

Social and Political Philosophy in the Enlightenment (A005895)

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

Credits 9.0

Study time 270 h

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (Year)

English

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Acosta, Emiliano

LW01

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

[Research Master of Arts in Philosophy](#)

crdts

9

offering

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Modern social and political philosophy, Racism, Feminism, Social contract theory, Patriarchalism, Eurocentrism, Decolonial/postcolonial thinking

Position of the course

The course is part of the Research Master in Philosophy program organized by the Universities of Ghent, Brussels (VUB), and Antwerp (UAntwerpen). Its aim is to offer a review of the legacy of Enlightenment social and political philosophy in its broadest sense (1600-1800) from the perspective of current critiques, primarily stemming from feminist, decolonial, and postcolonial discourses.

Contents

Each year a different program is offered, focusing on one of the current points of critique of Enlightenment social and political philosophy. The course consists of studying contemporary interpretations of this period in social and political philosophy and evaluating them through an examination of the works that are the object of the critique. For example: a review of modern theories of the social contract based on C. Pateman's *The Sexual Contract*.

Initial competences

Basic knowledge of the history of modern philosophy.

Final competences

- 1 Students can independently and critically analyze both the social and political philosophy of the Enlightenment and its contemporary critiques.
- 2 Students can argue clearly and consistently.

Conditions for credit contract

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

The course begins with a series of introductory lectures by the professor and guest researchers. This is followed by group readings and discussions about the literature. The final part of the course consists of student presentations.

Study material

None

References

The course mainly studies, on the one hand, the contributions of Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Fichte and Hegel to modern social and political philosophy, and the current criticisms of these discourses mainly developed by Dussel, Spivak, W. Mignolo, L. Adler, C. Pateman, Ch. Mills and Irigaray.

Course content-related study coaching

Paper: The teaching team will first evaluate the initial idea for the paper and then a draft, before the students submit their final papers.

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

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

Participation, Presentation, 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

- Active participation in discussions and submission of a draft of the final written work.
- A written paper on one of the topics/authors/works presented and discussed during the course.
- Regarding participation and presentation, knowledge of the study material and the critical and analytical capacity of the students' interventions will be evaluated.
- All this information will be explained during the first session.

Calculation of the examination mark

- Participation: 30%
- Presentation: 30%
- Paper: 40%

Facilities for Working Students

The course may offer facilities for working students.