Care, Justice and Biopolitics

Code: 45068
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Care Philosophies	OB	1

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this document.

Prerequisites

This course has no prerequisites. However, it is recommended that students are able to read texts in English and French.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The aim of this course is to provide students with the analytical tools necessary to situate themselves in the contemporary debate on intergenerational justice and biopolitics.

Intergenerational justice asks what duties we owe to the people of the future (and of the past) as an extension of global justice in a temporal way. At the same time, in order to build an expanded ethical perspective, abandoning presentism and committing to a context-sensitive and long-term view, such a conception needs to be accompanied by an ethics of care that emphasises care for all forms of life and the planet. In this way, a forward-looking ethic is constructed in which justice goes hand in hand with a sense of intergenerational care.

In this direction, in the first block, we will give an overview of the most significant aspects and issues of the problem, i.e.: what is intergenerational justice, what does it mean to have obligations towards past and future generations, the role of memory and retrospective justice, and the current ethico-political turn towards care in relation to intergenerational duties. We will address some specific problems in the field of intergenerational justice: the lack of overlap between generations, the problem of non-identity, epistemic uncertainty, 'the motivational aporia' (or why we should care for the well-being of future generations), as well as the question of how to articulate a concept of responsibility to care with the aspiration to make life on the planet more sustainable, good and just. We will then examine the contributions of the most important philosophical theories in this special area of reflection, incorporating perspectives from the so-called Global South, intersectional thinking, and applying a gender perspective. As a practical exercise, we will ground the knowledge in the particular territory of climate justice and our duties in the context of ecological crisis.

In the second block of the course, the focus will be on the political control over bodies, the management of life and death, and how the politics of care (health, social or environmental) are shaped by power structures. Students will reflect on issues such as pandemics, reproductive rights and environmental justice, understanding how biopolitics shapes the ways in which care is exercised and distributed in contemporary societies in terms of its intergenerational effects.

Learning Outcomes

1. CA07 (Competence) [pendent traducció a en] Utilizar el trabajo en equipo para interpretar y producir textos relacionados con aspectos políticos del cuidado
2. CA08 (Competence) [pendent traducció a en] Incorporar la perspectiva de la ética del cuidado a la diversidad social en un ámbito profesional
3. KA10 (Knowledge) [pendent traducció a en] Analizar conceptos de la ética del cuidado en el contexto de la biopolítica contemporánea
4. KA11 (Knowledge) [pendent traducció a en] Explicar las desigualdades entre distintas generaciones, en cuestiones sociales, económicas y ambientales, desde el punto de vista de la filosofía del cuidado
5. KA12 (Knowledge) [pendent traducció a en] Identificar las principales cuestiones de la ética del cuidado presentes en políticas públicas reales relacionadas con los sistemas de salud y el ámbito asistencial
6. SA11 (Skill) [pendent traducció a en] Aplicar los conceptos claves de la ética como el bienestar, la justicia o el cuidado en la investigación sobre ética intergeneracional y biopolítica
7. SA12 (Skill) [pendent traducció a en] Utilizar los conceptos clave de la ética intergeneracional y la biopolítica para explicar conflictos sociales, económicos y ambientales en el contexto de la ética del cuidado
8. SA13 (Skill) [pendent traducció a en] Diseñar investigaciones originales sobre el control político de la vida y la salud de individuos y poblaciones ejercido por parte de los sistemas democráticos liberales

Content

Block I

1.- What is intergenerational justice?

2.- Specific problems with the concept of intergenerational justice.

3.- Theories of intergenerational justice and the ethics of care.

4.- Practical exercise: the case of climate change.

BLOCK II

1.- Biopolitics, intergenerational justice and care.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Reading and analytical tutorials, debate and commentaries, tutorials	37	1.48	KA10, KA11, KA12, SA12, KA10
Type: Supervised			
Guide notes, essay, commentary and conference	25	1	CA07, CA08, KA10, KA12, SA11, SA12, CA07
Type: Autonomous			
Critical reading, interpretation, composition and	82	3.28	CA07, CA08, KA12, SA11, SA12,

As the teaching modality is virtual, both the methodology and the evaluation have been adapted accordingly.

Methodologically, the module aims to guide students in developing informed critical thinking through scientific reading, oral presentations, philosophical essay writing, and the exchange of ideas through dialogue.

The methodological objective is for students to be able to critically position themselves on current problems involving life and bodies, our relationships and duties as human beings, and our relationship with other forms of life. This will expand their perspective both spatially and temporally.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Commentary	30%	2	0.08	CA07, CA08, KA10, KA12, SA11, SA12, SA13
Conference	30%	2	0.08	CA08, KA11, SA11, SA12, SA13
Essay	40%	2	0.08	CA08, KA10, KA11, KA12, SA11, SA12, SA13

Three assessment activities will be carried out to include the different competences and knowledge that students have acquired throughout the course, as well as their various skills.

1. Conference - 30% (Block I): Delivery of a script with a title and a 15-minute lecture.
2. Text commentary- 30% (Block II): Delivery of a commentary with a maximum length of five pages.
3. Final essay (40%): An essay demonstrating the knowledge acquired throughout the course. Presentation of a conceptual structure and title, and final essay.

Continuous assessment consists of completing all the proposed activities.

If you are unable to complete the first task, you must notify the teacher. In this case, you may be given a 'Not Presented' mark. From completion of the first two tasks, the final mark for the course will be the average of all exercises, including those not handed in, according to their weighting. The delivery timetable is as set out in the teaching plan. If you are unable to submit a task by the deadline due to exceptional circumstances, you must inform the teacher.

Use of AI

This subject allows the use of AI technologies exclusively for support tasks such as bibliographic searches, text correction or translations. Other specific situations may be contemplated, as deemed appropriate by the teacher. The student must clearly (i) identify which parts have been generated using AI technology; (ii) specify the tools used; and (iii) include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the process and final outcome of the activity. Lack of transparency regarding the use of AI in the assessed activity will be considered academic dishonesty; the corresponding grade may be lowered, or the work may even be awardeda zero. In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

Note:

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

Bibliography

An extended, subject-specific bibliography will be provided at the beginning of the course.

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_Theories of Justice, London, Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1989.

BIRNBACHER, Dieter. «What Motivates Us to Care for the (Distant) Future? », Axel Gosseries & Lukas Meyer (eds.), Intergenerational Justice, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 273-301.

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_«What Do We Owe the Next Generation(s)? », Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review, 35 (2001), pp. 293-354.

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_«Historical Wrongs: The Two Other Domains», Lukas Meyer (ed.), Justice in Time, Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004, pp. 117-134.

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_«Entretien avec Paul Ricoeur. L'éthique, le politique, l'écologie [Propos recueillis par Edith et Jean Paul Deléage]», Ecologie politique. Sciences, Culture, Société, 7 (1993).

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THOMPSON, Janna. Taking Responsibility for the Past. Reparation and Historical Injustice, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2002.

_Intergenerational Justice: Rights and Responsibilities in an Intergenerational Polity, New York, Routledge, 2009a.

_«Identity and Obligation in a Transgenerational Polity», Axel Gosseries & Lukas H. Meyer (eds.), Intergenerational Justice, New York, Oxford University Press, 2009b, pp. 25-49.

TRONTO, Joan. Caring Democracy. Markets, Equality, and Justice, New York University Press, 2012.

Software

None

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.