



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Sociology of Third Sector

1920-2-E3901N047

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#### Learning objectives

The course aims to provide basic sociological notions for the autonomous development of a critical perspective on the third sector. In particular, specific attention will be given to supply categories and competences that make a sociological approach to the third sector. Theoretical lens will be introduced and developed with respect to specific case studies and local contexts. The course is explicitly oriented at promoting students' ability to autonomously exert a sociological critical viewpoint on processes, institutions, shifts and practices of contemporary third sector and civil society.

#### *Communicative skills:*

Students will be sustained in developing refined communicative skills, in terms of competences for both listening and speaking in public.

#### Contents

Third sector's history; theoretical issues and practical stakes; interpretative approaches and their implications on practices and service delivery; research perspectives; civic action approach; current shifts in Italian civil society.

#### Detailed program

The teaching starts from an overview of the recent history of the Italian third sector, exemplified by reference to case studies and local contexts. The main issues and practical concerns through which non profit activities were

initially framed will be introduced. Specific attention will be given also to more recent public themes such as the hopes of regenerating welfare systems in crisis, the argument that see associations as 'school of democracy', the conditions for social innovation outcomes and exploration of the regulative principles that shape civil society.

The main theoretical perspectives and practical approaches to the third sector will be introduced and exemplified with case studies. Particular attention will be paid to the civic action approach and to the analysis of associative practices and styles. The final part of the teaching addresses three current transformative processes that are reshaping the Italian third sector: the rise of ephemeral forms of civic engagement and voluntary action, the setting up of events as repertoire of action and contractualization of the relationships with public authorities.

## **Prerequisites**

None, a part from adequate motivation.

## **Teaching methods**

Lectures, discussions and oral presentations by the students.

## **Assessment methods**

Written exam for the attending students: three open questions to be answered in one hour and a half, concerning the two books included in the below specified program for not attending students.

Attending students can choose between oral and written exam. Anyway, there will be here also three open questions concerning uniquely the contents introduced during the lectures and collective discussions in class, paying specific attention to how students critically elaborated such contents.

## **Textbooks and Reading Materials**

### **Attending students:**

- booklet prepared by the teacher and including all the readings discussed in class
- students' notes.

### **Not attending students:**

Fazzi L., 2013, *Terzo settore e nuovo welfare in Italia*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

Ascoli U., Pavolini E. (a cura di), 2017, *Volontariato e innovazione sociale oggi in Italia*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

