



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Sociological Theory and Social Change

2526-1-E4002N001

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#### Learning objectives

##### Knowledge and Understanding

The course introduces students to the classical authors of sociological thought, their theories, and the main conceptual issues related to social structure, with particular attention to social change and social inequalities.

##### Applying Knowledge and Understanding

By the end of the course, students will be able to apply the fundamental concepts of sociology to the analysis of contemporary social realities and will be able to recognise different forms of sociological research.

##### Making Judgements

The course develops students' critical ability to analyse different sociological theories and perspectives, particularly concerning the dimensions of social structure, social change, and inequalities.

##### Communication Skills

Students will acquire the specialised language necessary to clearly and effectively present sociological theories and concepts.

##### Learning Skills

The course encourages students to further explore sociology on their own, fostering curiosity and critical thinking.

#### Contents

The course provides an introduction to the key classical sociologists and the fundamental concepts of sociological analysis.

It also addresses the central themes of sociological research, illustrating the different theoretical and analytical approaches developed within the discipline and their links with other fields. Finally, the course provides an insight into social inequalities in their many forms.

## Detailed program

The first lessons of the course provide an introduction to sociological thinking in relation to the historical and social conditions that influenced its origin and development.

It also highlights how sociology has been characterised by a plurality of analytical approaches and elements of convergence with related disciplines.

Subsequently, the course explores the contributions of key classical authors to sociological theory, such as Comte, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, Parsons and Merton. Particular focus is given to the various approaches each author took to the topic of social structure, as well as related concepts such as action, reproduction, change, order, institutions, conflict and inequality.

The next part of the course covers some of the key themes in contemporary sociological research, such as organisations, life courses, education, economics and work. Particular attention is paid to social inequalities, analysed in their various forms and explored through dialogue between conceptual dimensions and empirical research. To this end, selected sociological research articles from scientific journals will be examined, illustrating how different research techniques are applied.

## Prerequisites

No prerequisites.

## Teaching methods

Approximately 90% of the 56 hours that make up the course will be delivered using traditional teaching methods, such as slide-based lectures, audio and video. The remaining 10% will be delivered using interactive methods, such as exercises and small-group work. All lessons will be held in person.

## Assessment methods

The written exam consists of open questions on the content covered in the course. The aim is to assess students' ability to develop their thinking based on the concepts learned.

The assessment criteria are:

1. Language skills - Appropriate use of terms.
2. Accuracy in the logical presentation of arguments;
3. Ability to make connections between different topics;
4. Completeness of presentation.

Students enrolled in academic years prior to 2025/26 must contact the instructor at least one week before the exam date to finalise the programme to be covered in the exam. Students are recommended to adopt the programme of the current academic year.

## Textbooks and Reading Materials

Jedlowski P. (2009). Il mondo in questione. Introduzione alla storia del pensiero sociologico. Roma: Carocci.

- Chapters: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11.

Bagnasco A., Barbagli M. e Cavalli A. (2012). Corso di Sociologia. Bologna: Il Mulino.

- Introduction and Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6.

Giancola O. e Salmieri L. (a cura di) (2020). Sociologia delle diseguaglianze. Teorie, metodi e ambiti. Roma: Carocci.

- The complete book is required reading, excluding the Introduction and Chapter 1.

Grande T. e Parini E.G. (a cura di) (2014). Sociologia. Problemi, teorie, intrecci storici. Roma: Carocci.

- Chapter 18 (by Navarini G.)

Santagati M., Ferrari C., Noia E., Cornaggia C. e Medina L. (2023). Donne all'origine della sociologia.: Il contributo alla ricerca empirica in America, in Europa e in Italia. AG About Gender-International Journal of Gender Studies, 12(23), pp. 249-287. Available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.15167/2279-5057/AG2023.12.23.2039>

The student must choose two article from the list provided in class (which is available on e-learning.unimib.it).

## Sustainable Development Goals

REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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