

Faculty of Arts and Letters



FLTR1610 Introduction to Philosophy

[45h] 4.5 credits

This course is taught in the 2nd semester

Teacher(s): Jean-Michel Counet, Jean Leclercq (supplée Jean-Michel Counet), Michel Lisse
Language: French
Level: First cycle

Aims

By the end of this course, the students should be able to engage in an act of philosophical reflection, which implies creating a distance from the immediate experience in which the reflection can take place. The students should gain a global perspective of the major kinds of questions the great philosophers of the past have raised as well as understand the answers they have offered; this leads to a personal reflection by the students as well as to a sensitivity to the use of philosophical questioning in today's world. An introduction to the working methods will allow the students, if need be, to continue their learning on their own.

Main themes

The lecture course is divided into four different parts. 1) A historical introduction: What is philosophical questioning? How has this questioning been expressed over the course of the different historical periods? In this part, we show both the permanence of the great philosophical questions and the original contributions of each period, that is, how philosophy confronted dominant forms of thinking in a critical manner (myth, monotheistic religions, natural sciences, social sciences, and technique). We shall focus on introducing the key philosophers and on situating them in their historical context. 2) A study of subjectivity and its modalities: perception, imagination, memory, types of reflection, etc. The point is to show the specificity of mental phenomena in contrast to physical phenomena, so as to reach different levels of consciousness (thetic consciousness, habitual consciousness, the subconscious, the unconscious) in order to unravel the notion of intentionality. 3) A philosophical study of different cultural sectors (language, art, religion, science, technique) where human consciousness exteriorizes itself and thus acquires a collective aspect. At play will be the specificity of the resulting approach to the real and how it allows us to gain a deeper knowledge of the human being. 4) A study of human actions and their individual and collective ends: the emphasis will be on distinguishing action from behavior and on introducing the ethical dimension of human actions.

Content and teaching methods

This introductory course is centred on history. Philosophy at each period may be characterized at each epoch by a critical dialogue with leading disciplines: myth in Antiquity, faith in the Middle Ages, sciences of nature in Modern Times and human sciences and technique from the XIXth century. The historical account focuses on the conception of man and the emergence of subjectivity. A few great philosophers are taken as examples of the philosophical peculiarities of their times. The XXst century is essentially seen from a political (how did philosophy deal with totalitarisms) and an esthetical point of view (what are the link between philosophy and literature?).

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Pre-requisites:

Good knowledge of French, of the general structure of Western history, logical reasoning skills, sufficient computer skills in order to fruitfully use Internet.

Assessment:

Final examination at the end of the semester on the lecture course and continuous assessment of the work in small groups.

Assessment is carried out by academic and research staff.

Course material:

Course notes will be provided covering the main aspects of the lecture course, supplemented by texts and other documents, especially including precise bibliographical references and information on access to multimedia tools.

Course holder:

The course will be given by a group made up of one or more lecturers for the lecture course and two assistants for the tutorials in small groups, with the help of student-tutors (doctoral or licence students in philosophy, or if necessary, licence students in arts).

Other credits in programs

ARKE12BA	Deuxième année de bachelier en histoire de l'art et archéologie	(4.5 credits)	Mandatory
CLAS11BA	Première année de bachelier en langues et littératures anciennes, orientation classiques	(4.5 credits)	Mandatory
GERM11BA	Première année de bachelier en langues et littératures modernes, orientation germaniques	(4.5 credits)	Mandatory
GERM1PM	Année d'études préparatoires au master en langues et littératures modernes, orientation germanique	(4.5 credits)	
HIST11BA	Première année de bachelier en histoire	(4.5 credits)	Mandatory
HORI11BA	Première année de bachelier en langues et littératures anciennes, orientation orientales	(4.5 credits)	Mandatory
LAFR11BA	Première année de bachelier en langues et littératures modernes et anciennes	(4.5 credits)	Mandatory
ROGE11BA	Première année de bachelier en langues et littératures modernes, orientation générale	(4.5 credits)	Mandatory
ROGE1PM	Année d'études préparatoires au master en langues et littératures modernes, orientation générale	(4.5 credits)	
ROM11BA	Première année de bachelier en langues et littératures françaises et romanes, orientation générale	(4.5 credits)	Mandatory
STIC1PM	Année d'études préparatoires au master en sciences et technologies de l'information et de la communication	(4.5 credits)	