Care, Community and Democracy

Code: 45069
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Care Philosophies	OB	1

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

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

Prerequisites

It is recommended that enrolled individuals be able to read in English.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The concept of care will be studied in the context of political philosophy, with special attention to theories of citizenship, public virtues, political emotions, and discursive performativity (rhetoric).

1. The care of the *res publica*
2. The democracy of care
3. Civic virtues and "human flourishing"
4. Emotions in politics
5. The political rhetoric of care

Learning Outcomes

1. CA09 (Competence) [pendent traducció a en] Desarrollar la capacidad para trabajar en equipo, integrarse y colaborar de forma activa en debates en distintos entornos (virtual, no virtual)
2. CA10 (Competence) [pendent traducció a en] Aplicar la capacidad autoevaluativa en la lectura, interpretación y producción de textos
3. CA11 (Competence) [pendent traducció a en] Proponer mejoras en las políticas públicas relativas al cuidado de las personas vulnerables atendiendo a la diversidad social

4. KA13 (Knowledge) [pendent traducció a en] Identificar la fundamentación republicana de las políticas públicas del cuidado
5. KA14 (Knowledge) [pendent traducció a en] Examinar la educación para la ciudadanía desde la óptica de la filosofía del cuidado
6. KA15 (Knowledge) [pendent traducció a en] Relacionar los discursos de la ética del cuidado con el papel de las emociones comunitarias y políticas
7. SA14 (Skill) [pendent traducció a en] Aplicar las problemáticas filosóficas del cuidado al análisis de las teorías contemporáneas de la democracia
8. SA15 (Skill) [pendent traducció a en] Analizar cuestiones políticas de actualidad a partir de las teorías estudiadas sobre democracia y cuidado
9. SA16 (Skill) [pendent traducció a en] Interpretar textos de la tradición republicana del pensamiento político en el ámbito de las filosofías del cuidado

Content

1. The Care of the *Res Publica*

What is care from a phenomenological perspective? In this introductory section, we will approach the concept of care based on our everyday experience, both individual and collective.

2. The Democracy of Care

The ideological and conceptual context in which much of academic political thought and social debate takes place is that of liberalism. One of the key conceptual pairs in liberalism is the opposition between the public and private spheres. Political philosophy that places care at its core challenges this distinction.

Drawing on feminist critiques of the strict separation between public and private, we will reflect on cases where, from an ethical and political standpoint, it is appropriate to think about human social reality without the constraints of this dichotomy.

We will also use this section to discuss the concept of public health: how should we care for the social body?

3. Civic Virtues and "Human Flourishing"

In this section, we will focus on virtue ethics and relate it to the ethics of care.

The presentation of virtue ethics will explore its Aristotelian roots and move through to critiques of liberalism in the 1980s and 1990s (Alasdair MacIntyre, Victoria Camps).

- What should a city be like to welcome all people?
- Is the city a fertile space for authentic individuals to flourish?
- Is it enough to have clear laws for justice to prevail in the city?
- What lifestyles should be promoted in a city?
- Is it possible to make an objective argument about the good life?

4. Emotions in Politics

In this section, we will explore the importance of emotions in political life, especially in a political life where care is central-as a fundamental axis for achieving egalitarian institutions and societies.

Emotions have always been a problematic aspect of human affective life, fromantiquity to the present, and they are unavoidable when analyzing our practical realities from both moral and political perspectives.

Starting from these general ideas, we will discuss the role of emotions in a politics of care and the possibility of identifying emotions that are necessary for it-emotions that contribute to caring with or alongside the cared-for,

and that, according to Joan C. Tronto (*Democracy and Care*. Barcelona: Rayo Verde Editorial, pp. 78-79), help assign care responsibilities and ensure that citizens fulfill them.

This is because emotions motivate behaviors, and those behaviors can be cohesive or divisive, contributing to the maintenance and stabilization of certain political orders or to their destabilization and destruction.

Let us recall that for Aristotle, the political community could not survive without *philia politiké*, that is, love for the political community itself, which in modern republican tradition is considered a civic virtue. Similarly, emotions such as hatred or anger are often attributed with negative political consequences, such as discrimination, persecution of minorities, or punitive attitudes in matters of justice (a point emphasized recently by Martha Nussbaum).

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5. The Political Rhetoric of Care

If, as seen in the previous section, emotions are an unavoidable part of political life, so too is communication aimed at persuasion-at making the listener judge and act in accordance with what a discourse proposes.

In this section, we will analyze what might be identified as rhetorical or discursive practices of care-that is, practices that would promote the equitable distribution of responsibilities and ensure that citizens fulfill them-and we will explore their problematic aspects.

Within this framework, we will focus on how to effectively shape bidirectional communicative environments primarily governed by the attitude and practice of attentive listening.

Indeed, from a rhetorical perspective, political practices have traditionally focused on one-way communication, where the speaker tries to persuade a passive audience-a mere receiver whose needs may be, and often are, neglected or deliberately ignored.

Communication aimed at creating social environments where care responsibilities are shared-environments that listen attentively-requires, by contrast, that the speaker has first attended to the needs of the listener and sees themselves as someone with needs and as a recipient of care.

This, of course, is not without challenges, which we will seek to identify and discuss in order to gain a better understanding of the specific challenges of a democracy of care.

The materials provided by the instructors will be in Spanish. Some of the bibliographic references will be in English.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Individual and/or group study	82.5	3.3	CA11, SA15, CA11
Presentation of the syllabus topics in written and audiovisual documents	30.5	1.22	CA10, KA13, KA15, SA14, CA10
Type: Supervised			
Personalized and/or group academic tutoring	25	1	CA09, KA14, SA16, CA09

Throughout the course, materials will be uploaded to the subject's Moodle platform. These materials will include both annotated texts and presentations of the content for each point of the syllabus, properly commented on by the teaching staff. These materials will also be linked to the continuous assessment process.

Individual tutorials will play a central role in the development of the subject.

The methodology used will be primarily based on reading, analysis, and interpretation of texts. Each unit will consist of several texts that must be read and discussed, following the reading, interpretation, and work guidelines provided by the instructors.

Note: "15 minutes of a class will be reserved, within the timetable established by the centre/title, for the complementation by the students of the assessment surveys of the teaching staff's performance and the assessment of the subject".

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
Presentation (video)	25%	3	0.12	CA10, SA14, SA15, SA16
Text comment	25%	3	0.12	CA11, KA15, SA15, SA16
Writing / Podcast on the concept of care in democracy (1st submission, tutorial, 2nd submission)	50%	6	0.24	CA09, CA10, CA11, KA13, KA14

Blocks 1-3

1. Assessment 50%

Brief assignment related to the course introduction: Students must interview someone close to them-a friend, acquaintance, or family member-and ask what they understand by "care," whether they consider themselves to "care" for something, someone, or themselves, when they believe someone deserves care, and when one is obligated to provide that care.

Next, they must write a maximum of one page (2,100 characters including spaces) in which, after presenting the basic ideas of each interviewee, they reflect on the concepts covered in the Introduction materials. The goal is to answer the question: What aspects of care-understood phenomenologically, existentially, and conceptually-are reflected in the interviews you conducted?

After this first step, students must expand their reflections by taking into account what will be studied in sections 2 and 3 of the syllabus, especially the personalized tutorial with the instructor regarding the initial submission. This will be the second part of the assessment. The development of the reflections may be submitted either as a 3-page text, a podcast, or a narrated presentation.

Assessment follow-up: Between the start and the deadline for both activities and the final text submission, at least two individual tutorials will be held to discuss the work done, plan the next steps, resolve doubts and problems, and receive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Block 4

Assessment 25%

Emotions in Politics and Care

Initial debate: This block will begin with an asynchronous debate in the course forum. The aim is to explore students' prior knowledge about the relationship between political emotions and care. Each student must make one contribution and at least two comments on their classmates' posts.

Text commentary: Following the initial debate, students will read and write a commentary on an article addressing the theoretical and conceptual aspects relevant to systematically analyzing the relationship between emotions and care. These aspects include:
(a) the anthropology of vulnerability as an alternative and controversial model compared to the anthropology of possessive individualism typical of the liberal tradition;
(b) the relationship between emotion and moral motivation and the possibility of identifying genuinely moral emotions;
(c) the role of empathy in human relationships;
(d) the problematization of specific emotions that have been proposed and could be defended as emotions that promote or motivate care or different types of care.

The written assignment will account for 25% of the final course grade. Participation in the initial debate will be considered as a positive factor in the grading.

Assessment follow-up: Between the start and the deadline for the text commentary, an individual tutorial will be held in which the student will present a first draft of the written work, allowing for doubts and problems to be addressed and feedback and suggestions to be received.

Block 5

Assessment 25%

The Political Rhetoric of Care

Initial debate: This block will also begin with an asynchronous debate in the course forum. The debate will focus on the presence of care in public discourse and in normative and practical reality. Again, each student must make a reasoned contribution on the presence of care in public debate and its reflection in public policies, as well as two comments on their classmates' contributions.

Oral presentation (video): After the initial debate, students will read an article analyzing the presence of care ethics concepts in political rhetoric, as well as the continuity between political discourse and the design and implementation of public policies. Students must create a short video (5-10 minutes) in which they:
(1) explain the main ideas of the reading;
(2) carry out a similar analysis based on a recent political speech of their choice.

This activity will account for 25% of the final course grade. Participation in the initial debate will be considered as a positive factor in the grading.

Assessment follow-up: Between the start and the deadline for submitting the video presentation, an individual tutorial will be held in which the student must present a draft or outline of the presentation, with the aim of resolving any doubts or problems and receiving feedback and suggestions from the instructor.

Evaluation Model

The course can only be passed through participation in and successful completion of continuous assessment (CA). The final grade for the course will be the grade obtained through CA.

Continuous assessment consists of completing all the proposed PACs (Continuous Assessment Activities).

If the first block's activity is completed but the student cannot continue, and this is communicated to the instructor in advance, it may be possible to receive a "Not Presented" (No Show) grade.

- From the completion of the first two PACs onward, the final grade will be the average of all activities, including those not submitted, weighted according to their percentage of the final grade. (Improvement over the course will be taken into account.)

- The submission calendar follows the schedule outlined in the course guide. If a student is unable to submit an activity within the established deadline due to exceptional circumstances, they must inform the instructor, and the situation will be considered on an individual basis.

This subject allows the use of AI technologies exclusively for support tasks such as [bibliographic or content-based searches, text correction or translations, where applicable]. 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 awarded a zero. In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

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 willbe 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.

On carrying out each evaluation activity, lecturers will inform students (on Moodle) of the procedures to be followed for reviewing all grades awarded, and the date on which such a review will take place.

Bibliography

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Software

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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.