



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Communication, Media and Society

2122-3-E4001N097

Aims

The course objective is to provide an understanding of the functioning of the news media system, of the actual processes of news production and of the changes it is undergoing under the pressure of technological innovation.

The students will develop the ability to critically analyse the news, the construction of social problems, and how linguistic and social processes influence the framing and the representation of reality.

Contents

The course addresses the relationship between news media and power. This relation is approached from a historical perspective, then considering the social environment of the news-making process, and finally evaluating the power effects of the language of the media.

In the course, an interdisciplinary and multilevel approach is preferred, passing from the big picture to everyday practices, and focussing on historical reconstruction, sociological investigation, and discourse analysis. Particular attention will be given to the language of news, among other features to their narrative structures, modes of address and quotation, stylistic features, framing choices, in short, to media discourse and its power effects.

Detailed program

The course is divided into four parts. In the first, a short review of the concept of power is provided, and then a social history and a political economy of the media system is sketched. The lessons will focus on the mass and industrial nature of the media and their consequences, on the birth of news as a concept, on the characteristics of

mainstream news media and of other models.

In the second part, the ethnographic and sociological body of research on the news making process will be used to understand the nature of the reality constructed by the news media. The relationship between the media and other political and social agencies will be also examined in order to reflect on the environment of news production.

The third part is dedicated to the changes introduced by the advent of the Internet in the relationship between the media and their audience, in the production and nature of news and in the new online information economy. We will focus on phenomena such as blogs and citizens' journalism, the sharing and the attention economy, disinformation problems and the role of platforms.

The fourth part broadens the view to the role of the media in the construction of social problems, considering phenomena such as the agenda-setting effect, the moral panic model, and media-hypes.

Prerequisites

None

Teaching form

The lessons will be held in presence, in Italian. Teaching is assisted by Power Point and audio/video materials to synthesize concepts and analyze with the class concrete examples and case studies taken from everyday news.

Textbook and teaching resource

The text to be studied is the reader "I mezzi di informazione e il potere", which will be uploaded at the start of the lessons on the e-learning page and available at the "copisteria Fronteretro" in Viale Sarca 191.

Semester

Second semester

Assessment method

The final exam is written and will test the knowledge of the various topics of the program, the ability to establish connections and to use the concepts illustrated during the course. The exam consists of some multiple-choice questions and an open question in which students are asked to write a short essay.

The student - and the Professor - will have the possibility to ask for an oral exam in order to receive another

assessment of her/his preparation, provided that she/he has received a passing grade in the written exam.

Office hours

Students can refer to my personal page accessing it from the "rubrica" in the university website.
