# Relationship Philosophy

## Prof. Alessio Musio

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

The course aims to outline the essential features of a philosophical reflection on the theme of *relationship*, starting from the understanding of its *ontological status* and its inevitable *plural* dimension.

In light of an extensive investigation on the *services to individuals*, which pervades the Master's degree programme, the course aims to bring these services back to their original *relational* matrix, in order to escape merely *functionalistic* logics, highlighting the *uniqueness* of the *human being*.

At the end of the lectures, students will therefore be able to identify and philosophically distinguish the complex figures that mark the experiential paths of human relationships, and critically discuss the main paradigms that underpin today - often from an economic and productivity perspective - the *services to individuals* within the broader relationship between notions of man, professional action and community inclusion or exclusion processes.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into a general and a special part aimed at testing the categories initially presented.

The first step will consist in highlighting the inevitable substantial and relational dimension of the concept of individual, and then recreate the process that, in the contemporary age, caused the reflection to lose its original meaning, associated with the affirmation of the most radical *uniqueness* and *unrepeatability* of every human being, and transform it into a *violent device* that claims to be able to outline the criteria of *belonging* (*exclusion*) to the social and political community.

Hence the task of avoiding forms of relationships centred on *impersonal* logics. The course will therefore try to rethink the sense of *human being* in a *relational* key, as a reality which, following Romano Guardini’s lesson, is capable of *meeting* the world and one's self, rather than just *bumping into* it.  Since reflecting on personal services from a relational point of view means having to deal with their inevitable ethical implications, the course will focus on that trend, typical of many social organisations, in which individuals are thought, in fact and with the best intentions, as *interchangeable*.

Hence the choice of philosophically treating - in the special part – the difficult question of *surrogacy,* which with its repeated *replacements* becomes the metaphor of a civilization in which the distinction between people (unique and unrepeatable) and things (reproducible in series and always replaceable) tends to blur.

The course will close with a dedicated focus on how to safeguard personal centrality when the experiences of the disease seem to take over socially, pushing *welfare* systems into emergency mode, as happens in a pandemic.

***READING LIST***

R. Guardini, *Mondo e persona*, It. transl., Morcelliana, Brescia 2015, pp. 131-205.

R. Esposito, *Terza persona. Politica della vita e filosofia dell’impersonale*, Einaudi, Torino 2007 (pp. 4-24; 80-126).

A. Musio, *Baby Boom. Critica della maternità surrogata*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2021 (pp. 9-55; 103-242).

A. Pessina (edited by), *Vulnus. Persone nella pandemia*, Mimesis, Milano 2022 (at least two essays of your choice in addition to that of the lecturer).

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures in the classroom. Three hours per week.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Oral exam aimed at verifying: 1) students’ reading of the texts indicated; 2) ability to present their content; 3) their ability to argue and clearly express the topics by identifying the links between the themes covered; 4) mastery of suitable and adequate language; 5) accuracy and clarity of presentation.

Firstly, students will have to demonstrate their knowledge of the key concepts covered during the course. In the oral interview they will have to demonstrate their familiarity with the basic themes and issues discussed during lectures, with particular attention to: the distinction between the concept of *human being* in an *ontological*, *psychic* and *moral* sense; the problem of the relationship between *power* and *domination*; the role of *indifference* within the human community in order to think of a *relationships philosophy* protected from merely *functionalistic* interactions; the different problems at stake in the case of maternity surrogacy.

The assessment will be based on students’ appropriate use of specific terminology, reasoned and consistent structuring of argumentation, ability to identify conceptual links and open questions.

Assessment:

30 cum laude: excellent, solid knowledge, excellent expressive skills, complete understanding of concepts and topics.

30: very good, complete and adequate knowledge, correct and well-articulated expression skills.

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

24-26: fairly good knowledge, however not complete and not always correct.

21-23: generally good but superficial knowledge. Often inappropriate expression.

18-21: sufficient.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no content-related prerequisites for attending the course. However, intellectual interest and curiosity for philosophical-moral reflection are required. The use of a history of philosophy manual is recommended to autonomously investigate 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.