

Philosophy in Society (A005208)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2024-2025

A (Year)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

independent work

seminar

Lecturers in academic year 2024-2025

Delanote, Broos

LW01

staff member

Van de Vijver, Gertrudis

LW01

lecturer-in-charge

Boudry, Maarten

LW01

co-lecturer

De Vries, Bouke

LW01

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2024-2025

[Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences](#)

crdts

5

offering

A

[Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy](#)

5

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Philosophy in theory and practice; humanities; philosophy in society; objectivity; critical thinking; argumentation and debating skills; relevance to society at large; engagement; translation; interdisciplinarity and intermediality; philosophically relevant styles and genres

Position of the course

The objectives of this course are fourfold: (a) to acquire the necessary skills to participate in public debates as a philosopher and to reflect critically on the role of philosophy in society at large -- general component (b) to reflect on the place of philosophy in the field of the sciences and the humanities in particular -- historical-theoretical part, (c) anchoring philosophical methodology, contentwise on the basis of actually relevant societal debates, and formally on the basis of a broad sample of philosophically relevant genres and styles -- practical part, (d) to hone writing, argumentation and presentation skills in order to navigate the public arena as a philosopher -- practical part.

Contents

Throughout this course, students critically reflect on the role philosophy can play in society and on the proper place of philosophy with respect to other sciences and the humanities. They trace what the importance and the perspectives are of translating philosophical concepts, genres and texts in relation to specific audiences. They reflect on the value and function of public philosophy.

On the basis of a series of philosophically relevant genres that are connected to a historical or an actually pregnant case, various possibilities and constraints are being explored of styles and media to come to a philosophical reflection on society. In this way, students are being encouraged and guided to develop competences through:

(i) the analysis and discussion of actual and pertinent societal debates (topic by choice),

(ii) the writing of an actually relevant opinion paper,

(iii) the active participation through the course in discussions, reading groups, debates, ...
(iv) to engage in a project outside the pure academic context (for example, Month of philosophy, Philosophizing with children or in a care-setting, Symposium, Interdisciplinary initiative on sustainable development goals, ...)
(v) (optional) following performance and interventions in the public sphere.
Finally, through the various subparts, we will reflect back on the history of the department and the programmes of philosophy and moral science. On the basis of grounding texts by Apostel, Boehm, Kruihof, Vermeersch, students investigate the way in which societal engagement was being practiced and reflected upon at Ghent University.

Initial competences

Basic knowledge of the history of philosophy, epistemology and the philosophy of science.

Final competences

- 1 To be able to reflect critically on the role of philosophy in the social debate.
- 2 The ability to recognize, analyze and problematise the role of philosophical methodology in the field of the (human) sciences.
- 3 To be able to put this methodology to the test in the context of actual societal problems.
- 4 To develop the necessary argumentative skills, both orally and in writing, to be able to participate in society's actual philosophical problems.
- 5 Being able to write a publishable opinion piece.
- 6 To be able to analyze/put into practice adequate genres, styles and media in order to contribute, from within philosophy, to what happens in society.
- 7 To realize and make tangible the possibilities of a proper philosophical engagement.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

1. Lectures and interactive discussions about the place of philosophy in society, as well as about the role of philosophy in the field of the (human) sciences and the broader societal field), and about the usefulness and employability of the philosophical methodology in scientific and social discussions - texts to be read in advance.
2. Seminars (i): Analysis and discussion of (historical) debates with a view to their actualization and embedding in society: historical contextualization, argumentative and rhetorical structures.
3. Seminars (ii) - learning argumentative and stylistic skills to write an opinion piece, preparing topics and collectively presenting and discussing results.
4. Seminars (iii): participate in an online reading group around a chosen essay.
5. Autonomous work: reading the texts of the ex cathedra courses, prepare the courses and analyze the debates beforehand, preparing a writing assignment, presentation and discussion.
6. Extra muros: to engage as a philosopher in a project by choice.

Study material

None

References

Subject to change every year (see Ufora).

Course content-related study coaching

By the lecturers (by appointment) and teaching assistant.
Collective feedback and possibility of individual feedback (by appointment).
Interactive support through Ufora (Forum, e-mail).

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Peer and/or self assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

Periodical evaluation: writing an essay (1500-2000 words) based on a question (various options) offered during the exam that fits in with the lessons.

Calculation of the examination mark

Periodic (30%) and non-periodical (70%) evaluation

Breakdown for non-periodical evaluation

- continuous assessment: 20%
- opinion piece: 20%
- Reflection report practical part: 30%

Participation in all components is mandatory.

Facilities for Working Students

1 The examination cannot be rescheduled.

2 Feedback can be given by email or during an appointment during office hours

Extra information: For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy