SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Sociologia della Politica

2425-3-E4001N134

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding:

The course aims to provide a basic knowledge of the perspectives and theoretical interpretations of political and social transformations in contemporary societies in terms of the configuration and redistribution of forms of power and individual and collective agency within the framework of the nation-state and at supra-, inter- and transnational levels. It aims to develop critical and reflexive skills for the analysis of socio-political phenomena and the ability to understand the complexity and contradictions of transformative processes unfolding at local, national, European and global levels.

Applying knowledge and understanding:

The course provides skills for understanding the dynamics of the transformations under consideration, while training students for concrete civic and political agency, both in the professional field and in civil society.

Communicational skills:

The active and continuous participation of the students is one of the prerogatives of the course. Seminar activities and group work are an integral part of the educational project.

Contents

The course aims to explain the basic concepts that distinguish political sociology from other social science disciplines in the way it thinks about and investigates the complex dialectic between politics and society. It considers the political sphere in dynamic interaction with other social institutions, exploring the ways in which different social agencies and actors challenge and co-construct, produce and reproduce social structures, specific forms of action, events and movements. Traditionally, political sociology has studied power relations within the

framework of the nation-state; today it is essential to rethink these processes beyond the borders of a single state, in their supra- and trans-national dimension, in the globalised world. European integration is thus becoming a new privileged field of sociological analysis, capable of shedding light on the ways in which new political and social interests are configured and compete in the political arena, with new actors attributing alternative meanings to individual and collective action, institutions, and political and social structures. As a result, new questions have emerged that challenge dominant interpretations of political action and society as such in a post-national constellation. The course will provide a space for observation and participatory discussion of selected dimensions of these processes.

Detailed program

The lectures will proceed along two parallel and intertwined paths: the first will cover the basic concepts of political sociology in the form of an interactive frontal lecture; the second will offer various forms of participation on selected topics proposed by the teacher and agreed with the students. Both modalities aim to create a space for discussion and exchange of ideas and require active participation.

First, the basic theoretical approaches to understanding socio-political phenomena will be explained and discussed in the light of contemporary transformations in European and global societies. The concepts of state, political systems and civil society will be problematised as spaces of conflict between different interests of social groups and between ideological and cultural world views. Second, participation in the political community will be interpreted through the lens of specific political cultures that create collective identities and forms of association that are reproduced over time through the process of socialisation. Moreover, socialisation is constantly challenged by new social and political actors and their reinterpretations. Third, the constitution and legitimation of both political parties and social movements are seen as crucial for understanding the dynamics between the political and social spheres in these turbulent times of transition from the 'short century' and its cognitive patterns to the new millennium. Fourth, special attention will be paid to the tensions surrounding the configuration of European and Western liberal democracies today, in relation to the global dominance of neoliberalism on the one hand, and the rise of illiberal and authoritarian tendencies in these societies on the other. Finally, we will analyse forms and practices of structural political violence, typical of totalitarian and post-totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century, but at the same time intrinsic to the modern nation-state. Political violence reappears in a more visible way in the discourses and practices of radical right-wing parties and movements, while it is less transparent in the new ways in which contemporary nation-states exercise power over society.

The seminars will be organised as an integral part of the course, both in terms of the participation of invited guest lecturers and in terms of the reading, presentation and discussion of selected texts by the students enrolled in the course. The themes of nationalism, populism, citizenship and social inequalities will be approached from an intersectional perspective in terms of class, gender, religion and ethno-national identification. All topics will be addressed with a critical approach to methodological nationalism.

Prerequisites

No specific prerequisite is required. A basic knowledge of English is desirable, but not essential.

Teaching methods

The course will combine lectures and participatory activities – students will be invited to present and discuss

several selected texts. We will host experts in the field during our seminars. Italian is the official language of the course.

The lectures will be proposed in presence; the online participation will be possibile only in case of the external guests of the seminars.

The course does not distinguish between attending and non-attending students, but rewards participation. A certain number of afternoon online meetings with working students may be arranged; Erasmus students may ask for short seminars in English, both in remote synchronous mode.

I will receive students in presence and via Webex – the appointment should be agreed by mail a few days in advance.

Assessment methods

The oral examination consists in an interview concerning the topics and argumentation treated by the relevant literature and during the lectures and seminars. Beside the textbook, each student must choose four scientific articles / book chapters that were proposed for the seminars on citizenship, nationalism, populism and totalitarianism.

All students are invited to write a paper (max 2500-3000 words including references), on a selected topic proposed by and agreed with the teacher; the paper must be delivered at least 10 days before the first session of oral examination in June 2025; each paper will be evaluated by assessment of points (min 0 - max 2). Students can write their papers in English, Slovenian, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian language. **Writing a paper is not compulsory.** Active role in seminar presentations will be taken into consideration.

Evaluation criteria:

The oral exam test:

/- Understanding of the specific concepts related to the course topics;

/- Ability to present the topic in a coherent way;

/- Ability of critical and reflective thinking.

The paper evaluation (not compulsory):

/- Ability to grasp the fundamental conceptual elements proposed by the course;

/- Ability to unfold synthetically a subject chosen for the paper in an original and autonomous way;

/- Ability to develop a critical and reflective discourse in written form.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The main textbook for the oral exam is:

Fabio de Nardis (2023), *Sociologia politica. Per comprendere i fenomeni politici contemporanei*, **Milano:**

McGraw Hill Education.

For the students enrolled to the course from aa 2020/2021 to 2022/2023 the textbook
Luigi Ceccarini e Ilvo Diamanti (2018), Tra politica e società. Fondamenti, trasformazioni e prospettive, Bologna, il Mulino. will remain valid.

The Erasmus+ incoming students may use in alternative:
Nash K. (2010), "Contemporary Political Sociology", Wiley-Blackwell.

Additional literature for the oral exam:
Four articles/book chapters of your choice among the proposed texts for seminars: two on citizenship + two on populism, nationalism, totalitarianism.

Citizenship

1. Balibar, Etienne (2012), Cittadinanza, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, capitolo V, "Cittadinanza ed esclusione", pp. 86-110.
2. Kochenov, Dimitri (2020), Cittadinanza, Bologna: il Mulino, capitolo V "Politica", pp. 167-198.
3. Baubӧck Reinhard (2014), "The Three Levels of Citizenship within the European Union", German Law Journal, Vol. 15, n. 5, pp. 752-763.
4. Marchetti, Cristina Maria (2015), L'Europa dei cittadini. Cittadinanza e democrazia nell'Unione Europea, Milano: FrancoAngeli,

   • Capitolo I, "Il dibattito contemporaneo sulla cittadinanza: verso una cittadinanza postnazionale?", pp. 11-28;
   • Capitolo II, "Cittadinanza europea: diritti e prospettive", pp.29-48.

5. Isin, Engin F (2009), "Citizenship in flux: The figure of the activist citizen", Subjectivity, Issue 29, pp. 367–388
6. Isin, Engin and Ruppert, Evelyn (2020). 'Digital Citizens yet to Come', in Being Digital Citizens. 2nd edn. London: Rowman & Littlefield International, pp. 173–193

Populism, Nationalism, Totalitarianism

1. Anselmi, Manuel. (2019). "How to study populism? (Chapter 17) and Concluding Remarks: Democracy and Populism: Which pespectives?" (Chapter 18). In Populism, An Introduction. Oxford and New York: Routledge.
2. Mouffe, Chantal. (2018). "Il momento populista". In Per un populismo di sinistra. Roma: Editori Laterza.
3. Cohen, Jean (2019). "Populism and the Politics of Resentment". Jus cogens 1: 5-39.
4. Brubaker, Rogers. (2020). "Populism and Nationalism". Nations and Nationalism 26 (1), 2020, pp. 44–66.
5. Brubaker, Rogers, (2017). "Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective". Ethnic and Racial Studies, 40:8, pp. 1191-1226.
6. Delanty, G. (2019). "'The Centre cannot hold': The Return of the Nationalism and the Spectre of the Authoritarian Democracy". In Formations of the European Identity, Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 365-397.
7. Traverso, Enzo (2017). "Dal fascismo al postfascismo?" in I nuovi volti del fascismo. Ombrecorte, 11-49.
8. de la Torre, Carlos (2025). Populism and Fascism. Tre parti: Introduction and Definitions (2-23); Similarities and Differences (24-45); Fascism, Populism, Democracy + Conclusions (46-58). Cambridge University Press.
9. Arendt, Hannah (1996), "Il tramonto dello stato nazionale e la fine dei diritti umani" in Le origini del totalitarismo, Milano: Edizioni di comunità, pp. 372-419.
10. Arendt, Hannah (1996), "Ideologia e terrore" in Le origini del totalitarismo, Milano: Edizioni di comunità, pp. 630-656.

All texts will be available in the University library and, where possible, in electronic format. Other selected materials will be uploaded on the course web platform. Each student may create his/her selection of references regarding the

specific topic of the paper (not compulsory).

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS