# Media and Politics

Prof. Fausto Colombo

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

The aim of the course is to illustrate the relationships between media and power in the context of phenomena of representation and public debate.

More specifically, the course will address three particular aspects:

* the role of Web 2.0 in transforming the public sphere and political power;
* the relationship between parrhesia and politics in the current media context, characterised by strong ideological bias and propaganda;
* the role of the photographic image in creating public opinion.

*Knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the course, students will be able to recognise the main forms of and in media power, based on some crucial theories of power (in particular, Michel Foucault) and focusing particularly on the most recent forms, associated with the platform society. In addition, they will be able to understand the role that photography can play in political communication, and reflect upon the complex relationship existing between truth and politics.

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*

Students will be able to analyse various forms of propaganda and to develop communication campaigns or counter-campaigns about political communication by means of social media.

Given the specialised nature of the course, there will be a particular focus on developing a critical perspective and awareness of media mechanisms. Specific lectures will focus on analysing case studies to familiarise students with analytical tools and technologies.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into two parts.

* The first part (semester 1) will examine the relationship between the media and politics, taking a multidimensional approach and illustrating areas of mutual influence, including through the analysis of historical cases. There will be a particular focus on the phenomenon of Web 2.0 and platform and surveillance society, in particular regarding the relationship between truth and propaganda.
* The second part (semester 2) will examine a single theme: the role of the image (particularly the photograph) in creating and disseminating political imagery

***READING LIST***

F. Colombo, *Verità e democrazia. Sulle orme di Michel Foucault,* Mimesis, Milano 2022.

F. Colombo, *Ecologia dei media. Manifesto per una comunicazione gentile*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2020.

F. Colombo, *Imago Pietatis. Indagine su fotografia e compassione,* Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2018 (for the second part).

During the course, further reading material in Italian and in English will be distributed or made available online. In particular, students will have the possibility to read and analyse a selection of works by Plato, Michel Foucault, Hannah Arendt, and Jan Patočka and also some cases of contemporay propaganda in social media.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures. Frontal lectures and open discussions, based on a number of essays and papers read together (some of which will be in English).

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

At the end of the first part (semester 1), there will be an interim test for which students must:

* present a report to be agreed with the lecturer in advance;
* sit an oral exam on the course reading material.

At the end of the second part, there will be a final exam; to pass this exam, students must:

* have already passed either the interim test or an oral assessment on the reading material of the first part;
* discuss an essay to be agreed in advance with the lecturer on an example of political photography; or sit an oral assessment on the reading material of the second part of the course.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students can find all the information on the syllabus and the course in general, as well as any room or timetable changes on the lecturer’s personal webpage. All relevant teaching material, documents, information and instructions will be made available on Blackboard. Prof. Colombo can be contacted on the following email address: *fausto.colombo@unicatt.it*.

*Prerequisites*

In order to get the most out of this course, students should have a good knowledge of contemporary history, the key concepts of political science, and the English language. During the last years, there have been no difficulties in the absence of these requisites and students have always partecipated actively in class.

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.