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PLTH300 – Citizenship and Religion in a multicultural society: a new clash of identities in Italy and Europe?

PROF. PAOLO MONTI

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In recent years, European societies have become increasingly pluralistic and religiously diverse. In particular, the influx of migrants coming from the nearby regions of North Africa, Middle East and the Balkans has determined the presence of an unprecedented variety of cultures and religions in Italy and in Western Europe. This transformation has been challenging our views of citizenship, identity and democracy. In this evolving situation, our societies face the menace of terrorism, cultural division and social conflict, but we also have a unique occasion to reflect on crucial features of our social and political life, as well as to engage in a serious public debate with old and new neighbours. This course explores the perspectives that philosophers and political theorists have been advancing to understand these ongoing social and political transformations and the new role of citizenship in the age of religious and cultural diversity.

COURSE CONTENTS

The course will cover the following subjects:

- From the Italian city of the XIII century to the European Union in a global world: shifting models of citizenship and political participation
- The state of the European Union: recent history, financial crisis and political tensions
- The thin line between private and public space: why does politics matter to us?
- Migration and cultures: cultural pluralism as a social fact and as a philosophical problem
- Secularization and Post-secularization: the public significance of religions in a changing society
- Fear and conflict: the problem of violent extremism and the quest for peace and cooperation

PREREQUISITES

No specific background is required.

METHOD OF TEACHING

The course is based on four complementary approaches:

1. Case studies that illustrate situations of conflict, integration, or public controversy across the past and recent history of Europe.
2. Lectures that present the philosophical articulation of the problems at stake and the contribution to their solution that comes from the history of ethical and political ideas.
3. Questions and open discussion.



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4. Final assignment to be presented and discussed in the final weeks of the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to:

- a. Regularly attend class sessions and actively contribute to in-class debate
- b. Deliver one assignment and present it to the class in the final two weeks of the course
- c. Take two written tests: a mid-term exam and a final exam

CREDITS

6 ECTS

GRADING

Attendance and class participation	20 % of final grade
Home assignment + class presentation	20 % of final grade
Midterm exam	30 % of final grade
Final exam	30 % of final grade

COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS

The lecturer's slides will be available on Blackboard after the lessons.

RULES OF CONDUCT

Exam dates communicated in the syllabus for the midterm and final cannot be re-scheduled. Unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.

In cases of unforeseeable circumstances such as illness or injury on the day of the exams, the student must submit a medical certificate and communicate his/her absence to the Professor and UCSC International Office via email prior to the exam. If the student does not justify his/her absence through sufficient documentation and with adequate notice before the final test, the student will receive an automatic Failed.

SCHEDULE

Lesson 1: Course overview and introduction to the topic: public and private spheres

Lesson 2: A philosophical history of Europe I: The Middle Ages and the Italian City



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del Sacro Cuore

Lesson 3: A philosophical history of Europe II: The Wars of religion and the rise of Nation States

Lesson 4: A philosophical history of Europe III: On Totalitarianism and the "Banality of Evil"

Lesson 5: A philosophical history of Europe IV: Liberal Democracies and Social Justice

Lesson 6: *Ex pluribus unum?* The troubled project of a United Europe

Lesson 7: The European Union's current crisis and alternative visions for the future

Lesson 8: Private VS Common goods? Why we need the others

Lesson 9: Bound together: citizens, communities, and the quest for identity and recognition

Lesson 10: Migration and Islam: from the first generation migrants to the ongoing refugee crisis

Lesson 11: Midterm exam

Lesson 12: What does it mean to be a citizen? Law, culture, deliberation

Lesson 13: Pluralism as a problem: the debate on multiculturalism in Europe

Lesson 14: Do we still live in a secular age? The philosophy of Charles Taylor

Lesson 15: Religion and politics after secularization: the philosophy of Jürgen Habermas

Lesson 16: Secularism in France: the controversy on the Islamic veil

Lesson 17: Violence and fear: the challenge of terrorism to European societies

Lesson 18: Assignments presentation and discussion I

Lesson 19: Assignments presentation and discussion II

Lesson 20: Assignments presentation and discussion III

Lesson 21: Assignments presentation and discussion IV

Lesson 22: Final exam

COURSE EVALUATION

At UCSC we highly value student opinions as they are among our most important resources for assessing and improving the quality of teaching.

The course evaluation will be available on the Blackboard two weeks before the end of the course.

Note that you will not be able to view your final grade if you do not submit the survey for the course.

The survey is made of multiple choice questions and open questions. The evaluations will remain anonymous. Professors will receive an average score of each answers (except for the open question).

INSTRUCTORS BIO

Paolo Monti earned a Ph.D. in Philosophy in 2005, with a research on issues of normative ethics and public ethics in contemporary American philosophy, with special reference to the work of Robert Audi.



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He has been Visiting researcher at Notre Dame University in 2004 and 2006, working on issues related to moral epistemology, ethical intuitionism and the relationship between religion pluralism and public discourse. Also Visiting researcher to the Department of Bioethics of the NIH in 2009 on issues related to public deliberation and ethics of the healthcare systems and visiting to Georgetown University in 2011 researching on paradigms of public reason and democratic institutions.

He worked from 2007 to 2010 at the Center for Clinical Bioethics and Healthcare Governance at Fondazione IRCCS Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico, a public research hospital based in Milan, on projects concerning public deliberation in healthcare, informed consent and patients' empowerment. From 2011 to 2013 he was research fellow at ASSET – Studium Generale Marcianum, Venice, with an interdisciplinary project on public reason in pluralistic societies.

He has published and edited various books and he is author of several articles in national and international academic journals. His latest book is *Contemporary Political Philosophy and Religion* (Routledge 2018, with co-author Camil Ungureanu).

He is currently Lecturer at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan and Brescia. His research focuses on public ethics and the role of religions in the public sphere.

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