UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Sociologia dell'Innovazione di Impresa

2526-1-F5703R004

Course title

SOCIOLOGY OF BUSINESS INNOVATION

Topics and course structure

Within the complex economic dynamics that characterize contemporary society, scientific and technological knowledge is one of the key factors of competitiveness. In order to fully exploit the possibilities for development, it is necessary that this knowledge does not remain confined to laboratories and research centers, but spreads in the economic and social context, gaining strength and generating innovation. A key factor in the mechanisms of knowledge transfer is represented by human capital, that is, by the presence of professional figures able to operate in the boundary areas between science, economy, and society, addressing the management problems related to the generation, selection, development, and implementation of innovation in organizations.

The course aims to present the most relevant models of innovation and discuss the systemic approach to innovation, with the goal of contributing to the development of specific skills with respect to theoretical models, tools and methods for the management of organizational change, one of the fundamental aspects of the Master's Degree in Training and Development of Human Resources.

Objectives

With the course and a constant and participatory attendance at the lessons, we intend to promote the following learning:

1. promote knowledge and understanding of innovation processes in general terms, in their various

declinations and in relation to the macro-contexts of interest,

2. provide the information and tools necessary to develop the ability to understand and analyze these processes, stimulating the development of autonomous strategies for reading phenomena;

3. make students autonomous in evaluating technological, market, managerial and organizational business innovation processes, start-up and business development projects, interpreting the choices of the actors operating in a territory and the impact of their work on the environmental context
   in particular, students will have to achieve the following objectives:

4. Knowledge and understanding

- Acquire advanced knowledge on the main theoretical approaches and sociological paradigms applied to the study of innovation in organizational and entrepreneurial contexts.
- Understand the social, cultural and economic dynamics that influence innovative processes within companies and production systems.
  Deepen the regulatory, institutional and economic framework that regulates business innovation at a national and international level.

2. Applied knowledge and understanding

- Know how to apply theoretical and methodological tools of sociological research to the analysis of organizational, technological and social innovation processes in businesses.
- Develop the ability to design, monitor and evaluate innovative strategies in the entrepreneurial field.
- Integrate multidisciplinary knowledge (sociology, economics, management, law) to interpret and manage complex phenomena related to innovation.

3. Autonomy of judgment

- Be able to critically analyze the role of innovation in contemporary social and economic transformations.
- Independently evaluate the social and ethical impact of innovative choices adopted by businesses.
- Formulate independent reflections on future scenarios and emerging trends in the field of business innovation.

4. Communication skills

- Communicate clearly and reasonedly the results of analyses, research and projects related to business innovation, using the appropriate technical language.
- Interact effectively in multidisciplinary professional contexts.
- Know how to present reports, technical-scientific documents and reports to different types of interlocutors, both specialists and non-specialists.

5. Learning skills

- Develop independent learning skills to update oneself on innovative theories, tools and practices in the sociological and entrepreneurial fields.
- Be able to integrate knowledge from different fields to face new professional and research challenges.
- Strengthen one's skills to continue any research paths (e.g. doctorate) or to operate as qualified professionals in the sectors of business innovation and consultancy.

Methodologies

The methodologies used during the course will be the following:

- frontal lessons, with the aim of providing students with a common level of knowledge on the main theoretical aspects;
  these lessons will be of teaching nature and will not be less than two hours a week, for a total of 40 hours
- discussion in class on the topics presented in the lectures (slides and articles) or on the content of any interventions by professionals and experts in the sector. These lessons will be interactive with the method of exercises or workshops, for a total of 14 hours in total

Online and offline teaching materials

The books and articles are all available at the University Library, in paper or digital form.

Programme and references

In the Academic Year 2025/26, there will be no distinction between attending and non-attending students.

Required text:
Mura G., Aleotti F., Diamantini D., 2022, Il manuale della sostenibilità per le imprese, Mondadori Università.

Students must then select 4 texts of their choice from the following:

1. Porter M.E., (1998), “Clusters and the new economics of competition”, Harvard Business Review, p. 77-89, Nov-Dec.

2. Monaci, M. (2012). L'innovazione sostenibile d'impresa come integrazione di responsabilità e opportunità sociali, Studi organizzativi, 2, 26-61.

3. De Marchi, V., Di Maria, E., & Spraul, K. (2018). Collaborazioni università-impresa: i risultati sul fronte dell’eco-innovazione. ECONOMIA E SOCIETÀ REGIONALE, 62-72.

4. Narula, S., Puppala, H., Kumar, A., Frederico, G. F., Dwivedy, M., Prakash, S., & Talwar, V. (2021). Applicability of industry 4.0 technologies in the adoption of global reporting initiative standards for achieving sustainability. Journal of Cleaner Production, 305, 127-141.

5. Reis, J. S. D. M., Espuny, M., Nunhes, T. V., Sampaio, N. A. D. S., Isaksson, R., Campos, F. C. D., & Oliveira, O. J. D. (2021). Striding towards Sustainability: A Framework to Overcome Challenges and Explore Opportunities through Industry 4.0. Sustainability, 13(9), 5232.

6. Easter, S., Ceulemans, K., & Lynn, M. L. (2021). Moving Beyond Sisyphus: Pursuing Sustainable Development in a Business-as-Usual World. Business & Society, 00076503211015914.

7. Agudelo, M. A. L., Jóhannsdóttir, L., & Davídsdóttir, B. (2019). A literature review of the history and evolution of corporate social responsibility. International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility, 4(1), 1-23.

8. Poussing, N. (2019). Does corporate social responsibility encourage sustainable innovation adoption? Empirical evidence from Luxembourg. Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, 26(3), 681-689.

9. Khan, H.U.R., Ali, M., Olya, H. G., Zulqarnain, M., & Khan, Z. R. (2018). Transformational leadership, corporate social responsibility, organizational innovation, and organizational performance: Symmetrical and asymmetrical analytical approaches. Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, 25(6), 1270-1283.

10. Zhou C, Etzkowitz H. Triple Helix Twins: A Framework for Achieving Innovation and UN Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainability. 2021; 13(12):6535.

11. Lamine, W., Mian, S., Fayolle, A. et al. Technology business incubation mechanisms and sustainable regional development. J Technol Transf 43, 1121–1141 (2018).

12. Etzkowitz H. Is Silicon Valley a global model or unique anomaly? Industry and Higher Education. 2019;33(2):83-95. doi:10.1177/0950422218817734

Assessment methods

For the academic year 2025/26, there are no different exam methods for attending and non-attending students.
There will be no ongoing tests.

Type of test: The exam consists of a written test in which the student will be asked to demonstrate the acquisition of the knowledge discussed during the course and present in the bibliography, through open questions.
The exam lasts two hours and the student will have to answer four questions chosen from six proposals.

The choice of the written test as an exam method is consistent with the objectives of the teaching as it allows for the standardized assessment, in addition to knowledge, of learning skills in terms of autonomous re-elaboration of what has been studied as well as communication skills in the form of structured writing.

Evaluation Criteria: The evaluation of the result of the paper is based on the mastery of the concepts and issues relating to the sociological approach to innovation covered during the course and in the texts of the bibliography, on the ability to argue the different paradigms and perspectives, supported by an appropriate use of sociological vocabulary.

Office hours

On appointment.

Write an email to the professor: davide.diamantini@unimib.it

Programme validity

2 academic years

Course tutors and assistants

Dott.ssa Monica Mereghetti: monica.mereghetti@unimib.it

Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS