



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Cultural Research: Methodology and Techniques

2021-2-E4001N115

Learning objectives

The course will offer a set of analytical and conceptual tools, research methods and technics which allow the students to develop the basic skills for projecting and carrying out empirical investigations on cultural topics and phenomena.

Contents

The course is divided in three parts: the first one is devoted to the study of some analytical key-concepts and categories, useful to identify and frame cultural processes, systems, phenomena, documents and objects; the second part focuses on the main methods and technics of cultural researches dealt with from both a sociological and interdisciplinary perspective; the third part is centered on the in-depth analysis of specific fields of the cultural research.

Detailed program

The course is structured in three parts. In the first part the course will provide some analytical and conceptual key-categories for identifying and analyzing cultural phenomena, objects, and texts to use in the different research phases. Through the critical reading of sociological and cultural science texts the students will get an overview of the main orientations in the study of cultural questions, from the semiotic to the praxeological one. More specifically the students will deal with the relationship between the social and the cultural structures; the processes of production, reception and circulation of ideas, cultural texts and objects; the building of idioculture and (sub)cultural identities, by paying particular attention to the spatial-temporal dimension and embodiment dynamics. In the

second part the students will be introduced to the main methods and techniques of qualitative research such as narrative interviews, life stories, (auto)biographic methods; participant observation sensory ethnography in the physical and virtual spaces, applied to the investigation of cultural objects, text and phenomena. The aim of this approach is to highlight the nexus between empirical research and theorization in the different research phases, from the choice of the research object to the data analysis, the coding and the communication/writing of the research outputs. In the third part the students will deal with specific issues of the cultural research, among those the memory dynamics and conflicts; the spatialization processes in the (urban) places and the signification of life places; body narratives and biographies, the production, circulation and reception of knowledge and cultural objects. These issues will be tackled through class exercises, the discussion on specific case studies, the analysis of cultural texts and objects.

Prerequisites

Basic knowledges of the qualitative research methods and main topics of cultural sociology

Teaching methods

Lectures; seminars; lab sessions on audio-visual materials; presentations and group projects.

In case of the Covid-19 emergency containment measures would be extended online lectures will be alternated with frontal lessons

Assessment methods

Written exam with open questions for attending and non attending students. The aim is to assess:

1. the comprehension degree of the issues dealt with in the course
2. the knowledge degree of the issues dealt with in the course
3. the argumentative skills
4. the clarity of exposition
5. the accuracy of sociological terminology

For attending students the participation in classroom exercises and facultative homework will be evaluated for the final mark, according to the criteria mentioned above.

In alternative to the written exam, attending students can develop a research project. The exam will consist in the evaluation of a research report and of the oral exposition of the research outputs. If the research report is the result of a collective project work, it shall be possible to identify the individual contribution of each student. In case of the Covid-19 emergency containment measures would be extended the oral exposition will be done online through the platform Webex. The teacher will indicate in the -Learning teaching webpage the public link for accessing to the exam.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

For attending and non attending students: the reading material is available at the 'Copisteria Fronteretro', Viale Sarca 191. This includes the following reading assignments divided in two parts:

1. Theories and Concepts

- Grüning, B. e Santoro, M. 'La cultura' in T. Grande and E. Parini (eds), *Sociologia*, Roma, Carocci, 2014
- Geertz, C. 'Note sul combattimento dei Galli a Bali' in Id., *Interpretazione di culture*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1998
- Bourdieu, P. 'Spazio sociale e spazio simbolico' in *Ragioni Pratiche*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009
- Bourdieu, P. 'Il capitale culturale' in Id, *Forme di capitale*, edited by M. Santoro, Roma, Armando, 2015.
- Swidler, A. 'La cultura in azione' in M. Santoro and R. Sassatelli (eds), *Studiare la cultura*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009
- Griswold, W. 'La cultura e il diamante culturale' in Id., *Sociologia della cultura*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2005
- Willis, P., *Common culture: Symbolic work at play in the everyday cultures of the young*, Westview Press, 1990 (cap. 3, 4, 5)
- Fine, A. 'Piccoli gruppi e creazione culturale' in M. Santoro e R. Sassatelli (eds), *Studiare la cultura*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009
- Alasuutari, P. 'Theorizing in qualitative research', in *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(4), 1996

2. Research methods and techniques

- Creswell, J.W., *Research Design Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Thousand Oak, Sage, 1994 (cap. I)
- Kelle, U. 'The Development of Categories: Different approaches in grounded theory', in Antony Bryant & Kathy Charmaz (a cura di), *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory*, Sage, 2007
- 'Lavoro simbolico e immaginazione etnografica. Intervista a Paul Willis', in *Studi culturali*, 2, 2008, a cura di M. Santoro e R. Sassatelli
- Wacquant, L. 'Habitus as a topic tool: Reflection on becoming a Prizefighter', in *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 8, 2011
- Goffmann, E. 'Sul "Fieldwork"', in *Studi culturali*, 1, 2005
- Demazière, G. e C. Dubar, C. *Dentro le storie*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2000 (I parte)
- Stanley, L. 'On auto/biography in sociology', in *Sociology*, 27(1), 1993
- Knoblauch, H., Tuma, R. and Schnttler, B. 'Videoanalisi e videografia', in *Società e mutamento politico*, 7(14), 2016

Further suggested readings will be provided during the course

In case of the Covid-19 emergency containment measures would be extended,

for these readings which are not available online

