



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Communication Processes, Sustainability and Innovation

2425-2-F8802N062

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide students with the opportunity to acquire the conceptual and methodological tools to critically analyze the communicative strategies adopted in political, institutional, and media discourses in constructing the narrative on environmental, social, and economic sustainability. By the end of the course, students will be able to grasp the ideological implications conveyed in the discourse on sustainability and innovation across various communicative contexts.

Contents

The course examines communicative processes within the context of political and institutional discourse, with a particular focus on sustainability. Through the analysis of institutional documents, public statements, and institutional policies, the course will explore how the concepts of sustainability and innovation are integrated and represented in political and institutional communication. It will analyze the effectiveness of communicative strategies in promoting sustainable policies and develop critical skills in deconstructing political and institutional messages.

Detailed program

In the first part of the course, the main theoretical approaches developed within communication research will be presented. The second part of the course will be dedicated to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and to analyzing the most relevant studies published in this field on the topic of sustainability.

The course will be organized into the following thematic modules:

Module 1: Introduction to Political and Institutional Communication

- Definition and characteristics of political and institutional communication
- Tools and techniques of communication in the political context
- Role of the media in political communication

Module 2: The Concept of Sustainability

- Definition of sustainability and sustainable development
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the European Union
- Role of sustainability in public and institutional discourse

Module 3: Discourse Analysis Methods

- Methodologies for analyzing political and institutional discourse

Module 4: Political and Institutional Discourse on Sustainability

- Analysis of political speeches and official documents on sustainability
- Rhetorical strategies used to promote sustainability
- Case studies

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of the main theoretical and research perspectives in the field of communication and discourse analysis.

Teaching methods

Priority will be given to interactive lessons based on the presentation and discussion of texts, group exercises, as well as the design and implementation of a research project on the course topics.

Lecture-based Teaching (40%): Theoretical introduction to the topics covered.

Interactive Teaching (60%): Analysis and discussion of cases

Assessment methods

Students can choose between:

- A group research paper
- An oral exam

Theoretical and methodological knowledge acquired during the course will be assessed.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The reference texts will be presented during the first lesson and, where possible, will be made available in PDF format.

During the course, a selection of articles will be presented, analyzed, and discussed, including:

Cornwall, A. (2007). Buzzwords and fuzzwords: deconstructing development discourse. *Development in practice*, 17(4-5), 471-484.

Espiner, S., Orchiston, C., & Higham, J. (2017). Resilience and sustainability: a complementary relationship? Towards a practical conceptual model for the sustainability–resilience nexus in tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(10), 1385–1400.

Fiksel, J. (2006). Sustainability and resilience: toward a systems approach. *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy*, 2(2), 14–21.

Joseph, J. (2013). Resilience as embedded neoliberalism: a governmentality approach. *Resilience*, 1(1), 38–52.

Machin, D., & Liu, Y. (2024). How tick list sustainability distracts from actual sustainable action: the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 21(2), 164-181.

Mavelli, L. (2019). Resilience beyond neoliberalism? Mystique of complexity, financial crises, and the reproduction of neoliberal life. *Resilience*, 7(3), 224–239.

Mediavilla, J., & Garcia-Arias, J. (2019). Philanthrocapitalism as a neoliberal (development agenda) artefact: Philanthropic discourse and hegemony in (financing for) international development. *Globalizations*, 16(6), 857–875.

Telleria, J., & Garcia-Arias, J. (2022). The fantasmatic narrative of ‘sustainable development’. A political analysis of the 2030 global development agenda. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 40(1), 241–259.

Wagner, W., & Anholt, R. (2016). Resilience as the EU Global Strategy’s new leitmotif: pragmatic, problematic or promising?. *Contemporary security policy*, 37(3), 414-430.

Walker, J., & Cooper, M. (2011). Genealogies of resilience: From systems ecology to the political economy of crisis adaptation. *Security dialogue*, 42(2), 143-160.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | CLIMATE ACTION
