UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Platform Capitalism and Social Networks

2526-2-F8802N067

Learning objectives

The course aims at providing students with theoretical and methodological tools to understand, analyse and work in contemporary societies where digital platforms are not only an organizational model, but a socio-economic model of functioning of contemporary society, an evolution of capitalism. Students will learn theoretical concepts to be applied to practical case studies.

Ability to Apply Knowledge and Understanding: In addition to the analysis of the literature, some examples will be studied in order to understand the contribution of sociology in the study and observation of social networks, social capital, and platforms.

Contents

The module aims at analysing the different theoretical concepts like social networks, social capital, platforms identified in literature and their application to empirical studies. Particular emphasis will be put on the analysis of organisational networks within companies also the ones using the platform organization and within socio-economic local systems. We will be discussing the following concepts: network, (digital) trust, reciprocity, (digital) reputation. Furthermore, we will see how these concepts can be useful to understand the functioning of companies and society more in general

Detailed program

The course is structured into four parts. The first part is aimed at analysing the concept of social capital and its relationship with social networks. Attention will be paid to the theorization of social networks and social capital.

In the second part basic measures of Social Network Analysis (SNA) will be introduced, and students will have the chance to discuss how to apply them to companies (ONA); students will be asked to use a software for social network analysis during lab activities.

In the third part of the course, students will learn deepen the concept of platforms.

The fourth part is tranversal to the prior ones and is aimed at providing students with the necessary skills to realise a case study research (which will contribute to the final evaluation).

The theoretical, methodological and the empirical parts consist of individual and team online assignments: lessons are dedicated to the introduction of the course, the explanation of theoretical aspects and methodological issues, and the presentation of the work to be done online.
The discussion of theoretical issues is further developed through the individual reading of scientific articles and chapters and the elaboration of Power Point slides. The explanation of methodology is preliminary to the empirical work students must carry out both in the field and online, through the development of essays, Power Point presentations, and Word papers.

The final presentation of case studies will be held in class if possibile.
In addition to introducing the course and its organization, the lectures are dedicated to explaining certain theoretical elements, the case study methodology, and presenting the tasks to be performed online.
The explanation of theoretical elements during the lecture is further deepened through independent reading of chapters/scientific articles and the creation of PowerPoint presentations. The explanation of the case study methodology during the lecture is preliminary to the empirical research work that students will conduct in the field and online, through the preparation of working documents, PowerPoint presentations, and the drafting of a Word document. he presentation of case studies takes place in the last two meetings of the course.

For students who are unable to participate in the activities/tasks scheduled in BL mode, a different path is provided (see "Program" and "Assessment").

Prerequisites

No particular skill, besides navigating in iternet and using the moodle platform.

Teaching methods

This course is provided in blended method.
The course is based on different of teaching methods: classes, practices , team work.

Assessment methods

There are two learning assessment paths, Path 1 and Path 2.

Path 1
The final evaluation of the module consists of two intermediate assessments through QUIZZES, each comprising thirty questions; four assessments related to the research project (topic, research design and interview outline, slide preparation, and paper submission); and a company reorganization task applying network analysis. Each

intermediate assessment will be graded on a scale of thirty. The average of the assessments will contribute to the final grade according to a percentage specified in the “Evaluation Criteria” section. The quizzes will account for 20% of the final grade, the organizational restructuring project for 20% of the final grade, and the case study for 60% of the final grade, divided as follows: 30% for research design and script, 10% for slides; 60% for the final report. Students who do not achieve a score of at least 18 in the evaluation tests will be required to retake the test. The test can be retaken a maximum of two times within the specified time limits. Students who do not achieve a score of at least 18/30 in the assessment test will need to retake the test. The test can be retaken up to two times within the established deadlines.

Path 2

For those who do not complete the assignments, there are no intermediate assessments. The exam will consist of an analysis of a business organization using Social Network Analysis, to be submitted via the platform (notifying the instructor at alberta.andreotti@unimib.it) one day before the exam session in which the student intends to take the exam, and a final quiz on the entire program consisting of 60 closed questions and one open question. For more details on how to conduct the business organization analysis, it is necessary to watch the instructor's videos created specifically and uploaded on the course page.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Path 1
text will be integrated with suggestions by the Professor

Concetti base della SNA:
Andreotti, A. (2009) Che cos’è il capitale sociale, Roma, Carocci Introduzione e capitolo 1.
Ramella, F. (2013), "I piccoli mondi della creatività e dell'innovazione", in Sociologia dell'innovazione economica, Il Mulino, Bologna, pp. 119-150.
Scott, J. (1991 - ed. ita 1997) L'analisi delle reti sociali, La Nuova Italia Scientifica, Roma. Limitatamente ai: Cap. 1 (pp. 25-32); Cap. 2 (pp. 33-68); Cap. 4 (pp. 101-122); Cap. 5 (pp. 123-144).

Piattaforme
Gawer, A, Srnicek, N. (2021) "Online platforms: Economic and societal effects", EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service. Esclusi: par. 1.2.2; par. 1.2.3; Cap. 3; Cap. 6; Cap. 7.
Stark, D., Pais, I. (2021) "Algorithmic Management in the Platform Economy", in Economia & lavoro. Rivista di politica sindacale, sociologia e relazioni industriali, 3/2021, 57-80, doi: 10.7384/103627.

Organizational Network Analysis
Burt R. (2005) “Brokerage and Closure, ch. 1, Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, pp. 8-57.
De Toni A.F., Nonino, F. (2009) La misura del capitale sociale organizzativo attraverso le reti informali, in Sviluppo&organizzazione, 3, 37-54
Caimo, A. Lomi A. (2014) Knowledge Sharing in Organizations: A Bayesian Analysis of the Role of Reciprocity and Formal Structure, in Journal of Management Vol. 41 No. 2, February 2015 665– 691. Parti evidenziate in giallo.

Testi per il Path 2

Programma
Andreotti, A. (2009) Che cos’è il capitale sociale, Carocci, Roma. Limitatamente all'Introduzione e al Cap. 1.
Burt, R. (2005) "Brokerage and Closure", Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press. Da p. 1 a p. 38 inclusa.
Caimo, A. Lomi A. (2014) Knowledge Sharing in Organizations: A Bayesian Analysis of the Role of Reciprocity and Formal Structure, in Journal of Management Vol. 41 No. 2, February 2015, pp. 665– 691. Limitatamente alle parti evidenziate in giallo.

De Toni A.F., Nonino, F. (2009) La misura del capitale sociale organizzativo attraverso le reti informali, in Sviluppo&organizzazione, 3, pp. 37-54.
Gawer, A, Srnicek, N. (2021) "Online platforms: Economic and societal effects", EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service. Esclusi: par. 1.2.2; par. 1.2.3; Cap. 3; Cap. 6; Cap. 7.
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Scott, J. (1991 - ed. ita 1997) L'analisi delle reti sociali, La Nuova Italia Scientifica, Roma. Limitatamente ai: Cap. 1 (pp. 25-32); Cap. 2 (pp. 33-68); Cap. 4 (pp. 101-122); Cap. 5 (pp. 123-144).
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Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES