



JOHN FELICE
ROME CENTER

PHIL 288R: Culture and Civilization in Rome
John Felice Rome Center

Spring 2026

Tuesdays & Thursdays | 3:45-5:00pm

Dr. Moreno Rocchi

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Office Hours: Tue./Thu., 2:00-3:00pm (by appointment)

Course Description

This course, divided into five sections, is designed to acquaint the student with some important moments of the Italian philosophical tradition. More precisely, we will take five steps along the path that leads from the Renaissance to the contemporary period, trying to relate each of those steps to the peculiarities of Italy's socio-political history.

The first section of the course is dedicated to Renaissance philosophy. Having addressed those early Renaissance voices that articulate the break with the medieval 'theocentric' view, we will make a comparison between Campanella's utopian project and Machiavelli's political realism, paying special attention to the latter's view on human nature and the interplay between virtue and fortune.

The second section is about two figures who, while both moving from Copernicus' theory, open up two different but equally path-breaking perspectives: Giordano Bruno and his purely immanentistic approach to reality; Galileo Galilei and his philosophical assumptions on the relation between mind and world.

Two crucial historical-philosophical events of the 19th Century will be the subject of the third section: the birth of the philosophical nexus between nation, nationalism and internationalism, and the birth of Catholic Social Thought as a response to the issues posed by modernity.

In the fourth section of the course we will move on to contemporary philosophy by investigating two highly original and influential Italian philosophical responses to the shortcomings of globalization: post-Gramscian theories on the emergence of a new collective subject – the so-called "general intellect" – and Agamben's view on the relation between sovereignty and "bare life".

We will conclude by addressing two contemporary Italian feminist philosophers – Cavarero and Pulcini – who take advantage of their Italian heritage in ways that are different and yet share the same goal, that of giving new hope for a better future by making the female subject re-emerge from the vestiges of history.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of some of the main philosophical theories that have been proposed throughout the history of Italian culture, paying special attention to their socio-political context. More precisely, they should be able to dissect, compare and contrast views on topics such as human nature, the nature of external reality, the nature of political power, the relation between the individual and society, the role of culture and intellectuals in contemporary societies, difference feminism.

This course should also enable students to:

- (a) identify both the specificities and the potentialities of the Italian cultural tradition;
- (b) distinguish alternative paradigms on human nature;
- (c) look for and appreciate the reasons given in support of the different views, to assess the forcefulness of the challenge that each poses for the others, and to determine how they also challenge unexamined presuppositions in our own culture;
- (d) engage in dialogue with great philosophers, paying close attention to their reasons, their concerns, their vision;
- (e) insert their own reflections into the dialogue;



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- (f) differentiate among historical and contemporary perspectives with a view to fashioning a more humane and just world;
- (g) recognize the premises for a given conclusion or viewpoint, identify unexamined presuppositions, appreciate astute insights, expose vulnerabilities in established positions.

Required Texts/Materials

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince and The Discourses* (ed. by E.R.P. Vincent, intr. by M. Lerner), New York: Modern Library.

Assigned readings posted on Sakai.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the Rome Center mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, and in compliance with full-time student visa status, all courses adhere to the following attendance policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student and synonymous with academic success. Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for each course. Lateness or leaving class early will impact the course grade at the professor's discretion. All absences, including medical absences, will be treated the same, unless they are documented long-term conditions or emergencies. Such situations will be evaluated case-by-case by the Academic Affairs office.

- **After 2 absences**, a **2% final grade reduction** will be applied **for each missed class**.
- Missing **6 classes** or more will result in an **automatic failure (F)**.

Campus Health

The JFRC will conduct all activity according to policies and best practices as prescribed by the Italian Ministries of Health and Education and in consultation with the Loyola University Chicago main campus. These policies will be subject to change as the situation warrants.

Assessment Components

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| • Midterm Exam (in-class test) | 32% |
| • Final Exam (take-home paper) | 33% |
| • In-class Participation | 20% |
| • Online Forum* | 15% |

* One or two discussion prompts will be posted on Sakai, section "Discussions", every week. Each student is required to publish at least one post, either a direct answer to my prompt or a reply to someone else's answer, every week. Please just try to interact with each other as much as possible. 7% will be for completion. The other 8% will be for the quality of your submissions. I will not grade each post individually, but I encourage you to put thought and effort into each of them so that you can demonstrate the skills and knowledge you are gaining throughout the course.

Basic requirements of each post:

- Posts should be between 150 and 250 words;
- Use language that is professional and respectful of both the authors discussed and your classmates;
- Posts that respond to classmates' posts should begin with a brief statement about what you appreciate or agree with about the classmate's post.



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Grading

94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-
77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
60-66: D
59 or lower: F

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Loyola University Chicago, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle.

Failing to meet the following academic integrity standards is a serious violation of personal honesty and the academic ideals that bind the University into a learning community. These standards apply to both individual and group assignments. Individuals working in a group may be held responsible if one of the group members has violated one or more of these standards.

1. Students may not plagiarize; **the use of AI is considered plagiarism too and treated as such.**
2. Students may not submit the same work for credit for more than one assignment (known as self-plagiarism).
3. Students may not fabricate data.
4. Students may not collude.
5. Students may not cheat.
6. Student may not facilitate academic misconduct.

Follow this link for more details about these standards, sanctions, and academic misconduct procedures: (https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.

Accessibility Accommodations (with addendum on classroom recording policy)

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes. Loyola University provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with Student Accessibility Center (SAC), located in Sullivan Center, Suite 117. Professors receive the accommodation notification from SAC via Accommodate. Students are encouraged to meet with their professor individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential.



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Please note that in this class, software may be used to record class lectures exclusively in order to provide equal access to students with disabilities. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. Recordings are deleted at the end of the semester.

For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or SAC@luc.edu.

Notice of Reporting Obligations for Responsible Campus Partners

As an instructor, I am a Responsible Campus Partner ("RCP") under Loyola's Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation (available at www.luc.edu/equity). While my goal is for you to be able to engage fully and authentically with our course material through class discussions and written work, I also want to be transparent that as a RCP, I must notify the Office for Equity & Compliance ("OEC")/Title IX Coordinator when I have any information about conduct that reasonably may constitute Title IX Sex-Based Discrimination. Title IX Sex-Based Discrimination includes any of the following conduct, when the conduct was within the University's education program or activity:

- Discrimination or discriminatory harassment on the basis of sex (including sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, gender identity, sexual orientation, and Pregnancy or Related Conditions),
- Sexual harassment (including quid pro quo and hostile environment sexual harassment),
- Sexual assault,
- Dating and/or domestic violence, and/or
- Stalking

As the University's Title IX office, the OEC coordinates the University's response to reports and complaints of sexual misconduct (as well as discrimination of any kind) to ensure students' rights are protected. The University maintains such reporting requirements to ensure that any student who experiences sexual/gender-based violence receives accurate information about available resources and support. Such reports will not generate a report to law enforcement (no student will ever be forced to file a report with the police). Additionally, the University's resources and supports are available to all students even if a student chooses that they do not want any other action taken. If you have any questions about this policy, you are encouraged to contact the OEC at equity@luc.edu or 773-508-7766.

If you ever wish to speak with a confidential resource regarding gender-based violence, I encourage you to call The Line at 773-494-3810. The Line is staffed by confidential advocates from 8:30am-5pm M-F and 24 hours on the weekend when school is in session. Advocates can provide support, talk through your options (medical, legal, LUC reporting, safety planning, etc.), and connect you with resources as needed – without generating a report or record with the OEC. More information about The Line can be found at www.luc.edu/wellness.

Course Schedule

(N.B.: ALL READINGS MUST BE DONE BEFORE CLASS!)

Date	Topic	Assignment
Tue. 01/20	Introduction to the Course: The Italian Difference	
Thu. 01/22	Introduction to Italian Renaissance Philosophy	Garin, <i>Italian Humanism</i> , excerpt



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Tue. 01/27	The Dignity of Man	Selections from Italian Renaissance writers
Thu. 01/29	Machiavelli: Virtue, Fortune, Opportunity	<i>The Prince</i> , Ch. I, II, III, V, VI, VII
Tue. 02/03	Machiavelli: Morality and Politics	<i>The Prince</i> , Ch. XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX
Thu. 02/05	Machiavelli: Italy's Destiny	<i>The Prince</i> , Ch. XXIV, XXV, XXVI
Tue. 02/10	Movie day	
Thu. 02/12	Machiavelli: Conflict and Crisis	<i>The Discourses</i> , excerpts
Tue. 02/17	Campanella: A Synthesis of Utopian Thought	<i>The City of Sun</i> , excerpts
Thu. 02/19	Bruno: A Burning Thirst for Knowledge	<i>The Heroic Frenzies</i> , excerpts
Tue. 02/24	Bruno: The Plan of Immanence	<i>Of the Infinite Universe and Worlds and Cause, Principle, and Unity</i> , excerpts
Thu. 02/26	Galilei: The Book of Nature	Letter to Benedetto Castelli; <i>The Assayer</i> , excerpts
Tue. 03/03	Review	
Thu. 03/05	Midterm Exam	
<u>[SPRING BREAK]</u>		
Tue. 03/17	What is a Nation?	Chabod, <i>The Idea of Nation</i> , excerpt + Anthology on "Nation" and "Nationalism"
Thu. 03/19	Two Types of Transnational Brotherhood: Mazzini vs. Marx	Marx, <i>Communist Manifesto</i> , excerpts; Mazzini, selections from the letters
Tue. 03/24	Principles of Catholic Social Thought	Pope Leo XIII, <i>Rerum Novarum</i>
Thu. 03/26	Gramsci: The Philosophy of Praxis and the Role of Intellectuals	Anthology from the <i>Prison Notebooks</i> , part I
Tue. 03/31	Gramsci: The Modern Prince	Anthology from the <i>Prison Notebooks</i> , part II
Thu. 04/02	Contemporary Reflections on the "General Intellect"	Lazzarato, «Immaterial Labor»; Berardi, «What does Cognitariat Mean?»



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Tue. 04/07	Agamben: Homo Sacer, Zoé and Bios	«Form-of-Life» and «Beyond Human Rights»
Thu. 04/09	Agamben: State of Exception and Permanent Crisis	<i>State of Exception</i> , excerpts
Tue. 04/14	Movie day	
Thu. 04/16	Cavarero: Difference Feminism	«Narrating the Self through the Other»
Tue. 04/21	Pulcini: The Care of the World	«Emotional Subjects. For the Care of the Future»
Thu. 04/23	Study day: <i>work on your final paper!</i>	
Tue. 04/28 (to be confirmed)	Final Exam (= take-home paper deadline)	