UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Sociology of Communication

2526-3-E2001R005

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide an overview of contemporary communication and media dynamics, particularly emphasizing the influence they have on culture. By studying the functioning of old and new media, the course will allow students to deepen their understanding of the technological, social and cultural underpinnings of the contemporary media ecosystem, and will provide them with tools that will be useful during their work life.
The following educational objectives will therefore be pursued:
Knowledge and understanding
The course aims to develop students' knowledge and understanding of key theories, concepts, and epistemological perspectives relevant to the analysis of communication processes in contemporary society.
Applying knowledge and understanding
Students will be encouraged to critically apply their knowledge to the analysis of different forms and practices of communication, with particular attention to media, language, and the related social and cultural dynamics.
Making judgements
The course seeks to foster independent and critical thinking, both in the engagement with theoretical texts and in the interpretation of concrete communicative phenomena, encouraging a reflective approach to communication practices in their social context.
Communication skills
The course will promote the development of effective oral and written communication skills, enabling students to present sociological content clearly and coherently.
Learning skills
The course encourages a reflective and open attitude toward the diversity of approaches to communication analysis, providing the foundation for the development of autonomous and critically informed learning paths.

Contents

In the first part of the course, we will analyze the main theories of contemporary communication.

In the second part, the focus will be on the changes in the media industry in the new century, aiming to highlight the technological and digital transformations that have profoundly modified this sector.

Detailed program

Culture, technology and media

Communication theory

Digital media: history and social contexts

Paradigms for studying technological innovation

Studying digital media in historical perspective

Models of digital society

The Computer

Internet

Mobile phone

The digitization of analog media

Part Two

Platform strategies

Istitutional changes

Social media intermediaries

Shifting cultural practices

Entertainment sectors

Video games

Celebrities and influencers (nano and micro)

Public shaming

Memes and society

Prerequisites

None

Teaching methods

Lectures, group and individual work.
The course consists of 56 hours, approximately 50% of which will be delivered through traditional teaching methods (lectures with the use of slides, audio, and video) and 50% through interactive teaching methods (exercises, subgroup work, presentation of case studies from which to develop individual and subgroup projects, prepared and discussed during the course).
The lessons will be conducted in person with a maximum of 30 percent conducted remotely.

Assessment methods

Final written exam. The aim of the exam is to asess the comprehension degree of the issues dealt with in the course, the argumentative skills, the clarity of exposition, the accuracy of sociological terminology. he exam will consist of three open-ended questions, one for each book on the syllabus. The duration of the exam is one hour.

Students who have taken part in group work may, upon agreement with the instructor, give a final in-class presentation. Participation in group work entitles students to bring one fewer book and answer one fewer question in the exam. In addition, the presentation will receive a grade that will be averaged with the final exam score. In this case, the remaining two books may be freely chosen from all the texts included in the syllabus, including the optional ones.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

1. Comunello F., Pasquali F. Sorice M. Studiare i media prospettive disciplinari e parole chiave, Carocci (selected chapters:1,2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 20, 28)
2. Balbi, G. Magaudda, P. (2021) I media digitali. La storia, i contesti sociali, le narrazioni, Laterza

one book from the following options:

Benasso, S. Benvenga, L. (2024) Trap! Suoni, segni e soggettività nella scena italiana, Novalogos
Brilli, S. (2024) Youtube freak show. Fama e derisione alle soglie dell'influencer culture, FrancoAngeli
Girolami, A. (2025) Rivoluzione creator. Che cosa fanno, come lo fanno e perché, Il Mulino.
Lolli, A. (2019) La guerra dei meme, Effequ.
Lolli, A (2025) Storia della fama, Effequ
Mosna, L. (2018) Il videogioco Storia, forme, linguaggi, generi, Dino audino editore
Nagle, A. (2018) Contro la vostra realtà, Luiss
Pilla, F. Malgieri, F, Pirola, T. Rao, L. (2025) Videogioco: femminile, plurale, Ledizioni
Ricci, O (2013) Celebrità 2.0. Sociologia delle star nell'epoca dei new media, Meltemi
Ricci, O (2022) L'ultima comunità. I primi vent'anni di Wikipedia, Ledizioni
Ronson, J (2015) I giustizieri della rete. La pubblica umiliazione ai tempi di Internet, Codice
Zurovac, E. (2024) Screenshot society. Come le fotografie dello schermo raccontano il nostro stare online, Franco Angeli

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION