# Philosophy of Politics (Second-level Degree)

## Prof. Alessio Musio

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

The course aims to provide students with the basic features of a philosophical reading of the political phenomenon in relation to one of its most enigmatic terms: *sovereignty*. With the purpose of dealing with the twists that affect this term with respect to its twentieth-century semantics in the era of digital technologies and *ubiquitous computing*, the aim of the course is to seek a way out of the *labyrinth* that it has always represented through the ethical-political ideal of an authentic *relational sovereignty*.

At the end of the course, students will know the fundamental elements of a philosophical reflection on the political phenomena of *power* and *sovereignty*, and will be able to critically discuss the theses of some of the most important authors of the twentieth century who, like Hans Kelsen, Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt, tried to think of their meaning by comparing them with the unprecedented challenges of our time, represented by the intertwining of *bioeconomy* and *surveillance capitalism*.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The investigation proposed will follow three directions. The first shows how sovereignty changes its nature if phenomena such as *fear* and *obedience*, *money* and *relationships* are used as its matrix. The second aims to reflect on the relationship between *technique* and the forms of power, starting with the question of whether it can be interpreted as an extension of human sovereign capacity or as its dangerous *neutralisation*, based on the Schmitt’s hypothesis. The third aims at identifying how the contemporary phenomena of *bioeconomy* and the so-called *surveillance capitalism* do not impose themselves only in terms of a form of commercial exploitation of human experience, but they also determine a problematic techno-economic development of the forms of ‘governmentality’.

The fundamental objective will thus be to outline an *ethics of personal and relational sovereignty*.

Summary of contents:

* Sovereignty in relation to *decisionism*, *normality* and *exception* (against the background of a re-reading of the theoretical confrontation between Hans Kelsen and Carl Schmitt).
* The dialectic between the human capacity to *initiate* and that of *controlling* the process of action, in order to understand Arendt's solution to the *labyrinth of sovereignty.*
* The alternative between 'immanence I ' and 'transcendence I' as a testing ground for the ethical-political ideal of relational sovereignty.
* The image of power in the era of the exploitation of human experience by the bioeconomy and surveillance capitalism.

***READING LIST***

A. Musio, *Etica della sovranità. Questioni antropologiche in Kelsen e Schmitt*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2011 (in particular: pp. 9-62, 93-148, 163-231).

C. Schmitt, *Dialogo sul potere*, trad. it., Adelphi, Milano 2012 (inclusa la *Postfazione* di G. Gurisatti).

A. Papa (edited by), *Il pensiero prurale. Rileggere Hannah Arendt*, Mimesis Edizioni, Milano 2022 (almeno tre saggi).

A. Pessina, *L’io insoddisfatto. Tra Prometeo e Dio*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2016 (in particolare: pp. 3-138; 191-217).

S. Zuboff, *Il capitalismo della sorveglianza. Il futuro dell’umanità nell’era dei nuovi poteri*, trad. it., Luiss University Press, Roma, 2019 (in particolare: pp. 13-36; 213-246; 269-308; 433-460).

A. Musio, *Il capitale in-umano. La bioetica di fronte al “lavoro clinico”,* «Medicina e morale», (3/2016), pp. 293-314.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures. Three hours a week.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

An oral exam in which the following will be ascertained: 1) successful reading of the indicated texts; 2) ability to present their contents; 3) an aptitude to argue and express the subjects clearly, identifying the links between the topics discussed; 4) mastery of a suitable and adequate language; and 5) accuracy and effectiveness of presentation.

Students must first demonstrate their knowledge of the key concepts of the authors covered during the course. In the oral exam, they will have to demonstrate their ability to move between the topics and fundamental questions discussed during lectures, with particular attention to: the delineation of the three different forms of sovereignty deriving from the phenomenon of fear, money and fullness of a relationship; the theoretical elements of the comparison between Kelsen and Schmitt; and the novelty represented in the so-called bio-economy.

Assessment will focus on relevance of students' answers, their appropriate use of specific terminology, reasoned and coherent structuring of their discourse and their ability to identify conceptual links and open questions.

*Assessments:*

30 with distinction: excellent, solid knowledge, excellent ability to express themselves, complete understanding of the concepts and topics covered.

30: very good, complete and adequate knowledge, correct and well-articulated ability to express themselves.

27-29: good, satisfactory knowledge, essentially correct ability to express themselves.

24-26: fairly good knowledge, but incomplete and not always correct.

21-23: generally good but superficial knowledge. Often inappropriate way of expressing themselves.

18-21: sufficient.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course. However, an interest and intellectual curiosity in philosophical reflection are assumed, and the possible use of a manual on the history of philosophy is recommended in order to independently study the references to the authors covered in class.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

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.