



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Sociology of Religions

2526-3-E4001N111

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide students with the basic tools for the sociological analysis of religious phenomena, particularly in the forms they take in the contemporary world. Through an understanding of both classical and more recent theories, students will be able to design research projects on the cultural, social, and political roles of religious phenomena.

The following learning objectives will be pursued:

Knowledge and Understanding:

Students will acquire in-depth knowledge of the concepts, theories, and epistemological perspectives necessary for understanding religious phenomena.

Applying Knowledge and Understanding:

The course aims to equip students with the ability to use concepts and theories to understand the dynamics of religious phenomena, the configuration of contemporary notions of the sacred and new spiritualities, interactions with the political dimension, and the role of religion in everyday life.

Making judgements:

Through the preparation of individual or small group reports, the course seeks to promote independent and critical reflection on the state of religious phenomena in Western societies.

Communication Skills:

Through oral presentations, both individual and in small groups, the course aims to develop students' ability to present, argue, and critically discuss the content of selected texts.

Learning Skills:

By continuously engaging with a variety of theoretical approaches to the analysis of religious phenomena and interpreting empirical research data, by the end of the course students will be able to continue their studies in a critical and autonomous manner.

Contents

The program is divided into two parts. The first one will discuss the main sociological theories, from the classics to the more recent ones. The second part will focus on the forms of religious life in contemporary societies, on the forms of the sacred and alternative spiritualities, on the processes of change and adaptation in relation to the dynamics of secularization in a globalized world.

Detailed program

Part one: theoretical questions

Religion as ideology (Marx and the Marxist tradition)

The disenchantment of the world (the Weberian approach)

Religion, the sacred and society (Durkheim and the Durkheimian tradition)

Religiosity and religious forms (Simmel's approach)

The invisible religion and the heretical imperative (Luckmann, Berger and the phenomenological approach)

Religious marketplace and the theory of religious economy.

Part two: transformations of contemporary religious phenomena (case studies and researches)

Secularization and religious pluralism

Religions and public sphere

Forms of religious individualism

Fundamentalisms and alternative spiritualities

Mediatization of religion

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for the course.

Teaching methods

The course consists of 56 hours of instruction, approximately divided as follows:

- 70% traditional lectures (supported by slides and multimedia materials; 16 two-hour in-person classes and 5 two-hour online classes)
 - 30% interactive teaching (exercises, individual or small group presentations and reports).
- The course is taught in Italian.

Assessment methods

The exam consists of a written test lasting 90 minutes, during which students must answer three open-ended questions based on the suggested course materials. Each answer will be graded on a scale from 0 to 11. The final grade will be the sum of the three scores. A total score below 18 will result in a failing grade; a score of 31 or higher will correspond to the highest grade of 30 cum laude. The written test will be evaluated according to the following criteria: level of knowledge of the topic, appropriate use of scientific language, clarity of expression, and argumentative ability.

Students who participate in group work during class may alternatively submit an individual critical review paper on topics and texts agreed upon with the instructor. The paper must be submitted at least five days before the exam date. Specific guidelines for writing the paper will be provided during the course. The criteria for evaluating the paper are: ability to critically analyze texts, appropriate use of scientific language, clarity of exposition, argumentative ability.

No ongoing tests are planned.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

E. Pace, *Introduzione alla sociologia delle religioni*, Roma, Carocci, 2015 (escluso capitolo 5)

J. Casanova, *Oltre la secolarizzazione. Le religioni alla riconquista della sfera pubblica*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2000.

U. Beck, *Il Dio personale*, Roma, Laterza, 2009

R. Marchisio, *La religione nella società degli individui*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2010

F. Garelli, *Gente di poca fede. Il sentimento religioso nell'Italia incerta di Dio*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2020.

Further bibliographical information will be provided during the course.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
