



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Sociology of Family

2526-3-E4001N082

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding (D1)

The course provides theoretical tools for understanding the evolution of family relationships in relation to social, cultural, and economic transformations. Key concepts related to gender, generation, intimacy, and care are covered.

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding (D2)

Participants will develop skills in analyzing empirical data (qualitative and quantitative), critically reading sources, and applying sociological concepts to concrete cases and media materials.

Autonomy of judgment (D3)

The course promotes independent and critical reflection on family changes, gender inequalities, intergenerational dynamics, and social representations, stimulating personal and informed interpretations.

Communication skills (D4)

Students will be involved in discussion and oral presentation activities, with the aim of developing their presentation, argumentation, and use of sociological language skills.

Learning skills (D5)

Students will be able to approach the study of family phenomena in an independent and reflective manner, with the possibility of further study and independent research.

Contents

The aim of the course is to introduce the theme of the changes in demographic structure, in family types and in the 'doing families'.

Gendered and generational analysis of roles and family relationships.

Detailed program

The course will provide students with the theoretical and empirical basis for analysing and understanding family, gender and generational relationships.

We will firstly analysing the classical sociological thought on family relationships; secondly we will take into consideration the different dimensions (demographic, economic, historical, political and cultural) that have transformed family structures as well as intimacy and care.

Family relationships in their reproductive, affective and socialization dimensions will be placed at the center of our attention in the first part of the course.

In the second part, emphasis will be placed on the dynamics of gender-based violence and family violence, as well as the media representation of families.

Prerequisites

None.

Teaching methods

The course adopts a variety of teaching strategies aimed at fostering active learning, critical reflection, and participatory engagement. The teaching methodology is structured around the following components:

Lectures: The initial phase of the course is dedicated to traditional lectures that provide a comprehensive theoretical and conceptual framework. These sessions aim to build foundational knowledge and are enriched by interpretative models, empirical examples, and references to scholarly debates.

Guided classroom discussions: The second part of the course emphasizes interactive learning through structured in-class debates and group dialogue. Students are encouraged to critically reflect on course materials, raise questions, and engage in discussions based on scientific articles, empirical evidence, or real-life case studies provided by the instructor.

Individual or group presentations: Attending students will have the opportunity to prepare and deliver presentations on selected topics, which may include original research, literature reviews, or analysis of empirical sources (e.g., interviews, documents, media portrayals of families). Presentations will be followed by group discussion, encouraging the development of communication and argumentative skills.

Analysis of audiovisual materials: Selected sessions will include the screening and collective analysis of documentaries, video clips, advertisements, or other media content related to family transformations, parenting, and the representation of families in contemporary culture. These activities offer opportunities to apply theoretical tools in contextually rich scenarios.

Short exercises and group work: During the course, students may engage in practical activities such as constructing conceptual maps, analyzing empirical texts, or participating in role-play simulations. These collaborative formats are designed to support peer learning and the application of concepts through hands-on practice.

All teaching activities will take place in person. The course is structured in two phases: a first, primarily lecture-

based phase, followed by a second phase centered on student engagement, interaction, and active participation.

Assessment methods

Written (3 open-ended questions) and – possibly- oral examination.

Students: paper based on a direct research experience.

Exams have the aim of ascertaining the understanding of the dynamics of family changes, as well as the ability to consult and read qualitative and quantitative data and to use bibliographic materials.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Saraceno C., Naldini E. (2021), *Sociologia della famiglia*, Il Mulino

Cannito M. (2022), *Fare spazio alla paternità*, Il Mulino

Erasmus students:

Crespi I., Ruspini E. (2016), *Balancing Work and Family in a Changing Society*, Palgrave

Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY
