li> <li>• Ability to synthesize</li> <li>• Correct grammar</li> <li>• Spelling and presentation</li> </ul>	50%

## Qualification

Regular and active presence in class for discussions and tutorials is essential for a positive overall grade.