



Academic Year 2017-2018
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%.

At the end of the lecture period, a final written examination on topics 1 to 5 is given. Attendance to the final examination is compulsory in order to pass the exam. Students who fail the final examination will need to give a new complete examination in different exam dates of the year. Students who do not attend the first final examination can redo it in the second exam of the Winter session. Students who retake the exam in the September session have to forego any result of the Winter session and do a new complete examination.

Non-attending students will be evaluated only on the final examination.

Office hours

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