UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Change and Innovation in Complex Organizational Systems

2425-2-F8803N019

Learning objectives

Knowledge and Understanding:
Upon completion of the course, students will have acquired:

- the knowledge to understand the logic of how complex organizational systems function within the public sector;
- the knowledge to critically examine the processes of change and innovation in the public sector;
- the knowledge to reconstruct the legal-organizational field within which the divisions of public administration operate;
- the knowledge to diagnose the weaknesses and potentials of public apparatuses;
- the ability to conduct an organizational analysis in the public sector;
- the ability to find, understand, utilize, and critique organizational literature, as well as to collect primary sources "in the field";
- the ability to apply methodologies and techniques of organizational research.

Contents

The course focuses on the analysis of change and innovation processes within complex organizational systems in the public sector, particularly referring to three areas: justice, healthcare, and higher education.
The course is structured as a comparative journey, which will delve into the following dimensions:

- the structural characteristics and interdependencies among components;
- behavioral characteristics;
- the actors' room for maneuver at various levels
- the central-peripheral relationship;
- interaction with other actors in the legal-organizational field;

- the overall governance of the system;
- the social, economic, and political implications connected to the change and innovation of public administration articulations.

Detailed program

This course aims to provide students with the theoretical and methodological tools necessary to understand the logic behind the functioning of complex organizational systems in the public sector, particularly focusing on three areas: justice, healthcare, and higher education. It also encourages students to critically examine the processes of change and innovation within these sectors. The course is based on the understanding that comprehending the "public machinery" and its relationships with the business world and the third sector is a crucial skill for future experts in reliability, risk, and compliance in organizations, regardless of their field of employment. Public administration, in its various articulations, indeed plays a pivotal role in the legal-organizational field. Furthermore, its functioning and performance have a direct and clear impact on both the life and well-being of individuals and the socio-economic development of various territories. Beyond theoretically and empirically framing these topics, the course also aims to enable students to conduct their own organizational analysis in the public sector. To this end, thematic focuses and group projects will be carried out, incorporating organizational research methodologies and techniques such as document analysis, questionnaires, interviews, and non-participant observation.

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of logic and general culture are sufficient.

Teaching methods

The course includes lectures, case analysis, testimonials, and group work. The lectures are interactive: the presentation of key concepts is complemented by case studies, preparation of group projects, and practical application of organizational research methodologies. Guest lectures by experts and practitioners will be organized.

Specifically, the course will feature:

- 9 lectures, each three hours of expository teaching (DE) (47%);
- 10 lectures, each three hours of interactive teaching (DI) (53%).

All sessions (both expository and interactive teaching) are conducted exclusively in-person.

Assessment methods

Both attending and non-attending students will be assessed through an individual oral examination, which will cover the examination text and supplementary materials, such as slides, articles, and case studies. The evaluation criteria for the oral examination (for both attending and non-attending students) will include:

1. completeness of the presentation;

2. appropriateness of language - correct use of terminology;
3. accuracy in the logical presentation of arguments;
4. ability to construct connections between various topics.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

A collection of selected chapters and/or articles will be made available on the e-learning platform for both attending and non-attending students, to be studied in full.

Erasmus students who do not understand Italian may arrange with the Professor for a tailored program in one of the following languages: English, Spanish, or Portuguese.

Sustainable Development Goals

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS