UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Social and Cultural Planning

2526-1-F8702N027

Learning objectives

The course aims to achieve the following learning objectives:

- Acquire the theoretical and conceptual skills necessary for analysing social policies.
- Develop a critical understanding of the actors and logics involved in planning and implementing social policies.
- Analyse real-life cases and innovative policy processes.
- Promote the ability to design and evaluate social policies.

Expected learning outcomes:

DD1: Knowledge and understanding
By the end of the course, students will have acquired an advanced knowledge of the concepts, tools, and models of social planning. They will pay particular attention to social policies, welfare transformations, decision-making processes, and the actors involved. They will be able to critically understand current challenges, such as inequalities, social innovation, territorial fragmentation and governance logics, by integrating theoretical perspectives and empirical cases.
DD2 Applying knowledge and understanding:
Students will be able to apply their knowledge to critically read and interpret social plans, programmes and policies. They will also be able to analyse complex case studies, acquiring skills in the use of analytical tools and the critical understanding of the actors and logics involved in the planning and implementation of social policies.
DD3 – Making judgements
The course will promote the ability to make independent and reasoned judgements on public and social policies. This will involve reflecting on the values implicit in policy choices, existing social divisions, territorial inequalities, and the tensions between the principles of universalism, equity, and market logic. Students will be encouraged to develop a critical and reflective view of professional and institutional practices.
DD4 – Communication skills
Students will develop the ability to communicate effectively, using the specific vocabulary of the discipline and presenting rigorous arguments in their analyses. They will be able to present and discuss cases and policies.

DD5 – Learning Skills
Through a combination of lectures, independent study, group work and practical case studies, students will develop a solid capacity for independent learning. They will learn to critically update their skills by integrating theoretical materials and policy documents, and recognise the value of reflective analysis in social practice.

Contents

The course focuses on the social programming, examining its main theoretical perspectives, models, and conceptual tools with a particular focus on two case studies: the reform of 'Case di comunità' aimed at strengthening the territorial and community health and the historical development of mental health reform process in Italy starting with Law 180/1978. Building on these case studies, the course will explore key theories, models, and conceptual tools in social planning. These include the construction of public problems, theories of the state, the role of the private sector, welfare networks, and the implementation and evaluation of social policies.

Detailed program

The course aims to explore the theme of social programming by analyzing its main theoretical perspectives, conceptual tools, and practical applications through empirical case studies.

The introductory lecture provides the foundations to understand:

- The distinction between social policies, plans, and programs;
- The main models and methods of social programming.

Subsequently, the course is organized into a series of lessons dedicated to deepening the central issues of the social programming cycle, including:

- The construction of the public/social problem: the concept of “public” (Dewey), social fractures and conflicts, agenda setting/building, the role of symbolic agencies, and welfare chauvinism phenomena;
- The main theories on the State and the functioning of the bureaucratic organisations;
- Private sector in social policies (outsourcing, co-design, philanthropy);
- The resources and ambivalences of welfare networks;
- The implementation of policies by social workers and the dynamics of street-level governance;
- The role of space and territory in social policies;
- The processes of reflexivity and policy evaluation.

Case Study Analysis
The theoretical concepts and analytical tools presented in the above lessons will be systematically applied to these two case studies that will be explored during the course:

1. The reform of 'Case della Comunità', currently being implemented, focusing on:

- The strengthening of territorial and community health;
- The reinforcement of primary care;
- The creation of multidisciplinary and intersectoral teamwork;
- Social and health care integration.

2. The mental health reform process, initiated by Law 180/1978 (the “Basaglia” law) which led to the closure of psychiatric hospitals, focusing on:

- Social determinants of mental health;
- Spatial and territorial determinants of mental health;
- The evolution of the mental health field up to the current situation;
- The relationship between mental health and migratory background.

Prerequisites

A good capacity for independent learning and critical analysis, along with an interest in social policies and social inequalities.

Teaching methods

The course consists of 49 hours and includes a mix of lecture-based teaching (29 hours of frontal lectures using slides) and laboratory and interactive teaching activities (20 hours consisting of dialogic discussions between students and the instructor, peer workshops, exercises, guest presentations, and related discussions).

Specifically, the course will be organized as follows:

- 7 lectures of 3 hours and 4 lectures of 2 hours conducted in lecture mode (total 29 hours)
- 6 laboratory and interactive teaching activities of 1 hour and 7 of 2 hours each (total 20 hours)

Discussions during the course and the final assessment can take place in either English or Italian.

Assessment methods

The final assessment will consist of an oral examination based on the study materials presented and made available on the course platform. Positive evaluation will be given to students who demonstrate strong critical analysis skills, an in-depth understanding of the topics, the ability to make connections between the main themes of the course, a solid command of the technical and conceptual vocabulary of the discipline, and the capacity to provide concrete and relevant examples related to the issues discussed.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The professor will collect all the materials covered in the course into a handout that will be made available to students.

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES