UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Social Capital and Local Socio-economic Systems (blended)

2122-1-F6302N002

Learning objectives

The course aims at providing students with theoretical and methodological tools to understand, analyse and work in an economic systems: company and/or territory. Students will learn theoretical concepts to be applied to practical case studies.

The course is structured into three parts. The first part is aimed at analysing the concept of social capital and its relationship with social networks. Attention will be paid to the operationalisation of social networks and social capital. Basic measures of Social Network Analysis (SNA) will be introduced, and students will have the chance to discuss how to apply them to companies (ONA); students will be asked to use a software for social network analysis during lab activities.

In the second part of the course, students will learn the territorial approach to Social Capital through the analysis of empirical researches. Students will discuss the use of social capital in empirical studies on local economic systems and its relationship with organisational networks. Particular attention will be paid to the current changes experienced by contemporary economic systems, for instance in relation to the advance of sharing economy.

The third part is complementary to the prior ones and is aimed at providing students with the necessary skills to realise a case study research (which will contribute to the final evaluation).

Both the theoretical and the empirical parts consist of individual and team online assignments: lessons are dedicated to the introduction of the course, the explanation of theoretical aspects and methodological issues, and the presentation of the work to be done online.

The discussion of theoretical issues is further developed through the individual reading of scientific articles and chapters and the elaboration of Power Point slides. The explanation of methodology is preliminary to the empirical work students must carry out both in the field and online, through the development of essays, Power Point presentations, and Word papers.

The final presentation of case studies will be held in class if possibile.

Contents

The module aims at analysing the different forms of social capital identified in literature and their application to empirical studies. Particular emphasis will be put on the analysis of organisational networks within socio-economic local systems and within companies. We will be discussing the following concepts: network, trust, reciprocity, reputation. Furthermore, we will see how these concepts can be useful to understand the functioning of companies and local socio-economic systems.

Detailed program

In the first part, the concept of social capital in its various forms will be explored and the main theoretical approaches will be considered (Coleman, Burt). In the second part of the course, students will learn how to operationalize the concept of Social capital, with reference to firms/companies and informal networks within them, the development of local systems, and the networks of companies in an increasingly globalized world. Particular attention will be given to the changes that are taking place in contemporary economic systems with the transition from ownership to access (e.g. sharing economy).

The third part of the course is transversal to the previous ones and aims to provide the skills for the realization of an empirical study case that students will be called to carry out during the course.
There are two assesment methods.

Each mid-term evaluation will be assigned one vote in thirtieth. In the second case, for those who will not submit the deliveries, the exam will consist