



Academic Year 2025 - 2026 Syllabus
European Thought and Global Justice
12 CFU

1st module: Prof. Lorenzo Pecchi
2nd module: Prof. Lorenzo Perilli

Course Description

The Course is divided in two modules: European Thought (second module) and Global Justice (first module).

The first module addresses a central question: *What do we owe to each other?* To explore possible answers, we will examine major contemporary theories of justice and social ethics - utilitarianism, libertarianism, contractualism and communitarianism - tracing their roots to the political philosophies of Aristotle, Locke, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Bentham and Mill. Much of today's political debate in the Western democracies largely reflects these traditions, even if the actors involved are not always consciously aware of their influence.

Our inquiry into duties focuses on identifying and justifying the principles of justice that should guide our actions and shape our institutions. Since the emphasis is on global justice, we will consider how individuals and states ought to act in their relations with others on the world stage. Theories will be tested against pressing global issues such as world poverty, global inequalities, immigration and climate change.

The second module aims at providing students with a common background about the origin and development of the most important features peculiar to European thought, and at giving them the intellectual instruments to understand the issues which make Europe different from, or similar to, other cultures. Students will gain knowledge of the foundations and conceptual base of western political systems (democracy), science, law, philosophy, ethics, AI and the digital environment, and other issues, in their mutual relation.

1st module: GLOBAL JUSTICE

Teaching Method

Students are expected to read the material for every class and participate in every lecture.

Schedule of Topics

Topic 1	Introduction to moral theories
Topic 2	Utilitarianism
Topic 3	Libertarianism
Topic 4	Contractualism (Rawls)
Topic 5	Equalization of endowments and capabilities
Topic 6	Communitarianism and Republicanism
Topic 7	Cosmopolitanism vs. Social Liberalism
Topic 8	World poverty and global inequality
Topic 9	Borders: immigration and territory
Topic 10	Climate change justice

Textbook and Materials

The course's reference books are *Michael J. Sandel, Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?*, Penguin Group, 2009 and *Kok-Chor Tan, What is This Thing Called Global Justice?*, Routledge 2017 which cover large part of the above topics, however students are required to read selected articles and excerpts from the following books:

Beitz , Political Theories and International Relations
Dworkin, Sovereign Virtue
Dworkin (2), Is Democracy Possible Here?
Friedman, Free to Choose
Hayek, The Constitution of Liberty
Kant, (1) Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals
Kant (2) Perpetual Peace: a Philosophical Sketch
MacIntyre, After Virtue
Mill, Utilitarianism
Miller, Citizenship and National Identity
Mollendorf, Cosmopolitan Justice Moss,
Climate Change and Social Justice
Nozick, Anarchy, State and Utopia
Nussbaum, Creating capabilities
Pettit, Just Freedom
Pogge, World Poverty and Human Rights
Rawls (1), A Theory of Justice
Rawls (2), Political Liberalism
Rawls (3), The Law of Peoples
Rawls (4), Justice as Fairness
Rothbard, For a New Liberty - The Libertarian Manifesto
Sandel (1), Justice
Sandel (2), Liberalism and the Limits of Justice
Sen, Inequality Reexamined
Singer (1), Famine, Affluent, and Morality
Singer (2), Utilitarianism: A Very Short Introduction
Singer (3), Practical Ethics
Singer (4), One World One
Singer (5), The Life You Can Save
Taylor, Philosophical Papers 2
Walzer, Spheres of Justice

Course Outlines

1. Introduction to moral theories

Lichtenberg, Negative Duties, Positive Duties, and the New Harms Singer, Famine, Affluence, and Morality

2. Utilitarianism

Sandell (1), Ch. 2 (*) Mill,
Singer (2), Ch. 1, 2 & 3 The History of Utilitarianism – Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
(plato.stanford.edu)

3. Libertarianism

Sandel (1), Ch. 3
Rothbard, Ch. 2
Friedman, Ch. 1 & 5
Nozick, pp. 149 –182
Hayek, Ch. 6

4. Political Liberalism

Sandel, Ch. 4 – 5(*) Kant (1),

Rawls (1), Ch. 2 (sec. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14), Ch. 3 (sec. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25), Ch.4 (sec.40)

Rawls (2), Introduction

Rawls (4), Part 1

Liberalism – Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

5. Equalization of Endowments and Capabilities

Dworkin, Ch.1 & 2

Dworkin, Ch.1 & § Sen,

Ch.1, 2, & 3

Nussbaum, Ch.2

6. Communitarianism & Republicanism

Sandel (1), Ch. 8

Sandel (2), Introduction, Ch. 1

McIntyre, Ch. 15 – 16

Miller, Ch. 6

Taylor, Ch. 7

Walzer, Ch.1 – 2 – 3

Pettit, The Globalized Republican Ideal (*)

Pettit, Ch1, Ch.2, Ch.3

Communitarianism – Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

7. Cosmopolitanism vs. Social Liberalism

(*) Kant (2)

Rawls (3), sec. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 16

Beitz, Part 3, 1, 2 & 3

Miller, Ch. 2, 3

Mollendorf, Global inequality and Injustice

Mollendorf, Ch.2 & Ch. 4

Pogge, Introduction, Ch. 4 Singer

(4), Ch. 5

Cosmopolitanism – Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

8. World Poverty and Global Inequality

Tan, Ch.2, Ch.3

Milanovic, Global Income Inequality by the Numbers: in History and Now

United Nations, The Millenium Development Goals Report

Singer (5), Ch. 6, Ch. 7

9. Borders: Immigration and territory

Tan, Ch. 9

Tan, The Boundary of Justice and the Justice of Boundaries Carens,

Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders Miller, Selecting
immigrants

Miller, Ch. 7

Moellendorf, Ch. 3

Hardin, Migration and community

Walzer, Ch. 2

10. Climate Change Justice

Tan, Ch. 12

Mollendorf, Climate change and global justice Moss,

Introduction, Ch. 3

Singer (4), Ch. 2

Items with (*) are optional

Office hours

Office hours are after classes or via mail lorenzo.pecchi@gmail.com.

2nd module: EUROPEAN THOUGHT

Teaching Method

Taught class, lectures delivered by the Professor will be the main feature. Active discussion with students will also be part of the teaching activity. The first part of the module will touch upon issues of the origin of European culture, democracy, the origin of Western science and its relation to religion, and 20th century issues of (human) rights and duties. The second part of the module will be devoted to a discussion of two topics: 1) Fyodor Dostoyevsky's story of "The Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Students are required to read the chapters thoroughly in advance (see bibliography below), in order to be able to follow the arguments presented during the class and actively participate in the discussion. 2) The notion of Artificial Intelligence, Artificial Consciousness, the digital world and digital non-things and their impact on the human brain and behaviour.

Schedule of Topics

Topic 1	Origin of European culture.
Topic 2	Birth and first development of democracy as a political system. From Pericles to the Ventotene Manifesto.
Topic 3	The method of scientific research and the birth of the modern notion of science.
Topic 4	The evidential paradigm. Inference, induction, deduction, serendipity.
Topic 5	Rationality and religion. Ancients and moderns.
Topic 6	Rights, duties, obligations and the history of modern Europe.
Topic 7	God, Freedom, Power: Fyodor Dostoyevsky's <i>The Grand Inquisitor</i>
Topic 8	The image of Europe and Russia in Dostoyevsky's <i>Brothers Karamazov</i> and the debate between Joseph Brodsky and Milan Kundera
Topic 9	AI and the digital order of the world.
Topic 10	Artificial consciousness and the human brain and behaviour.

Textbook and Materials

Papers, Books, and Articles:

- i. Thucydides, *Pericles' Speech* and *The Melian Dialogue*.
- ii. C. Ginzburg, *Clues: Roots of a Scientific Paradigm*, in C. Ginzburg, *Clues, myth and the historical paradigm*, Johns Hopkins University Press 1989, pp. 96-125.
- iii. S. Weil, *The Need for Roots*, London 1952 (part 1 and other selected pages).
- iv. F. Dostoyevsky, *The Grand Inquisitor, with related chapters from The Brothers Karamazov*. Edited, with an Introduction, by Charles B. Guignon, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis/Cambridge, 1993 [From the beginning to Chapter 5 –The Grand Inquisitor (included). It is recommended to

read the introduction after reading the other chapters]. – **The best option** will be to read *The Brothers Karamazov* in its entirety.

- v. Kosmyna et al., *Your Brain on ChatGPT: Accumulation of Cognitive Debt when Using an AI Assistant for Essay Writing Task*, MIT, 2025.
- vi. L. Perilli, *The Dream of Hephaestus: Man and Intelligent Machines*, «Prometeo. Quarterly Magazine of History and Sciences» 170, June 2025.
- vii. A. Turing, *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*, «Mind» 49, 1950, 433–460.
- viii. A. Spinelli, E. Rossi, *The Ventotene Manifesto. For a Free and United Europe. A Draft Manifesto* (Any edition; for example, publ. Ultima Spiaggia, Bilingual edition Italian and English, 2016).
- ix. Compulsory reading: Stefan Zweig, *The world of yesterday*, University of Nebraska Press, 2013 (new translation of 1943 edition). The book can be read **in any language** (Original title: *Die Welt von Gestern*).
- x. Slides provided by the Professor.

Office hours

Students can speak with the Professor after each lesson or they can set up a meeting by writing an e-mail to lorenzo.perilli@uniroma2.it; lore

ASSESSMENT

First Module (6 CFU, one half of the final grade)

Assessment

Attending students will be evaluated based on two components: **Groupwork** and an **individual final written exam**.

- **Groupwork** (Requirement A) accounts for **25%** of the final grade.
- The **final written exam** (Requirement B) must be completed individually and accounts for **75%** of the final grade.

Active participation in class and completion of Requirement A are strongly encouraged, while completion of Requirement B is **mandatory**.

Groupwork consists of a closed-door debate in which two teams of five students each will argue opposing positions on assigned topics—one team defending a thesis, the other presenting the counter-thesis.

If the grade on the final written exam is higher than the weighted average of both components, the final exam grade will take precedence.

Non-attending students (those with less than 80% class attendance) or students who do not participate in the group debates will be assessed **solely** on the final written exam, which will account for **100%** of their grade.

which is done individually.

Second Module (6 CFU, one half of the final grade)

Written exam. Students will answer open questions and multiple-choice questions concerning topics from both textbooks and in-class activity. Different open questions and more multiple-choice questions for non-attending students, who will be assessed on the base of their study of the bibliography listed above. PLEASE NOTE that the study of the bibliography without attendance will require an extra effort.

Attendance is expected and strongly encouraged.

Please be aware: students will be considered for the first round (“appello”) grade of the exam only by sustaining BOTH modules’ exams, the exam of module 1 during the MIDTERM week and the exam of module 2 at the end of lectures. Students who do not show up/pass module 1

in the **MIDTERM** week cannot sustain the first exam of module 2 but will be able only to sustain both exams in the second round of the Summer session or of the Fall session. The student can reject **ONLY** the final grade of the average of the 2 exams. If they do that, they will have to retake the exam in the following rounds (appelli) by doing again the exams of **BOTH** modules. If a student passes module 1 in the midterm week, they can choose to take the final exam of module 2 in either round of the summer session.

NOTE: If you are an Erasmus or a non Global Governance student who would like to attend one or more courses in the Global Governance programme, please be aware that, before enrolling in the course, you should have read the code of conduct and the procedural rules characterizing our programme. We assume that, if you enrol in the course, you have read and accepted all Global Governance values and rules. Notice that attendance is expected from the very first lesson and you need to attend at least 80% of the course to be considered an attending student.

Description of the methods and criteria for testing learning

The examination assesses the student's overall preparation, ability to integrate the knowledge of the different parts of the program, consequentiality of reasoning, analytical ability and clarity of presentation, in accordance with the Dublin descriptors (1. knowledge and understanding; 2. applying knowledge and understanding; 3. making judgements; 4. learning skills; 5. communication skills).

The examination will be graded according to the following criteria:

Unsuitable: important deficiencies and/or inaccuracies in the knowledge and understanding of the topics; the topics are exposed in an incoherent manner and with inappropriate language.

18-20: barely sufficient knowledge and understanding of most of the topics, with some missing items; sufficient capacity for analysis; the topics are sometimes exposed in an inconsistent manner and with inappropriate/technical language;

21-23: basic knowledge and understanding of most of the topics; ability to analyze and synthesize correctly with sufficiently coherent logical argumentation, with possibly some inaccuracy in the technical language.

24-26: good knowledge and understanding of most of the topics; good analytical and synthetic skills with rigorously expressed arguments, though with possibly a few inaccuracies in the technical language.

27-29: complete knowledge and understanding of the topics; good capacity for analysis and synthesis. Arguments presented in a rigorous manner and with appropriate/technical language, with only minor inaccuracies.

30-30L: very good level of knowledge and thorough understanding of topics. Excellent analytical and synthetic skills and independent judgement. Arguments expressed in an original manner and in appropriate technical language.