**- Moral philosophy**

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

The course aims to provide students with a general understanding of a theoretical problem with relevant practical-social implications: the problem of the nature of *otherness* and the possible ways of coexisting with what is opposite to the concept of familiar and ordinary. What does the phenomenon of otherness consist of? How does it show itself? Is it possible to address the *other* - whatever form it takes - without replacing or imposing oneself on it, without identifying with it, without ignoring its needs and the challenges it poses, without capturing it in a web of prejudicial distortions, without allowing it to dominate us? In certain circumstances the others can be extraneous to us, but we can become extraneous to ourselves in other cases; worlds and cultures other than ours may appear extraneous to us, but also our world can sometimes appear extraneous to us. Part of the contemporary debate focuses on otherness, both in ethics and in the epistemology of care. This issue plays, in fact, a crucial role for various disciplinary fields. For moral philosophy, in the first place, especially when it is understood as responsive, that is, when it finds its source in responding to others. Secondly, for theories and practices of care and/or training, which tend to be expressed in dynamic-relational or ecological terms and not according to a model of mind established in the past, characterised in exclusively intrapsychic terms, or unnaturally separated from a shared field they belong to. In this perspective, e.g. treatment does not consist only of either a unidirectional intervention (from the doctor to the patient) or in a so-called ‘orthopaedic’ intervention (aimed only at straightening the distortions). Otherness and the figure of the *Doppelgänger* (the double or lookalike), as a paradigm of otherness (of the voice, of the gaze, etc.), will be the object of an essentially philosophical reflection, although with interdisciplinary openings. They will be grasped in their salient features and in their possible connections with the ethically fundamental concepts of “freedom”, “identity” and “responsibility” (also central in the legal field), of “good” and “evil”, of “same” and “other”, “ipseity” and “property”, “normality” and “abnormality”, “authenticity” and “inauthenticity”, “determinism” and “indeterminism”, “power” and “duty”. Particular attention will be placed on the interaction modalities between the mind and the body.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- know some fundamental philosophical themes and distinguish the phenomenological-responsive orientation from others in moral philosophy;

- understand their contribution to the development of adequate cultural and professional competence in the field of care and/or training;

- develop the ability to critically understand the fundamental issues regarding the relationship between moral, individual and collective action, the vulnerable aspects of existence and the possible forms of self-transformation (moral, cultural and related to “responsive therapy”);

- argue about ethical issues related to care work, also using specialist vocabulary.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Part of this course will be focussed on identifying, *through* phenomenology, the connection between ethics and the processes of self-re-creation, as they appear in the processes of transformation of experience (in artistic or scientific creations and co-creations, in inventions or innovations, in revolutions). The course will mainly adopt the responsive perspective of the contemporary moral philosopher Bernhard Waldenfels. In particular, the lectures will focus on the relationship that exists between an ethics of the senses and a “therapy” aimed at recovering the patient's ability to respond and their creative potential. A therapy of this type is therefore based on responsiveness or intertwining, characterised by asymmetries, with the other. From this perspective, ample space will be dedicated to the figure of the double or lookalike which constitutes the paradigm of otherness. For the purposes of describing the phenomenon of otherness, the emotionally connoted concepts of *pathos* and *response* will be decisive. We will try to understand the relationships between *pathos* and *response* and their possible dissociations as forms of non-responsiveness, failures to respond, blindness or relational weaknesses.

The course programme will be structured as follows:

- The first part will present the problem of otherness, also drawing on other theoretical traditions of moral research found in the history of Western thought. The *pathic* and temporal structure of the phenomenon of the other will be described. The difference between radical otherness and otherness will emerge. The course will discuss the ethical-cultural and theoretical implications of the concept of otherness, the methods of its application in care environments, the role of the other in communities.

- The second part will move from the Freudian analysis of the concept of “uncanny”. Further aspects, in the form of the double, of the phenomenon of otherness will then be explored. In this context, issues relating to individual and collective freedom, responsibility and guilt will also be analysed in depth.

***READING LIST [[1]](#footnote-1)***

B. Waldendfels, *Fenomenologia dell’estraneo,* translation by F. G. Menga, Cortina, Milan 2008 (p. 182).

B. Waldendfels, *Creatività responsiva*, translation from German and introductory essay by R. Guccinelli, Inschibboleth Edizioni, Rome 2022 (p. 181).

S. Freud, *Il perturbante, in S. Freud, Opere. Vol. 9 (1917-1923) L’Io e l’Es e altri scritti*, Edition by C. L. Musatti, Boringhieri, Milan 1979, pages 77-119 (the 1989 reprint is also worth mentioning).

Other materials will be made available by the lecturer and uploaded to the Blackboard platform.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Classroom lessons with multimedia tools; reading and commenting on textbooks and discussions. Literary or artistic exemplifications of some topics covered.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam is oral. Students must first demonstrate their knowledge of the key concepts of the topics covered during the course. The assessment will take into account the relevance of the answers, the appropriate use of specific terminology, the reasoned and consistent structuring of the discussion, the ability to identify conceptual links and open questions.

Assessments:  
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 skill.

24-26: fairly good, although incomplete and not always correct knowledge.

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

18-21: sufficient.

Less than 18: insufficient.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Since this is an introductory course, no prior knowledge of philosophy is required. However, interest and intellectual curiosity for reflection are expected.

Information on office hours available on the teacher's personal page at <http://docenti.unicatt.it/>.

1. The textbooks indicated in the reading list can be purchased from University bookstores; they can also be purchased at other retailers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)