# Philosophy of the Person

## Prof. Alessandra Papa

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

The course sets out to provide the conceptual tools needed to understand the key aspects of the contemporary debate on the human person and will introduce the student to the wide range of literature on the human condition, set in its historical and relational context. In particular, through its unique nature, the course thus proposes an anthropological reflection on the man who suffers and on the meaning of his illness, as well as on the ethical values that come into play in the doctor/patient relationship, read as an archetype of human relations.

At the end of the course, – considering the generally intended learning outcomes – students are expected to:

1. Understand and master the basic vocabulary of ethical reflection on issues such as human dignity, personal rights, disability and illness.

2. Apply the concepts learnt to events and problems typical of contemporary society.  
3. Be able to integrate knowledge and manage complexity, as well as to formulate judgments based on limited or incomplete information, including reflection on the social and ethical responsibilities related to the application of their knowledge and judgments, also taking a stand, in a clear and argued manner, on ethical issues involving the topics covered in the course, grasping its underlying problems.

4. Converse and debate on the ethical issues addressed in class making explicit reference to the vocabulary and argumentative strategies of the philosophical tradition.  
5. Independently read and understand advanced philosophical textbooks on anthropological reflection.

6. Demonstrate that they have developed critical analysis skills, the ability to evaluate and summarise complex ideas, and the learning skills to continue studying in a self-directed or autonomous way.

7. Ability to promote cultural advancement and to trigger moral reflection on issues related to caring and taking care.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course takes the form of a personalistic phenomenological study into the human condition aimed at staking philosophy’s claim to be an indispensable practice for developing expertise in ethics. This means its aim is to study various aspects of the life of a person with special reference to nascent life and the vulnerability of the body with its “need for care”. It will also look at the risk of turning the body into an object when threatened by technical-scientific and bio-political perspectives. By critically studying the notion of 'person' - as employed in modern-day debate - certain paradigmatic situations in life will be carefully examined, more specifically those related to the experience of disability, illness, suffering and exclusion from life in the polis due to being “born different”. The course will also offer an opportunity to reflect on the disease through the category of the *vulnus* and to wonder about the personal experience of pain in time of pandemic.

***READING LIST***

A. Papa, *L’identità esposta. La cura come questione filosofica,* Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2014 (excluding only chapter IV)

C. Cariboni-G. Oliva, *A Pessina,* *Il mio amore fragile. Storia di Francesco,* Editore XY.IT, Arona, 2011 (from p. 1 to p. 93)

A. Pessina (edited by), *Vulnus. Persone nella pandemia,* Mimesis, Milano 2022 (In particular: A. PAPA, *Scenari di crisi dell’umano e della “communitas”. Tra lutto e riparazione*, pp. 59-75 and two essays of students choice).

In-depth reading (recommended):

A. Pessina (edited by), *Paradoxa. Etica della condizione umana,* Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2010 (from p. 77 to p. 107 and from p. 199 to p. 243).

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures. Frontal teaching. Three hours a week. Supplementary seminar, which will require active participation.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The course includes a final *oral* exam aimed at verifying the knowledge of the texts and topics discussed in class. Specifically, the exam consists of an interview during which students must first demonstrate their familiarity with the key concepts of the authors covered during the course and, at the same time, their ability to find their way around the themes and basic issues discussed in class.

In summary, from a disciplinary point of view and with respect to the contents and the textbooks used, the interview will be aimed at verifying that students:

1. Have accurate knowledge and understanding of the fundamental concepts of the debate around the 'person' and know how to support them through the correct method studied in the textbooks of the reading list;
2. Critically rework the contents and identify logical links between the different themes/problems;
3. Have accurate and effective presentation skills;
4. Appropriately use the philosophical lexicon and approach advanced texts in an autonomous manner.

The final mark will take into account the accuracy and quality of the answers, as well as the communication skills shown by the student during the interview.

Assessment will thus focus on the 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.

Assessment will be out of 30.

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; an often inappropriate way of expressing themselves.

18-21: sufficient.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Furthermore, we inform students that since this is an introductory course, there are no content-related prerequisites for attending it.*

However, intellectual interest and curiosity for philosophical reflection and issues relating to human rights and justice are expected. In any case, the use of a history of philosophy manual is recommended to independently explore the references to the authors studied 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.