

Presentation

The Sophia University Institute is a graduate degree program for spiritual formation and interdisciplinary scholarship permeated by a strongly relational dimension. This unique opportunity for personal and intellectual growth emphasizes the connection between academic work and life in community – an academic community in which relationships among people form a basis to discover the relationships among the various disciplines.

Sophia Institute is an expression of the Focolare Movement (Work of Mary), developed through the inspiration and direction of its founder and president, Chiara Lubich, and an international advisory group of scholars within the Movement. It is located in Loppiano, Incisa in Val d'Arno, near Florence, Italy. In addition to its central campus, other sites dedicated to specific areas of research are planned for other countries in the near future.

The Host Site

Loppiano is a small town that aims at modeling a society based on the gospel law of mutual love. Since its founding in 1964, it has served as a place for formation and community life for families, youth, and adults.

The presence of approximately 900 permanent and temporary residents from close to 70 different countries makes Loppiano an ideal place for dialogue and exchange among diverse cultures. Sophia Institute facilities include a library, classrooms, recreational and cultural facilities, dormitories, and a cafeteria.

The goals

- To form young professionals and rising scholars prepared to face the complexities of modern life
- To offer an integrative approach to study and research that helps students frame their respective specializations within a coherent vision of human knowledge
- To foster openness and dialogue
- To promote personal and intellectual growth in service to society.

Up close

Beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year, Sophia Institute will offer a Master's degree in "Foundations and Perspectives of a Culture of Unity", a two-year course. It will also offer a corresponding Doctorate degree.

The Sophia Institute is approved by the Holy See and its credits and degrees are recognizable and transferable, according to the Bologna Process, through the European ECTS accreditation system.

A New Path to Integrate Studies with Life

Sophia Institute's first priority is to create an environment in which studies and life form an integrated whole. "The model for studies is based on a distinct concept of the human person and culture, in which the unified person is valued not for what they possess or know, but for who they are." (Pasquale Foresi, Focolare Movement co-founder).

In addition to lectures and seminars, the program of study also includes moments of personal sharing and dialogue with students and faculty in order to foster a collective search for truth and wisdom. This method strongly encourages team teaching, as well as personal and active student contributions.

Sophia Institute's approach puts each discipline in relation with others. Without denying the legitimate autonomy of each, it aims at bringing into relief their common roots and goals.

Theoretical aspects of the material are integrated with the discussion of, and exposure to, more practical implications, which are often facilitated by meetings with guest speakers and field trips. Possible internships in professional environments include cultural and social projects as well as exchange with representatives of the many different expressions of contemporary culture.

Courses

The study program for the Master's degree is spread over two years:

- *In the first year:* required courses of a mainly theological-philosophical and an ethical-anthropological nature, offering a look at the bases for a culture of unity;
- *In the second year:* specialized courses following two tracks: theology/philosophy and politics/economics.

In addition to the foundational courses, electives will be offered in varied disciplines, including law, sociology, urban planning, psychology, medical anthropology, linguistics, and communication. Specialized courses will

also be offered in various aspects of Christian spirituality, ecumenism, and the world's great religions.

Research seminars will be conducted in the principal areas of investigation.

For those who need additional language and cultural preparation prior to master's work, courses are offered in Italian language, the methodology of scientific research, the history of philosophy, and the history of Christianity.

Courses and discussions will be held in Italian. Papers, written exams, and oral exams may be given in the principal Western languages.

The President and Full-Time Faculty

The President of Sophia Institute is Professor **Piero Coda**, who has served as professor of systematic theology at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.

Resident faculty will be dedicated to research and teaching the foundational courses:

- **Antonio Maria Baggio**, Political Philosophy
- **Luigino Bruni**, Economics
- **Judith Povilus**, Foundations of Logic and Mathematics
- **Sergio Rondinara**, Modern Scientific Rationality
- **Gerard Rossé**, Biblical Theology

Resident professors will be assisted by others who are fully committed to Sophia Institute's methods and goals. Various courses will be staffed by:

- *Additional lecturers*, who will join the full-time faculty in international courses and other aspects of the program;
- *Visiting professors* from other universities and other experts who will join the faculty for a limited time to teach specialized courses;
- Courses will also incorporate as guest speakers leaders in international organizations and experts in various areas of social, political, economic, and professional life.

Students

The Master's degree program is open to:

- Students who have completed a Bachelor's degree, that is, a First Cycle Degree according to the Bologna Process, who would like to pursue academic work through the lens of a culture of unity, in order to strengthen the foundation of their own discipline and place it in dialogue with other disciplines;
- Young professionals who have completed their First Cycle Degree and are already working in various fields, who would like to enrich their careers with the perspective of the culture of unity.

Admission requires a commitment to participate in both the academic and the formative aspects of Sophia Institute's programs.

The program will enroll no more than 50 students per year. Students must be able to understand, read, and speak Italian and must hold the requisite First Cycle Degree equivalent to at least 180 ECTS credits.

It may be possible to attend Sophia Institute's program for a semester or a year, in coordination with an individual course of study approved by another university. Work is in progress to offer joint degrees in collaboration with other universities in various parts of the world.

Doctoral studies in "Foundations and Perspectives of a Culture of Unity" can only be undertaken if they touch upon one of the following core fields of study: Systematic Theology, the Philosophy of the Person, Political

Philosophy, Political Economics, Epistemology and Cosmology, or a research project that crosses over between any of these. In any of these subjects it is possible, by means of specific learning agreements, to engage in joint doctoral studies with higher education institutions competent to recognize academic qualifications.

Preparing leaders and intellectuals for a global society

The master's program and the corresponding doctoral studies aim to provide a solid cultural foundation that will help students gain new perspectives on their previous academic work by placing it in an interdisciplinary, intercultural, and relational context.

A major purpose of the program is to cultivate graduates who have a robust intellectual capacity and a wide range of interpersonal and intercultural skills that will enrich their work in any academic setting or professional environment.

Graduates of the program will be trained to appreciate and understand specific cultural identities and

acquire the skills needed to build social relationships, foster collaboration within working groups and coordinate projects that cut across a range of disciplines and objectives, navigate interpersonal conflicts and steer them toward constructive solutions.

In particular, the interdisciplinary quality of the courses will help students to develop a broader and more precise vision of human knowledge, an ability to draw out connections between different areas of knowledge and their various methodologies and cultural resources needed for a multifaceted analysis of problems and creative problem-solving.



SOPHIA
University Institute

First Year: courses

Theology
For a Culture of Unity: <i>Overview and Methodology</i>
The Word of God in the Bible
Person and the Mystery of God
God Who Speaks Love: <i>The Trinity, and Humanity Renewed in Christ</i>
A Historical Overview of the Church in the World

Logic and Scientific Reasoning
Humanity and the Cosmos
The Origin and Development of Modern Scientific Rationality
History and Paradigms of Logic

Philosophy
Metaphysics: <i>Being as Love</i>
Epistemology: <i>Truth and Dialogue, Relational and Communitarian Dimensions of Knowing</i>
Anthropology and Ethics of the Person
Topics in Bioethics

Social Science
The Person and Society: <i>Principles of Christian Social Teaching</i>
The Foundations of Political Science
Institutions of Civil Economy

Second Year: courses

The Theology/Philosophy Track
Ontology of the Human Person in Communion
Epistemology: <i>Truth Reveals Itself in Love</i>
Jesus Crucified-Forsaken and Risen: <i>Source and Measure of Christian Faith</i>
Jesus in the Midst: <i>Source and Measure of the Life and Mission of the Church</i>
Mary: <i>Icon of a Renewed Humanity</i>
The Doctrine of the Trinity from St. Augustine to Chiara Lubich
The Philosophy of Science
Technology and Civilization
Foundations of Mathematics: <i>Turning Points and Cultural Impact</i>

The Politics/Economics Track
Political Philosophy
Democracy and Participation
Political Theory
Political Theory of the International Community
Economy and Ethics: <i>History and Theory</i>
Economic Theory and Human Relationships
Economic Theory in the Non-Profit Sector and Values-Based Organizations
Political Economics: <i>Advanced Course</i>
Management and the Economy of Communion



How to support Sophia

Annual tuition fee is € 3,600, payable in two instalments, one each semester.

Lodging and food is € 500 per month.

You can contribute to Sophia in various ways, including donations aimed at supporting students from developing nations, contributions for the projected library, for faculty chairs. **Suggested methods of sponsoring the Institute range from paying for a book (€ 30) to a faculty chair (€ 50,000).**

Sophia University Institute

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