



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

History of Sociological Thought

2223-3-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, De Certeau, Mills, Badrillard, Debord, and Bauman.

Detailed program

- Introduction to the main issues of the history of sociology

- Why one has to 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
- The developments of contemporary society from the point of view of the consumption-commodity-capitalism relation
- Wallerstein
- De Certeau
- Mills
- Baudrillard
- Debord
- Bauman
- Consumption as production

Prerequisites

No particular prerequisite.

Teaching methods

This course will be delivered in the second semester.

The teaching method is based on the explanation and discussion of bibliography texts; audio/video materials.

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 own independent judgement.

Assessment methods

During the Course, there will be no intermediate evaluations. The exams will take place in normal sessions.

Written (required), oral (optional).

The written exam includes:

1. a section of multiple choice questions (only one is the correct answer); the correct answer is the most complete and logical one from the point of view of sociological reasoning; the alternatives can be in terms of:
 - 1.1. answers that although correct are however incomplete;
 - 1.2. generic or approximate answers;
 - 1.3. false or unlikely answers;

2. a section with open questions (in terms of very short essays).

About the written part of the exam, the section of open questions (2) will be evaluated only if the students pass the section of the multiple choice questions (1). Otherwise, the written exam is considered not passed.

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 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
2. Ghisleni M. (1998), *Modernità e secolarizzazione: il problema dell'ordine*, in A. Melucci (a cura di), *Fine della modernità?*, Guerini, Milano, pp. 131-148 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
3. Berthelot J-M. (2008), *La costruzione della sociologia*, Il Mulino, Bologna, only Chap. IV (I grandi programmi della sociologia contemporanea) e Chap. V (La sociologia dopo il 1970);
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 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
5. Wallerstein I. (2000), *Capitalismo storico e civiltà capitalistica*, Asterios Editore, Trieste, solo Parte I (Capitalismo storico), only the first two chapters (La mercificazione di ogni cosa; La politica dell'accumulazione), pp. 13-59;
6. De Certeau M. (2001), *L'invenzione del quotidiano*, Edizioni Lavoro, Roma, only Introduzione generale, pp. 5-22 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
7. Mills C. W. (1995), *L'immaginazione sociologica*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, only Chap. IX (Ragione e libertà), pp. 176-186;
8. Baudrillard J. (1976), *La società dei consumi*, Il Mulino, Bologna, Parte seconda, only Chap. I (La logica sociale del consumo), Chap. II (Per una teoria del consumo), pp. 39-87;
9. Debord G. (2008), *La società dello spettacolo*, Baldini&Castoldi, Milano, only Chap. I (La separazione compiuta), Chap. II (La merce come spettacolo), pp. 51-74;
10. Bauman Z. (2009), *Capitalismo parassitario*, Laterza, Bari, only Chap. I (Capitalismo parassitario), pp. 3-27;
11. Codeluppi V. (2007), *La convergenza tra produzione e consumo*, in 'Sociologia del lavoro', n. 108, fascicolo IV, pp. 11-20 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website).

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION
