UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Communication, Media and Society

2324-3-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 most important system of production and distribution of meanings in contemporary societies, namely mass communications, which today go through profound transformations by which precise effects of power are perpetuated and at the same time transformed.

An interdisciplinary and multilevel approach is preferred in the course, which will range, moving from major scenarios to everyday practices, from historical reconstruction to economic aspects, and from sociological to linguistic investigation.

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. These lectures will focus on phenomena such as the evolution of prosumers and the networking of the public through social media, the sharing and attention economy, disinformation phenomena, 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", available on the e-learning page and at the "copisteria Fronteretro" in Viale Sarca 191 since the start of the lessons. .

Semester

Second semester

Assessment method

The final exam is written. In the first part, multiple-choice questions will test the understanding of the various topics of the program. In the second part, two open questions that ask students to write a short essay will be used to assess the ability to develop an argument, illustrate it in a clear and precise way, provide examples, and establish connections with relevant concepts.

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 the webpage of the course on the e-learning platform..

Sustainable Development Goals

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS