



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Sociology of Language

2425-3-E4001N091

Learning objectives

The course examines language as an object of research and as a tool for the analysis of social phenomena.

By the end of the course, students will have acquired a solid critical understanding of:

- the main approaches to the study of language in interaction and different social contexts;
- the use of language as a practical resource and object of empirical research;
- the influence of gender, social class, age and processes of racialization on the production and use of language and discourse in everyday contexts.

In addition, students will be able to:

- apply concepts and theories on the use of language in the analysis of contemporary social and discursive phenomena;
- intervene critically in key debates in the sociology of language;
- incorporate the topic into their future research projects, both in theoretical methodological and empirical terms.

Contents

The course provides students with an introduction to the main theoretical and methodological reflections on language in the social sciences, from the linguistic turn to critical discourse analysis. It examines the relationship between language and knowledge, social practices, power and ideology. In particular, the course considers how issues of gender, age, class and race have transformed language into an important terrain of conflict and negotiation in contemporary societies.

Detailed program

The first part of the course provides an overview of the principal theoretical issues (structure, action, inequality, distinction, power, discourse, ideology) and methodological approaches (such as ethnomethodology, critical discourse analysis, and the cultural-materialist approach to the study of key words) at the centre of the sociology of language. In addition, the course examines the study of language in relation to lexical use, social interaction, social knowledge, and social practices. The second part of the course is devoted to an in-depth study of contemporary language as a field of conflict and negotiation. In particular, the course addresses the relationship between language and four thematic areas: gender, cities, power and migration.

Prerequisites

There are no special requirements, but it is desirable that students have a good grounding in the notions and analytical approaches that characterise the sociology of cultural and communication processes.

Teaching methods

The 56-hour course will consist of the following two teaching methods:

- didactic delivery (approximately 60% of the course), including lectures with the use of Power Point and the projection of audio-visual material;
- interactive teaching (approximately 40% of the course), including student discussion of readings and videos shown in class, individual and group classroom exercises; individual and group presentations on topics related to the course.

Assessment methods

Course evaluation will be by written exam based on the texts and the four themes connected with the course programme. In addition, attendance and participation in lectures and classroom activities (discussion of readings and debates on course-related issues) will be assessed.

Assessment criteria: understanding of the readings; clarity, precision and completeness in the discussion of material; the ability to make connections between the various topics; the ability to apply the theories and perspectives from the readings to contemporary social phenomena.

Further information regarding the exam can be found on the slide entitled "Informazione sull'esame" on the e-learning platform.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

A part of the reading materials (n.10 texts that are not available in electronic form) will be contained in a photocopy handout entitled "Sociologia del linguaggio a. a. 2024-2025" which can be purchased from the Fronteretro photocopy shop in Viale Sarca 191 from the start of the course. The shop's website provides details on opening

hours and contact details for any request for home delivery.

The other texts for the exam (those that are available in electronic form) will be uploaded to the e-learning platform in the section entitled "Bibliografia di riferimento". Where possible, English versions will be provided for the texts.

A complete list of the texts for the exam will be available in the "Bibliografia di riferimento" section on e-learning from 17 April.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES
