

Report on Free Academy activities (June 15th, 2023 – February 29th, 2024)

After the first initiatives of the year 2023, **Free Academy** is taking a quantum leap in 2024. The new "UniLib Master's Degree in Politics," in fact, represents an important moment of growth. It is providing an opportunity for relationships with a whole range of cultural, professional, and associational entities: from homeowner associations to small businesses.

What follows, in a very succinct way, is some information about the activities carried out so far and our plans for the future.

First steps

1) In-person conference, Pantelleria

May 12th, 2023, 8:15 p.m.

Theme: "What culture? What freedom? A new university entrepreneurship and the prospects for Pantelleria," organized by Aurelio Mustaccioli with the participation of Marco Bassani and Carlo Lottieri

The conference, which was also followed in online streaming on Facebook, presented the Free Academy intellectual project. We emphasized two crucial issues: the need to foster a university world that protects freedom of research and expression; and the need to enhance new technologies as a tool that can connect even those living in very remote areas to the world.

2) Webinar

June 15, 2023, 6 p.m.

Theme: What freedom of expression today? About the volume *Tolerance* by Luigi Marco Bassani
Thursday, June 15, 2023, 6 p.m.

Produced in collaboration with LibertyPlus, the meeting developed a discussion on Bassani's new volume. In addition to the author, Dario Caroniti (University of Messina) and Riccardo Manzotti (IULM University of Milan) spoke. Aurelio Mustaccioli (TheLibertyPlus) introduced and Luigi Angotzi (Free Academy) closed the meeting.

Participants: 80 people.

3) Three courses, Milan

October 7, 2024 - October 14, 2024 - October 21, 2024

Topics: "Bitcoin 101" (Giacomo Zucco), "Contemporary Renaissance. 21st century Italian painting" (Camillo Langone) "Private property and state exploitation" (Carlo Lottieri).

These courses took place in Milan, but a number of participants were connected via streaming and some followed the course later (listening to the recordings). Each course lasted four hours: two hours in the morning (10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.), and then another two hours in the afternoon (2:30-4:30 p.m.) after a lunch break.

For the first time we offered a paid educational course: with a registration fee of 300 euros. Thirty people enrolled, and although the number is not very impressive, we identified an initial group of people interested in the project - in the idea of lifelong learning - and motivated to promote it and make it known to the public.

4) UniLib master's degree in politics

March - July 2024

This master's program includes 12 courses (all of which are made of 8 lectures, except for one that consists of only 4) that aim to provide an inter-disciplinary analysis of the most substantive topics in politics: from philosophy to economics, history to law, and so on.

Among the lecturers-in addition to Bassani and Lottieri there were political scientists (Luigi Curini and Alessandro Vitale), historians of ideas (Alberto Mingardi, Dario Caroniti, Eugenio Capozzi and Matteo Salonia), jurists (Riccardo De Caria and Andrea Venanzoni) and economists (Bernardo Ferrero). Daniele Capezzone, editorial director of the newspaper *Liberio* will deliver four lectures on media and public debate.

While the official registration is 500 euros, we offered several discounted fees. Now enrollment has not yet ended (it will close in mid-March), but the number of those who have signed up is already more than 50. We closed various agreements with cultural, political and professional groups, to whom we have given the opportunity to offer their members a discounted registration fee.

In addition to the 92 lectures, the Master's program will also include two streaming meetings and a final in-person conference, on June 29th at Villa Tretti - Brazzale di Bevadoro, in the province of Padua.

Future prospects

Looking to the months ahead, after the conclusion of this Master UniLib in politics (of almost exclusively classical liberal and libertarian leanings) our intention is to offer ourselves as a platform for other cultural realities: conservative, liberal democratic, Catholic, federalist. The idea is to make Free Academy available as a tool that can facilitate free cultural initiative even for different intellectual traditions.

Beyond that, Free Academy and its promoters are very much engaged in a political and cultural battle in favor of private university realities. In Italy, there is a harsh conflict between the eleven online universities, almost all private, and the traditional academic state universities, almost all of them financed by public funds. The political left support the latter and aim to close any space to non-state academic initiatives.

This commitment to freedom of initiative in the university sphere and to protecting online universities is perfectly in accord with the principles and goals of Free Academy, and it intends to favor a project like UniLib, since we are trying to build cooperative projects with this world. The new online universities have formidable expertise and a great capacity for promotion and marketing. The first private, online university group, Multiversity, now has more students (150,000 members) than the largest traditional university, La Sapienza of Rome (90,000 members).