## **Bioethics**

## Prof. Alessio Musio

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

The course aims to introduce a philosophical reflection on the main ethical and anthropological questions raised by medicine and technoscience to try to understand and evaluate the continuous *transformations of human experience* that they determine together.

At the end of the course, students will be able to understand the main bioethical issues and will possess the conceptual tools to participate competently in the public debate on bioethics, thanks to an adequate vocabulary and argumentative method.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into three parts. The first, dedicated to a brief analysis of the origins of bioethics, is aimed at highlighting its nature as a “critical conscience of technological civilization”: students will reflect on the transformations of human experience determined by technology in order to evaluate also the role played by *habit* in the awareness of these transformations.

The second part will focus on the presentation of the most classic issues of the bioethical debate, looking at the questions relating to the “beginning” and “end of life”, on the basis of a path that will start from extracorporeal procreation to the problem of therapeutic obstinacy, euthanasia and assisted suicide, interpreted in light of the fundamental anthropological distinction between the experience of *pain* and that of *suffering*.

The third part of the course will be dedicated to an in-depth analysis of the theme of *surrogate motherhood*, to understand its inevitable repercussions on the meaning of anthropology and our civilization, starting from the explosion of the distinction between *people* and *things*.

Summary of the contents:

* The definition of bioethics and its history; the debate on the distinction between “secular bioethics” and “Catholic bioethics”; the relationship between *technology* and *habit*.
* The issue of the “person” and its problematic functionalist reduction (from the discovery of the value of the ego *uniqueness* to the logic of *discrimination*).
* Coming into the world and the death of an ‘individual’ (criticism of the notions of ‘beginning’ and ‘end of life’); understand the distinction between *pain* and *suffering*; from the spectre of therapeutic obstinacy to the distinction between abandonment, euthanasia, and assisted suicide.

The issue of surrogate motherhood in relation to technology, feminism, and desires.

***READING LIST[[1]](#footnote-1)***

Adriano Pessina, *Bioetica L’uomo sperimentale,* III Edizione, Milan -Turin, Pearson 2020 (in particular: pp. 3-44; 69-103; 125-154; 177-200).

Alessio Musio, *Baby Boom. Critica della maternità surrogata,* Vita e Pensiero, Milan 2021 (in particular: pp. 9-54; 143-209)

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lessons. Analysis and discussion of the course topics. Three hours a week.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam consists of an interview aimed at verifying and assessing: learning and understanding of the topics covered during lectures and in the textbook specified in the reading list; the student's presentation and argumentative skills; mastery of philosophical vocabulary; and the ability to establish connections between the various topics.

*Assessment:*

30 cum laude: excellent, solid knowledge, excellent presentation skills, full understanding of the topics covered.

30: very good, complete and adequate knowledge, articulated and accurate presentation skills.

27-29: good, satisfactory knowledge, essentially correct presentation skills.

24-26: fairly good knowledge, although not complete or always correct.

21-23: generally good although superficial knowledge. Often inappropriate presentation skills.

18-21: sufficient knowledge of the main topics.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Since the course is introductory, there are no particular prerequisites. However, interest and intellectual curiosity for philosophical reflection on concrete issues are expected.

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.

1. The textbooks specified in the reading list can be purchased at the University bookstores; they can also be purchased from other retailers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)