



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

History of Sociological Thought

2526-3-E4001N100

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Ability to understand the social phenomena through the 'classics' of sociology

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Ability to apply the sociological perspective put out by the 'classics' of sociology in order to understand the dynamics of everyday life situations

Making judgements

- Ability to understand some of the changes in which contemporary societies are involved

Communication skills

- Ability to argue both through written papers and through oral skills

Learning skills

- Stimulate the study of how the sociological 'classics' have approached the analysis of modern society and which are the main theoretical perspectives we find in classical and contemporary sociology

Contents

The lectures aim to investigate in which way the 'classics' of sociology can contribute to a better understanding of social phenomena.

The Course is organized around four main topics:

1. a discussion on how one can make history of sociology;
2. a very brief overview on contemporary sociological paradigms and theories;
3. some notes on the reorientation of the sociological analysis brought about by the 'sociologies of everyday

life' during the second half of the twentieth century;

4. a focus on how contemporary societies are changing along the commodity-consumer-capitalism relation.
5. In this last case, we will take into account a number of considerations coming from 'classical' authors such as Marx, Simmel, Mills, Baudrillard, Debord, Lipovetsky, and Bauman.

Detailed program

- Introduction to the main issues of the history of sociology
- The importance of written language in the construction of the sociological text
- Why one has to study the classics
- What is a classic
- Presentism and historicism
- The problem of order in the age of secular society
- Brief overview on contemporary sociological theories - from Parsons to microsociology
- Some remarks on the sociologies of everyday life: its reorientation of sociological analysis
- The developments of contemporary society from the point of view of the consumption-commodity-capitalism relation
- Theories and authors related to these transformations:
 - Marx
 - Simmel
 - Mills
 - Baudrillard
 - Debord
 - Bauman
 - Lipovetsky
 - Consumption as production

Prerequisites

No particular prerequisite.

Teaching methods

This Course will be delivered in the second semester.

The Course is held in Italian.

The teaching method used is in terms of lectures: 28 lectures of 2 hours in presence.

At the beginning of the course, the detailed program of the topics discussed during the various lessons will be distributed.

The teaching method and topics discussed focus on the development of synthesis skills, thus facilitating the practical application of the theoretical concepts.

Lectures and class discussions aim to show how science can be applied in studying everyday situations.

Students are expected to be able to make use of the various topics approached in order to describe and understand daily situations making use of their own independent judgement.

Assessment methods

Erasmus students: the exam can be taken in Italian or in English; the exam mode is the same as for Italian students; moreover, the student can decide to take the exam on an English bibliography; in both cases, students are required to contact the Professor for a preliminary appointment in order to define the bibliography and the exam method.

During the Course, there will be no intermediate evaluations. The exams will take place in normal sessions. The bibliography is the same for both attending and non-attending students.

Written (required); oral (optional).

The written exam includes:

1. a section of multiple choice questions (only one is the correct answer); the correct answer is the most complete and logical one from the point of view of sociological reasoning; the alternatives can be in terms of:
 - 1.1. answers that although correct are however incomplete;
 - 1.2. generic or approximate answers;
 - 1.3. false or unlikely answers;
2. a section with open questions (in terms of very short essays).

About the written part of the exam, the section of open questions (2) will be evaluated only if the students pass the section of the multiple choice questions (1). Otherwise, the written exam is considered not passed.

One can take the oral examination only after having passed the written one. The oral examination (optional) covers the whole program and the final vote is the average of the written and oral part. The oral examination aims to verify student ability in relation to arguments indicated in the bibliography.

Evaluation criteria for both written and oral examination:

- Appropriate use of technical formal language – scientific formal skills
- Logical accuracy in the presentation of topics
- Ability to identify the connections between issues
- Completeness of the illustration of the topics given the limits of time and available pages (written)

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Erasmus students: as already indicated, students can choose between an Italian or an English bibliography; however, the student must arrange a preliminary appointment with the Professor.

The bibliography is the same for both attending and non-attending students.

Bibliography:

1. Ong W. J. (1986), *Oralità e scrittura. Le tecnologie della parola*, Il Mulino, Bologna, only pp. 119; 123-127 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
2. Bachtin M. (1976), *Il problema del testo*, in V. V. Ivanov, J. Kristeva e altri (1977), Michail Bachtin. *Semiotica, teoria della letteratura e marxismo*, Dedalo, Bari, solo pp. 197-207 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);

3. Ghisleni M (2011), *Classici e scienza normale: la sociologia fra continuità e discontinuità*, in 'Quaderni di Teoria sociale', 11, pp. 259-278 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
4. Ghisleni M (1998), *Modernità e secolarizzazione: il problema dell'ordine*, in A. Melucci (a cura di), *Fine della modernità?*, Guerini, Milano, pp. 131-148 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
5. Berthelot J-M (2008), *La costruzione della sociologia*, Il Mulino, Bologna, only Chap. IV, V;
6. Ghisleni M (2000), *Vita quotidiana*, in A. Melucci (a cura di), *Parole chiave. Per un nuovo lessico delle scienze sociali*, Carocci, Roma, pp. 225-232 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
7. Marx K. (2006), *La merce*, in ID., *Il capitale*, Libro primo, Cap. I, Editori Riuniti, Roma, only pp. 23-33 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
8. Simmel G. (1995), *Le metropoli e la vita dello spirito*, Armando Editore, Roma, only Simmel's essay, pp. 33-57;
9. Mills C. W. (1995),* *L'immaginazione sociologica**, Il Saggiatore, Milano, only Chap. IX (Ragione e libertà), pp. 176-186;
10. Baudrillard J. (1976), *La società dei consumi*, Il Mulino, Bologna, Parte seconda, only Chap. I (*La logica sociale del consumo*), Chap. II (*Per una teoria del consumo*), pp. 39-87;
11. Debord G. (2008), *La società dello spettacolo*, Baldini&Castoldi, Milano, only Chap. I (*La separazione compiuta*), Chap. II (*La merce come spettacolo*), pp. 51-74;
12. Lipovetsky G., Serroy J. (2017), *L'estetizzazione del mondo. Vivere nell'era del capitalismo artistico*, Sellerio Editore, Palermo, only pp. 41-54 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website);
13. Bauman Z. (2009), *Capitalismo parassitario*, Laterza, Bari, only Chap. I (*Capitalismo parassitario*), pp. 3-27;
14. Codeluppi V. (2007), *La convergenza tra produzione e consumo*, in 'Sociologia del lavoro', n. 108, fascicolo IV, pp. 11-20 (downloadable from the teacher's e-learning website).

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION
