UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Work in The Digital Age

2425-2-F8802N064

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

The course goes in depth into specific issues dealing with work, employment and labour markets changes. A special focus will be devoted to the impact of digitalisation on work for both medium-high-skilled and low-skilled activities.

Applying knowledge and understanding

The course aims at providing students the following skills:

- presenting and discussing, with the support of different scientific documents (theoretical contributions, articles, research reports), issues relating to employment in the service sector;

- looking for, selecting, gathering and collecting empirical evidence to carry out the analysis of a specific issue or phenomenon in the labour market;

- designing and organizing a research project;

- carrying out a research with both quantitative and qualitative methods;

- analysing the results and present them through presentations/reports

Contents

The course proposes an analysis of the transformations of work and of the labor market with particular attention to highly qualified occupations in the service sector. The main topics covered by the course include the use of

information technology, remote working and the new working practices that are spreading after the pandemic, platform as virtual spaces of match between labour demand and labour supply.

Detailed program

The spread of digital technologies is changing the way of working and organizing work in many sectors and contexts. In particular, on the one hand, for skilled non-manual activities, digitalisation changes the way of working and amplifies the possibilities of de-localising work, making the spatial dimension almost irrelevant. On the other hand, digital technologies become a powerful tool for coordination and intermediation of the meeting between job supply and demand through platforms. The latter play an important role both for service activities that cannot be relocated, such as food delivery, and for low-skill non-manual activities, such as micro-activities that support artificial intelligence, which can be carried out almost anywhere.
The course intends to analyze these trends of change, highlighting their potential, critical issues and also false myths, both through the analysis of the most recent studies and through the carrying out of ad hoc research, to be carried out collectively.

The topics touched upon - linked to the more general theme of the transformations of work, employment, professions and the labor market in advanced societies - will be:

- the impact of digitalisation on work processes

- the impact of technological innovations on working practices (remore work, de-spatialization)

- meanings of work in terms of social identity, self-fulfillement, satisfaction, social relations

- job contents, work organization, relational dynamics in the workplaces

The course is organized so that students can actively participate to classes in order to use the skills developed in a) analyzing and studying different empirical researches; b) critically reviewing and using original research materials; c) carrying out research by using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Prerequisites

A basic command of sociological theory, methodology and fairly good skills in learning, writing and speaking.

Teaching methods

The course consists of 56 hours of lessons, all carried out partly in erogative teaching mode and partly in interactive teaching mode. The first two weeks of the course will see a prevalence of erogative teaching, while in the following weeks interactive teaching will prevail. The active participation of students is required during all the lectures. Students will be invited and required to:

- comment and discuss the results of empirical researches, both quantitative and qualitative;

- prepare a research project and structure its specific phases

- directly experiment statistical data analysis;

- directly confront with the carrying out and with the analysing of qualitative interviews to workers and employers;

- do short public presentations / write a short research report.

Having to give an evaluation of the percentage of time dedicated to erogative and interactive teaching activities, it can be estimated that the former weighs on average between 15 and 20% over the total numebr of hours, and the latter between 75% and 80%..

Assessment methods

Evaluation of work done during classes and brief oral exam.

For students not attending classes: written exam (two open questions).

Textbooks and Reading Materials

References for students who will attend classes and participate in collective activities

- Carreri A, Gosetti G, Poggio B, e Zanoni P. (2020), Lavoro e digitalizzazione, in Sociologia del lavoro n.158, pp. 51-73
- Gosetti, G. (2012) “Dalla qualità del lavoro alla qualità della vita lavorativa” Sociologia del Lavoro (127): 17–34 [disponibile nelle risorse elettroniche della biblioteca]
- Wood A.J, Graham M., Lehdonvirta V. e Hjort I. (2019), "Good Gig, Bad Gig: Autonomy and Algorithmic Control in the Global Gig Economy", Work, Employment and Society, Vol. 33(1) 56–75
- AA.VV. (2022), "Smart working", numero monografico di Meridiana, rivista di storia e scienze sociali", n. 104, (selected parts) [disponibile nelle risorse elettroniche della biblioteca]

In addition to several chapters of the books cited above, the course bibliography – mainly made of scientific articles and report research in Italian and in English – and other useful documentation will be uploaded on the course elearning page.

References for students who will not attend classes

- Fellini I. (2017) Il terziario di consumo. Occupazione e professioni. Roma: Carocci.
- Carreri A, Gosetti G, Poggio B, e Zanoni P. (2020), Lavoro e digitalizzazione, in Sociologia del lavoro n.158, pp. 51-73
- Gosetti, G. (2012) “Dalla qualità del lavoro alla qualità della vita lavorativa” Sociologia del Lavoro (127): 17–34 [disponibile nelle risorse elettroniche della biblioteca]
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Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | GENDER EQUALITY | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH