



Syllabus
Foundations of European Thought
CFU 6
Prof. Lorenzo Perilli

Course Description

The course 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, and other issues, in their mutual relation.

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. Students will also be asked to write short essays on topics not announced in advance.

Schedule of Topics

Topic 1	the birth and first development of democracy as a political system
Topic 2	the method of scientific research and the notion of science. Axiomatic-deductive method vs. arguments based on images
Topic 3	the role of religion in society and its competitiveness towards rational thought
Topic 4	Inference, induction, deduction.
Topic 5	the circulation of knowledge and the idea of progress

Textbook and Materials

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; M. Finley, *Democracy ancient and modern*, London 1985; R. Kapuscinski, *Travels with Herodotus*, Knopf, New York 2004. Selected pages from E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley 1951; G.E.R. Lloyd–N. Sivin, *The way and the word. Science and medicine in ancient China and Greece*, Yale 2003. Further bibliography and other material will be made available during the class.

Assessment

Attendance: 20%; written work: 10%; final exam: 70%.

Office hours

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