Philosophy of Communication and Analysis of Argumentative Strategies

Prof. Ingrid Basso

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to engage students in a philosophical enquiry into communication, in order to help them get a better historical and theoretical understanding of the contexts, methods, tools and purposes of the communication processes at play within their existential and their professional experience. In particular, the course aims to analyse the features of that type of knowledge we define as philosophical, as well as its methodology and, above all, the form of communication put in place by the tradition in order to explain the meaning of the world: the dialogue, from Plato to the contemporary debate in the philosophical, scientific, and political field.

Particular emphasis will be placed on the historical and technical analysis of rhetoric, through the problematisation of the always active possibility of a discrepancy between the word and the search for the truth (what is the difference between good and bad rhetoric? What is the relationship between truth and consent?), also through the reading of texts, analysing the foundations of the argumentation theory and argumentative strategies.

At the end of the course, students will be able to operate with critical awareness within different communicative environments; in addition, having acquired the key historical and theoretical concepts at the basis of communication and the expressive resources used by the different means of communication, they will be able to distinguish and use argumentation strategies.

***COURSE CONTENT***

1. Introduction: key features of a *philosophical* approach. Analysis of the philosophical and theoretical foundations of the notion of communication and their breakdown into various conceptual and professional contexts.
2. The link between words and truth: the relationship between knowledge, words, and democracy, and the connection between the search for the truth and the freedom of speech.
3. Elements of logic and theory of argumentation (recognising and using argumentative strategies). Analysis of the nature, function and limits of persuasive discourse as distinct from the demonstrative one.
4. The daily practice of logic and "the new rhetoric".

***READING LIST***

- Lecture notes (see Materials on Blackboard).

- Foucault M., *Discorso e verità nella Grecia antica*, Donzelli, Rome 2019.

- Boniolo G. - Vidali P., *Strumenti per ragionare. Le regole logiche, la pratica argomentativa, l’inferenza probabilistica*, Pearson, Milan 2017 (Chaps. 1, 2, 8, 11, 12, 13).

For non-attending students (who attend less than 70% of classes): the course syllabus and the reading list will be the same, but they will have to study also the following textbook:

- Venier F., *Il potere del discorso. Retorica e pragmatica linguistica*, Carocci, Rome 2008.

Further teaching material will be made available during the course.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures; guided reading and analysis of texts (to be carried out individually or in groups); identification/use of argumentative strategies.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

There will be an oral examination on students’ knowledge and understanding of course content and students’ ability to critically read a text, recognise its structure and argumentation strategies. Students will also be assessed on their ability to argue and express themselves clearly, their mastery of specific language and accuracy of argumentation.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.

**Basics of coding workshop**

Prof. Gloria Dalla Costa

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The Basics of coding workshop aims to introduce students to programming. The programming language which will be used during the course is Python because it is easy to learn and is widely used in Web applications, software development, data science and machine learning. The objective of the course it to present the basic concepts of Python programming and to provide an overview of the tool’s practical applications.

***COURSE CONTENT***

1. Introduction to Python: compiled and interpreted programming languages

– algorithms – Python development environments – types of variables (numeric, string, boolean, list, dictionary, tuple, file) – functions – for while if cycles – libraries - pandas

2. Analysis of a website using Python – scraping on Indiegogo – creation of a dataset containing data extracted from the website – dataset analysis and classification of projects presented on the website

3. Creation of images through libraries of machine learning text-to-image models

4. Group work

5. Presentation of group work

***READING LIST***

Downey, Allen, Jeffrey Elkner, and Chris Meyers. *How to Think Like a Computer Scientist: Learning with Python*. Green Tea Press, 2002. ISBN: 9780971677500

***TEACHING METHOD***

Guided practical work and group work will be carried out during lessons. The PANOPTO application will be used for remote teaching.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be asked to prepare a small project (of their choice among creation of images, website analysis, etc.) using the proposed theoretical tools. Examinees will be expected to prepare a group paper and to present it as a group: students will be assessed on the basis of the work they have carried out and will be marked out of thirty.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The only prerequisite for course attendance is to have a Google account in order to be able to use the Google Colab platform.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.