



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

History of Sociological Thought

2021-3-E4001N100

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Ability to understand the social phenomena through the 'classics' of sociology

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Ability to apply the sociological perspective put out by the 'classics' of sociology in order to understand the everyday phenomena, what happens in everyday life situations

Ability to understand some of the changes in which contemporary societies are involved

Contents

The lectures aim to investigate in which way the 'classics' of sociology can contribute to a better understanding of social phenomena.

The course is organized around four main topics: 1) a discussion on how one can make history of sociology; 2) a very brief overview on contemporary sociological paradigms and theories; 3) some notes on the reorientation of the sociological analysis brought about by the 'sociologies of everyday life' during the second half of the twentieth

century; 4) a focus on how contemporary societies are changing along the commodity-consumer-capitalism relation. In this case, we will take into account a number of considerations coming from 'classical' authors such as Wallerstein, Mills, Baudrillard and Debord.

Detailed program

- Introduction to the main issues of the history of sociology
- Why study the classics
- What is a classic
- Presentism and historicism
- The problem of order in the age of secular society
- Brief overview on contemporary sociological theories - from Parsons to microsociology
- Some remarks on the sociologies of everyday life: its reorientation of sociological analysis
- De Certeau and the invention of the quotidian
- The developments of contemporary society from the point of view of the consumption-commodity-capitalism relation
- Wallerstein
- Mills
- Baudrillard
- Debord

Prerequisites

No particular prerequisite.

Teaching methods

This course will be delivered in the second semester. At the moment it is difficult to know what will happen in the coming months because of the Covid-19. There are two possibilities:

1. Normal situation:

lectures, text discussions, audio/video materials.

2. Persistence of the current emergency situation:

video lectures recorded through the Kaltura system and uploaded on the teacher's e-learning site; 3 synchronous (optional) meetings are scheduled via Webex for clarifications and insights on the topics dealt with in the lessons recorded or foreseen in the bibliography.

The teacher will update the syllabus according to the situation.

The teaching method and topics discussed focus on the development of synthesis skills, thus facilitating the practical application of the theoretical concepts.

Lectures and class discussions aim to show how science can be applied in studying everyday situations.

Students are expected to be able to make use of the various topics approached in order to describe and understand daily situations making use of their independent judgement.

Assessment methods

At the moment, it is difficult to predict which will be the evolution of the situation caused by the Covid-19. Anyway, the examination is organized in these terms:

Written (required), oral (optional).

1. If this current emergency period will also continue in the second semester, the examination will take place online through the Webex platform, which offers the opportunity both for the written examination (required) and for the oral one (optional). Written and oral exam take place in two different days. In this case, the link for the log in will be indicated on the e-learning page of the course. More detailed information will be provided at the beginning of the second semester, when the situation should become clearer.

2. If instead in the second semester this emergency situation should be overcome, both the written (required) and the oral examination (optional) will take place in class and in a situation of physical presence. Of course, written and oral exam take place in two different days.

The teacher will update the syllabus according to the situation.

The written questions can be both in terms of open questions and/or multiple choice questions. If this is the case, for every question there are more alternatives, but only one is the correct answer.

The oral examination (optional) concerns the whole program. In this case, the final result is the average vote coming from the written and the oral examination.

The precondition for the oral exam is that one must be sufficient in the written examination.

Evaluation criteria for both written and oral examination

- Appropriate use of technical formal language – scientific formal skills
- Logical accuracy in the presentation of topics
- Ability to identify the connections between issues
- Completeness of the illustration of the topics given the limits of time and available pages (written)

Textbooks and Reading Materials

1. Ghisleni M (2011) *Classici e scienza normale: la sociologia fra continuità e discontinuità*, in 'Quaderni di Teoria sociale', 11, pp. 259-278 (downloaded from the teacher's e-learning site);
 2. Ghisleni M (1998), *Modernità e secolarizzazione: il problema dell'ordine*, in A. Melucci (a cura di), *Fine della modernità?*, Guerini Editore, Milano, pp. 131-148 (downloaded from the teacher's e-learning site);
 3. Bertholet J-M (2008), *La costruzione della sociologia*, Il Mulino, Bologna, solo Cap. IV, Cap. V;
 4. Ghisleni M (2000), *Vita quotidiana*, in A. Melucci (a cura di), *Parole chiave. Per un nuovo lessico delle scienze sociali*, Carocci, Roma, pp. 225-232 (downloaded from the teacher's e-learning site);
 5. De Certeau M (2001), *L'invenzione del quotidiano*, Edizioni Lavoro, Roma, solo *Introduzione generale*, pp. 5-22 (downloaded from the teacher's e-learning site);
 6. Wallerstein I (2000), *Capitalismo storico e civiltà capitalistica*, Asterios Editore, Trieste, solo Cap. I, Cap. II, pp. 15-59;
 7. Mills C W (1995), *L'immaginazione sociologica*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, solo Cap. IX (*Ragione e libertà*), pp. 176-186;
 8. Baudrillard J (1976), *La società dei consumi*, Il Mulino, Bologna, Parte seconda, solo Cap. I (*La logica sociale del consumo*), Cap. II (*Per una teoria del consumo*), pp. 39-87;
 9. Debord G (2008), *La società dello spettacolo*, Baldini&Castoldi, Milano, solo Cap. I (*La separazione compiuta*), Cap. II (*La merce come spettacolo*), pp. 51-7
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