UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Complex Organizations

2324-3-E1601N078

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding: The goal of the course is to study criminal organizations, and in particular mafias, as secret organizations and economic enterprises.

Applying knowledge and understanding: Identify the main characteristics and behavior of criminal organizations. Learn how to conduct organizational analysis of mafias.

Contents

Main topics of the course:

- Mafias as organizations: dimensions and organizational levels.
- Organizational analysis of mafias.
- Mafia activities.
- Organizational structures.
- Organizational orders and the use of violence.
- Rules and rituals.
- Communication among criminals.
- Markets and environments.
- The movement to non-traditional areas.
- Organizational dilemmas.

Detailed program

Criminal organizations are secret societies generally articulated on a hierarchical basis. Members of criminal organizations form groups in order to pursue economic gains. Mafias are criminal organizations whose main characteristic is to seek the monopoly of illegal economic activities. Mafias are a very specialized subset in the set of organized crime groups: they are extra-legal government structures attempting to control the supply of protection. Mafias are groups who aspire to govern markets and territories, offering 'services' to their customers, such as protection against extortion, the elimination of competition, etc. In this class, we will analyze different organizational aspects of mafias, among which: their activities, their rules, norms, and rituals; the organizational levels of mafias; mafia as clan-based form of organization; communication and cooperation among criminals; mafia markets and environments; mafia presence in non-traditional areas. The class will also discuss different orientations and approaches to the study of the Mafia, such as the Mafia as a cultural phenomenon, as hyper centralized organization, etc. Finally, particular attention will be devoted to the phenomena of diffusion to new areas, such as Northern Italy, and the socio-economic factors that makes it possible for mafia organization to take roots in different environments and lines of business.

Prerequisites

Elements of logical reasoning, and knowledge of current events.

Teaching methods

Lectures. Analysis of case-studies. Class team-work.

Assessment methods

Attending and non-attending students will be assessed through a written test based on open questions regarding the topics of the course and the materials indicated in the bibliography. The evaluation criteria for the written test are:

1. language properties - appropriate use of terms;
2. precision in the logical exposition of the arguments;
3. ability to build connections between various topics;
4. completeness of the exposure given the time limits;
5. analytical skills in commenting on the texts selected for study texts.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Attending and non students (book and other material should be read in full):

- M. Catino (2019), *Mafia organizations. The visible hand of criminal enterprise*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Sustainable Development Goals

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE