UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Policy and Politics

2425-1-F8701N010

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide an introduction to the most relevant concepts and themes for the study of politics, for the understanding of problems debated in the public sphere and for the design and analysis of public policies.

Contents

The course will deal with three macro-themes, which will constitute as many articulations of the program: 1) Introduction to the fundamental concepts of political theory; 2) Theories of democracy and populism; 3) Democracy and the issue of inequality.

Detailed program

1. In introducing the fundamental terms of political theory, we will analyse the historical and theoretical meaning of concepts and themes such as:
   what is politics;
   politics and power;
   what is public policy;
   State and citizenship;
   forms of government;
   fundamental rights
   political ideologies;
   gender and political theory.

2. In the part dedicated to the theories of democracy and populism, we will explore the competing definitions

and visions on the foundations, principles, procedures and forms of democratic government, and the tension to which neo-populisms subject contemporary liberal democracies. The topics addressed will include: history of the democratic ideal; concepts of freedom and equality; liberal democracy; majority and minorities; the principle of representation; deliberative processes; actors in the democratic process and forms of political participation. And: definitions and characteristics of populism; the relationship between populism and democracy.

3. The third part will address the issue of inequality as a threat to the survival of democracy. It will analyse the attack on equality as an effect of the combination of neoliberal policies, resurgent nationalism and anti-egalitarian ideologies.

Within each of these thematic sections, some of the content will be covered in the form of an interactive seminar with guest speakers. Study visits are also planned.

Prerequisites

No special skills are required, but interest in discussing contemporary political issues, willingness to learn, passion for argumentation and active participation in the classroom.

Teaching methods

The Course consists of 42 hours, of which approximately 60 percent is with didactic delivery (face-to-face lectures using slides, audio and video) and 40 percent with interactive teaching (study visits, subgroup work, interactive seminars with guest speakers).

Assessment methods

Three alternative modes of examination are provided:
(a) oral examination on the textbooks.
(b) limited to the January and February exam session: writing and presentation of an essay (max 40,000 characters) from the topics of the lectures, reference texts or seminars. The writing of the eleborate replaces the examination on the texts.
(c) oral examination on text 1) only, with exemption from text 2), for those who wish to produce (also in small groups) during the course a brief paper on the topics covered in the seminars. The seminar schedule will be made available, along with the lecture schedule, at the beginning of the course.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

1. Marco Almagisti, Paolo Graziano (a cura di), *La democrazia. Concetti, attori, istituzioni*, Carocci 2024. Chapters: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 30, 31, 32, 33.

2. A text of your choice from the following:

- Norberto Bobbio, *Destra e sinistra. Ragioni e significati di una distinzione politica*, Donzelli 2023.
- Cas Mudde, *Ultradestra. Radicali ed estremisti dall'antagonismo al potere*, Luiss University Press 2020.
- Jan-Werner Muller, *Cos'è il populismo*, Egea 2023.
- Giorgia Serughetti, *Il vento conservatore*, Laterza 2021.
- Carlo Trigilia, *La sfida delle disuguaglianze. Contro il declino della sinistra*, il Mulino 2022.

For students who will present a paper on the content of one of the seminars, the examination program will consist of text 1) only.

Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS