**History of Late Medieval and Renaissance Thought (Master's Degree Course)**

## Prof. ssa Elisabetta Cattanei

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

The course is designed to enable students to acquire a more in-depth knowledge of the history of Western philosophy from the 14th to the 16th centuries. In order to reconstruct this phase of the history of thought, there will be a special focus on sources, offering a thematic pathway through commented reading of some works (or parts of works) of 15th and 16th century philosophers. Specifically, the course has the following aims and expects students to have acquired:

1)  *Knowledge and ability to understand*. Deeper knowledge of important periods and figures of the history of Late Medieval and Renaissance philosophy; ability to recognise the lexicon, argumentative structures and the historical and cultural context of the main philosophy texts of that period.

2)  *Ability to apply knowledge and understanding.* Ability to read and explain Late Medieval and Renaissance philosophy texts, from the perspective of historical reconstruction and of the philosophical discussion of problems.

3)  *Autonomy of judgement*. Acquisition of critical awareness, through the dialogue with written texts and the cultures of the past.

4)  *Communication skills*. Extension of the philosophical lexicon, development of abstract thinking skills and of the ability to choose argumentation strategies, depending on the context.

5)  *Ability to learn*. Acquisition of the basic skills in the framework of Late Medieval and Renaissance philosophy, that are useful for professional opportunities, within the scope of second level degrees in the fields of philosophy, history and literature.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Natural macrocosm, human microcosm and their transformations. The acceptance of Plato’s *Timaeus* and of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* in Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola.

The course retraces, from a philosophical perspective, the evolution of Humanism in Europe focusing on two significant episodes of the recovery of ancient philosophy in the 15th and 16th centuries; the presence and transformation of Plato’s *Timaeus* and of the *Problemata Physica* ascribed to Aristotle in *De Vita* by Marsilio Ficino and in *Oratio de hominis dignitate* by Pico della Mirandola. The leitmotif of the analysis of the texts, of their traditions, and of their sources, will be the different facets of the relationship between physical macrocosm and human microcosm, with particular reference to the thematisation of the issue of freedom, between corporeal, psychic and ethical life, in the “case study” of the human being endowed with genius and dedicated to intellectual activities.

***READING LIST***

1. *Primary literature*

Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, *La dignità dell’uomo*, edited by R. Ebgi, Einaudi, Turin 2022.

Marsilio Ficino, *De Vita*, edited by A. Biondi e G. Pisani, Biblioteca dell’Immagine, Pordenone 1991 (book I) (alternatively: Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books of Life*, edited and translated by C.V. Kaske-J.R. Clark, Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, Binghamton N.Y., 1989; AMCRS Press, Tempe [Arizona] 2019, Book I).

Platone,  *Timeo*, edited by G. Reale, Bompiani, Milan 2000 (sevral reprints).

[Aristotele], *Problema XXX 1, Perché tutti gli uomini straordinari sono melancolici*, edited by B. Centrone, ETS, Pisa 2018.

2. *Secondary literature*

M.J.B Allen-V. Rees-M. Davis (eds.), Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy,*His Legacy,* Brill, Leiden 2002 (two Chapters selected by students).

J. Hankins-A. Palmer, *The Recovery of Ancient Philosophy in the Reanaissance: A Brief Guide*, Olschki, Florence 2008 (Chaps. IV, V, X, XII)

H. De Lubac, *Pico della Mirandola. L’alba incompiuta del Rinascimento*, Jaca Book, Milan 2016 (Part one, Chaps. 2-5; Part two, Chaps. 1-6).

R. Klibanski-E. Panofski-F. Saxl, *Saturno e la Melanconia*, *Studi su storia della filosofia naturale, medicina, religione e arte,* Einaudi, Turin 2002 (Part one, Chaps. I-II; Part three, Chaps. I-II; should it be difficult to find the Italian translation, students should use the most recent edition in English: R. Klibanski-E. Panofski-F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy. Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal 2019).

3. *Reference texts:*

a. Primary literature

Platone,  *Tutti gli Scritti,* edited by G. Reale, Bompiani, Milan 2000.

Aristotele, *Problemi*, edited by M.F. Ferrini, Bompiani, Milan 2002.

Id., *L’anima*, edited by G. Movia, Bompiani, Milan 2001.

Calcidio, *Commentario al “Timeo” di Platone,* edited by C. Moreschini, Bompiani, Milan 2003.

Marsilio Ficino, *Anima Mundi. Scritti Filosofici*, edited by R. Ebgi, Einaudi, Turin 2021.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Mito, Magia, Qabbalh*, edited by G. Busi and R. Ebgi, Einaudi, Turin 2014.

b. Secondary lierature

E. Cassirer, *Individuo e Cosmo nella Filosofia del Rinascimento*, Bollati Boringhieri, Turin 2012.

E. Cattanei, *Melanconia, Deliberazione and “Phantasia”. Stati patologici e fisiologici dell’’“immaginazione deliberativa” in Aristotele*, in: V. Gessa Kurotschka-C. De Luzenberger, *Immaginazione, Etica, Interculturalità*, Mimesis, Milan-Udine 2008, pp. 39-52 (the PDF will be made available to students).

B. Centrone (edited by), *Studi sui Problemata Physica aristotelici*, Bibliopolis, Rome-Naples 2011.

G. Ernst (edited by), *La filosofia del Rinascimento: figure e problemi,* Carrocci, Rome 2003 (or another University manualù, for the contextualisation of the considered authors).

E. Garin, *Il ritorno dei Filosofi antichi*, Bibliopolis, Rome-Naples 1983.

Id., *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 2007.

J. Hankins (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007.

P.O. Kristeller, *La tradizione classica nel pensiero del Rinascimento,* La Nuova Italia, Florence 1987.

P. De Leemans-M. Goyens (eds.), *Aristotle’s Problemata in different times and tongues*, Leuven 2006.

E. Rudolph (editor), *Polis e Cosmo in Platone*, Italian edition edited by E. Cattanei, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1997 (Chaps.. I, III, VII).

S. Toussaint, *La Liberté d’Esprit: Fonction et condition des intellectuelles humanistes*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2019.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course includes 30 hours of frontal lectures in the classroom. Possible seminar activities, also with active participation by students, will be programmed at the beginning of the Course. There will also be meetings and conferences with sector specialists.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam consists of an oral reading test and in a commentary on the primary literature texts specified in the Reading List. Students have the option to replace one of the three parts of the programme with a presentation of a written paper, structured like a brief Chapter of a degree thesis.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In order to attend the course, students are requested to have prior knowledge of the fundamentals of the history of ancient and medieval philosophy.

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.