# Culture and Civilisation in Europe

## Prof. Luca Montecchi

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

The course aims to describe and document ideas – especially those related to *virtue* – that have shaped the consciousness and mentality of the people of Europe.

The course will first present the ontological foundations of the *logos* of the praxis, from Socrates to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, with an appropriate focus on medieval reflection in Thomas Aquinas and Franciscan thinkers, especially in the light of the Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. This line of classical and Judeo-Christian development will then be compared, on the one hand, with the legalistic outlook of Islam and, on the other, with the rationalistic and idealistic departure of Protestantism, taking a partly retrospective approach based on thinkers – philosophers and intellectuals – of the 19th and 20th centuries who, in modern and post-modern eras, have reflected on virtue and the meaning of a “good life”.

1. *Knowledge and understanding*

By the end of the course, students will have gained solid knowledge of the categories and terms that define and describe moral action, and the ability to identify their premises and (psycho-)logical developments throughout the trajectory of Western thought. Students will also be able to observe contemporary Italian and international social customs across a broad time frame with a more alert and educated eye.

1. *Ability to apply knowledge*

Students will be invited to make critical observations and draw comparisons between various views on classical, Biblical and secular ethics, as well as critically adopt such views in order to apply them to enhance one’s own consciousness, as well as reflect on and more expertly evaluate and discuss the choices we make for ourselves and those that fall within the remit of governing bodies in the religious, political, legal and economic spheres.

1. *Critical analysis and communication skills*

In a world like ours, dominated by media exposure and the disappearance of boundaries between the public arena and private sphere, it is increasingly urgent that young people approaching adulthood be aware, including of the diachronic stratification, of the meanings of currently prevalent words and of the criteria by which to interpret social and cultural phenomena, which in turn affect individual acts and choices.

Learning capacity will be stimulated by presentations, structured discussion and special debates using appropriate terminology and analytical tools.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Single-subject course

*Virtue for success and happiness.*

*The concept and practice of cardinal virtues from the ancient world to the present.*

***READING LIST***

Attending students will use lecture notes and the bibliographic information provided during the course.

The following works will be particularly important:

Alasdair McIntyre, *Dopo la virtù. Saggio di teoria morale*, Armando, Rome 2009.

Josef Pieper, *«Otium» e culto*, Cantagalli, Siena 2010.

Luca Montecchi, *Maometto. L’anno dell’Égira*, Bolis, Bergamo 2023.

***TEACHING METHOD***

During lectures, students will read and comment on the most significant and relevant texts to the subject of the course. Lectures will include theoretical study and discussion on specific questions posed by the lecturer or raised by the students.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam with the relevant lecturer on the culture of one of the linguistic areas. The format of the exam will be determined by the lecturer. Students must take the *Culture and Civilisation of Europe* exam on an official exam date, and after passing the oral exam on the individual linguistic areas.

In the exam, students will:

1. be assessed on their knowledge of basic categories and structures related to European cultural history;

2. examine texts and other cultural testaments commented on in lectures, with alternative content for non-attending students.

NB. “Non-attending students” will meet with the relevant lecturer to agree on their examination syllabus.

The final mark will be the weighted average of the mark obtained in the oral exam for the individual languages and the mark obtained in the final exam.

Regarding the first point of the syllabus, which involves knowledge of the basic categories and structures of European cultural history, students require general knowledge equivalent (at least) to that provided by a lower-secondary level textbook.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

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.