UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Economia e Storia Economica

2526-1-E1805M005

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Understand the fundamental principles of microeconomics, including consumer and firm behavior, market functioning, strategic interaction, and public intervention.
- Acquire knowledge of the historical processes of economic growth and development in Europe and the Western world, with particular attention to the Italian case from the Napoleonic era to the present day.
- Identify and interpret the technological, institutional, organizational, and financial components of long-term economic development.
- Understand the historical evolution of business forms and their adaptation to changing competitive and institutional environments.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Apply microeconomic models and tools to the analysis of real-world economic situations and market structures.
- Analyze historical economic transitions and business dynamics using a comparative and interpretative approach.
- Use historical-economic frameworks to understand the evolution of production systems, institutions, and enterprise models over time.

Making judgements

- Critically evaluate market functioning and the causes of inefficiencies, as well as the role of policy and institutions in shaping economic outcomes.
- Interpret the historical evolution of economies and business organizations, assessing the interplay between economic theory and historical evidence.
- Develop informed perspectives on the long-term drivers of development and industrial transformation.

Communication skills

- Effectively communicate economic reasoning and historical-economic interpretations using appropriate terminology, both in written and oral form.
- Participate in discussions on economic and business history topics, formulating arguments supported by theoretical models and historical data.

Learning skills

- Develop autonomous learning skills in both economic theory and historical inquiry.
- Acquire the ability to combine theoretical tools with historical evidence to analyze complex economic phenomena and long-term transformations.

Contents

The course combines microeconomic analysis with a historical-economic perspective, providing students with theoretical tools to understand consumer, firm, and market behavior, while also exploring the long-term evolution of economic systems and business forms. Through analytical models and historical case studies, the course offers insights into the dynamics of economic development and productive organization, with a particular focus on the Italian and European context.

Detailed program

Microeconomics

- Introduction to microeconomics: individuals, firms, and markets
- Economic models and the role of assumptions
- Demand, supply, and market equilibrium
- Consumer choice: preferences, constraints, utility
- Income and substitution effects, surplus, and welfare
- Elasticity and individual demand curve
- Production and cost theory
- Relationship between production, costs, and returns to scale
- Perfect competition: equilibrium and welfare
- Monopoly and price discrimination
- Oligopoly: strategic models (Cournot, Bertrand, Stackelberg)
- Monopolistic competition and product differentiation
- Strategic interactions and game theory
- Markets with imperfect information: adverse selection and moral hazard
- Welfare economics and market failures
- Externalities and public goods
- Public intervention and regulation
- Innovation and market dynamics

Economic History

- Introduction to the historical-economic analysis method
- Theories on the evolution of economic systems
- Chronology of global economic development (from the 18th century to the 2000s)

- Industrial revolutions and technological transitions
- The role of institutions, finance, and productive organization
- Italian economic development: from the Napoleonic era to the present
- Economic and social transformations in Europe
- Evolution of business forms
- Emergence, diffusion, and adaptation of enterprises across time and space
- Competition, innovation, and business models
- Case studies on firms and industrial sectors
- Interaction between real economy, technology, and institutions

Prerequisites

Matematics

Teaching methods

The course is structured through a combination of lectures, interactive activities, and advanced thematic workshops.
In-person classes, mainly delivered in a traditional lecture format but including structured interactive moments, are complemented by synchronous online sessions during the teaching week to ensure flexibility and continuity in learning.
The course also includes collaborative activities, practical exercises and case analyses, as well as opportunities for discussion and critical debate

Assessment methods

For the Microeconomics module, assessment consists of a written exam worth 70% of the final grade and a group project worth 30%. For the Economic History module, evaluation is based on written assignments prepared, presented, and discussed in class, and a written test composed of both multiple-choice questions (25% of the exam grade) and open-ended questions (75% of the exam grade).

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Microeconomics: Teaching materials prepared by the instructor and the textbook Microeconomics by Katz and Rosen. Economic History: Teaching materials prepared by the instructor and selected readings, including: V. Zamagni, Why Europe Conquered the World, Bologna: Il Mulino (Chapters III, IV, V, VIII, XII, XIII, XIV). For the Italian case: V. Zamagni, From the Periphery to the Center. The Second Economic Renaissance of Italy (1861–1990), Bologna: Il Mulino (selected chapters on the formation of enterprises). Franco Amatori, Andrea Colli, Business History. Complexity and Comparisons, Milan: Pearson (Chapters II, III, V, VI)

Semester

I semester Economic history, II semester Microeconomics

Teaching language

Italian

Sustainable Development Goals

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE