



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Sociology of Development

2021-3-E4001N099

Learning objectives

The course provides with theoretical and methodological tools with the aim of: (1) analyzing the topic of the economic development with a sociological approach; (2) understanding and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the main theoretical approaches to the so-called underdevelopment; (3) understanding the recent debate on both the alternative approaches to the development and the "sustainable development"; (4) understanding and analyzing the problem of the informal economy and its relations with the socio-economic development.

Contents

The course deals with the topic of the economic development, with a sociological approach. It shows the main theoretical approaches to the economic development, since the debate on modernization. In this field, the strengths and the weaknesses of the main theories of development are described.

In addition, the course focuses on the most recent "alternative pathways" to development, highlighting contact points and major differences between different approaches. The second part of the course deals with the issue of the informal economy, showing the main definitions, the dilemmas associated with it, and its relations with socio-economic development.

Detailed program

The course is arranged in two parts. The first part describes the main theoretical approaches to the economic development, on which the debate on the modernization has been built. The attention is focused on the problem of

underdevelopment, and to the main solutions that many countries carried out. In this section, the main features of the theory of modernization and of the dependency are discussed, as well as approaches such as the basic need and self-reliance approach.

The second part focuses on the theme of the informal economy, showing the main definitions, the interpretations of the phenomenon (dualist, structuralist and legalistic approaches) and the unresolved dilemmas. Moreover some case studies on the informal economy are analyzed, focusing the attention on both the North and the South of the world.

Prerequisites

Any prerequisites are not needed.

Teaching methods

In the Covid-19 emergency period, lessons will take place in mixed mode: some lessons will take place remotely in asynchronous mode (video-lessons), others will take place remotely in synchronous mode (through videoconferencing programs, such as WebEx).

The course allows two forms of participation: (1) in attending mode; (2) in non-attending mode. 'Attending' students are considered to be those who regularly follow the lessons proposed on the elearning platform and participate, in the periods indicated, to the individual and group activities proposed by the teacher. Students who choose not to regularly attend lessons and not to participate in individual and group activities at the times indicated by the teacher are considered 'not attending'. The two methods of participation envisage different forms of evaluation.

Assessment methods

'Non-attending students': Oral exam. The evaluation will consider the correctness of the answers, the precision and ownership of language and the argumentative efficacy in order to verify the learning and understanding of the contents of the exam program. Please note that the exam program is made up of texts and articles listed in the 'Reference texts' section. The video lessons and the distance lessons carried out in synchronous mode will touch only a part of the entire exam program.

During the Covid-19 emergency period, oral exams will only be online. They will be carried out using the WebEx platform and on the e-learning page of the course there will be a public link for access to the examination of possible virtual spectators.

'Attending' students. 'Attending' students will be assessed with reference to the following activities: group works, individual works to be carried out on the e-learning platform, participation in lessons. Group works involve the production and discussion of written papers.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Libri/Books:

- Bottazzi G. (2009). Sociologia dello sviluppo. Bari-Roma: Laterza.

Articoli/Articles:

- Boels D. (2014). It's better than stealing: informal street selling in Brussels. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 34(9/10), 670-693.
- Coletto D. (2013). The informal economy and its dilemmas in Latin America: the case of street vendors in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in Saitta, P., Shapland, J. and Verhage, A. (Eds.). *Getting by or Getting Rich? The Formal, Informal and Criminal Economy in a Globalised World*. The Hague: Eleven Publishers (345-368).
- Coletto D. and Bisschop L. (2017). Waste pickers in the informal economy of the Global South: included or excluded? *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 37(5/6), 280-294, doi: 10.1108/IJSSP-01-2016-0006.
- Cross J. (2000). Street vendors, and postmodernity: conflict and compromise in the global economy, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol. 20(1/2), 29-51.
- Williams, C.C. (2014). Out of the shadows: a classification of economies by the size and character of their informal sector. *Work, Employment and Society*, 28(5), 735-753.
- Williams, C., Horodnic I., and Windebank J. (2015). Explaining participation in the informal economy: an institutional incongruence perspective. *International sociology* 30(3), 294-313.
- Roever S. (2016). Informal Trade Meets Informal Governance: Street Vendors and Legal Reform in India, South Africa, and Peru. *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*, 18(1), 27-46.

Please note that the exam texts indicated in the course program are available using the resources of the University library, <https://www.biblio.unimib.it/it>. A copy of the essays by Roever and Coletto will instead be available on the University's elearning platform with the start of the course.
