1st Session: General Introduction. Today’s Crisis of the Public Sphere.
- Signs of the crisis; ex. a. privatization and the domination of finance in education; b. the WikiLeaks phenomenon and unrestricted information.
- The 4 fundamental dimensions of the public sphere: 1. Space exposed to the public gaze vs. private space. 2. Transparency and information vs. secrecy; 3. Deliberation and democracy vs. tyranny ; 4/ The common good vs. private interests.
- The idea of the public good. What does belong to everyone?
- The idea of the state. The crisis of the state. The new media and virtual public space.

2nd Session: The Genesis of Social Institutions and Kinship Systems
- The public realm as a fundamental dimension of all human societies.
- The obligation of exogamy as an expression of that dimension and as the explanation for the universal prohibition of incest. - Lévi-Strauss’s analyses in The Elementary Structures of Kinship.
- Nature and culture. - Human bond as convention - The idea of institution. -

3rd Session: The Birth of Public Space in Ancient Greece City-States
- Ethnic groups, lineages and aristocratic culture in ancient Greece.
- The Hoplitic reform and the warriors’ circle: the center—meson— as the space assigned for booty and speech. - Democracy as debate; that which should concern everyone.
- Justice among groups. - Vengeance and the birth of the court of law.
- M. Detienne, The Masters of Truth ; J.P. Vernant. Space and political organization in Ancient Greece.

4th Session: Public Sphere and Private Sphere according to Arendt
- Definition of the public and private realms. - The realms of action and labor.
- Definition of the city vs. the family. Aristotle: Politics.

5th Session: The Formation of the Public Sphere according to Habermas
- The central concepts; public opinion and the public exercise of reason - Kant: What is Enlightenment? The Enlightenment project. – The bourgeois civil sphere. Public opinion and the means of information.
- Readings: Habermas: Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere; Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man.
6th Session: the Ideas of Law and the State – and Democracy
- The idea of public realm in the formation of the modern state. The idea of the state.
- Rousseau: The Social Contract. - The idea of the state: Hegel: Philosophy of Right
- Republicanism: Tocqueville and the American model. - Ph. Pettit: Republicanism.

7th Session: Public Sphere and Economic Activities: Politics and Private Interests
- Plato – Aristotle: Polis and oikonomia. Underestimating the role of the economy.
- The birth of economic theory in the 18th century. Reading: Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations
- The political sphere and the economy. - The market. - Private interests

8th Session: Public Space and Public Culture
- Art and community in traditional societies.
- Art and society in classical Europe. - Urban public space and political public space.
- Politics and theatricality: the requirement of visibility; the stage of power -Emotions – Symbols.

9th Session: Education : Knowledge as a Public Good
- Education and society. - Traditional societies: initiation and social competence.
- The Greek paideia. Education and the aristocracy. – The Church and monasteries as means of access to elite culture. – European universities since the Middle Age. - Social access to education.
- The current crisis of the university in the USA.. – Privatization. – For-profit schools.
- Reading Chris Newfield Unmaking the Public University

10th Session: Networks as Public Spaces - Virtual Space – The New Democracy
- The network: a very long history. - Proximity and distance. Information and dissemination networks in the 18th century. The mail. - The post office. - Gazettes. – Newspapers.
- The revolution in communications: the telephone. – The radio. – Television. – The Internet.