UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Logic and Method of Comparative Research in Social Sciences

2223-1-F8802N007

Learning objectives

The course aims to address the fundamentals of comparative method through a deepening of approaches, techniques and tools of sociological and political research. The main objective of the course is to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to define a consistent and rigorous methodological research design, through the presentation of the main theoretical and empirical reflections.
By the end of the course, the student will be able to define a methodologically rigorous comparative research design.

Contents

The course is divided into two parts. The first part will be dedicated to presenting the characteristics, aims and methodological problems of comparative analysis in the social sciences. Particular attention will be given to analyse and discuss aspects of similarity and difference with the logic of case studies. In the second part, in addition to the discussion of some readings and presentation of some comparative empirical research, there will be exercises with students in order to prepare a paper that will be subject to final evaluation.

Detailed program

Topics discussed:

Presentation of the course and exercises. Comparison in social sciences.

Comparison in social sciences: Durkheim, Weber, Tocqueville.

Nature and aims of the comparison.

The forms and functions of the comparison.

Exercise (discussion and approach of the final paper).

Variable-oriented approach.

Exercise (discussion and formulation of the final paper).

Case Oriented Approach.

Exercise (discussion and drafting of the final paper).

The methodological problems of comparison.

Exercise (discussion and drafting of the final paper).

Strategy for similar and dissimilar cases.

Exercise (debate and drafting of the final report).

Presentation and discussion of empirical comparative research.

Exercise (debate and drafting of the final report).

Presentation and debate on empirical comparative research.

Presentation and final evaluation of papers.

Presentation and final evaluation of papers.

Prerequisites

No prerequisities

Teaching methods

Unless otherwise specified in the Covid-19 emergency, the course consists of face-to-face lectures and group exercises.
For students who cannot attend face-to-face lectures, remote discussion and video-recorded lectures are provided.
The course is delivered in Italian.
Any student who performs all the activities scheduled during the course and respects the deadlines is considered an attending student. In order to be considered an attendee, it is necessary to attend the lessons and in-person exercises.

Assessment methods

The course includes a series of exercises and the preparation of a final essay to enable the student to assess the degree of learning of the topics covered during the course. The assessment at the end of the course will be based on the discussion of the paper.
For non-attending students, the evaluation will take place at the end of the course by means of an oral examination.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Dogan M., Pelassy D., La scelta dei paesi nella comparazione internazionale: cinque strategie in Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica, 13,3, 351-78, 1983.
Marradi A., Natura forme e scopi della comparazione in Fisichella D., (a cura di), Metodo scientifico e ricerca politica, Roma, Nuova Italia Scientifica.
Sartori G., Morlino L. (a cura di), La comparazione nelle scienze sociali, Bologna, IlMulino, 1991
Lijphart A., Il metodo della comparazione in Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica, 1, 1, 67-92, 1968
Della Porta D., Keating M. (Eds), Comparative analysis: case-oriented versus variable-oriented, Cambridge University Press, 2012 (cap.11).

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION