



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Communication, Media and Society

2627-3-E4001N097

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#### Aims

Knowledge and understanding

Students will acquire in-depth knowledge of several concepts that are central to understanding the relationship between information and power. They will develop a solid and systematic understanding of the information system, journalistic practices, the ongoing changes in the mass media landscape brought about by the advent of digital media, and the most useful conceptual models for investigating these phenomena.

Applying knowledge and understanding

Students will learn to use the concepts and methods of analysis of media sociology to examine the public construction of social problems, practices of media representation, language as a tool for producing and reproducing reality, and the logics of information dissemination and virality.

Their independent judgment will be strengthened through knowledge of the representational strategies typical of the media and through the analytical skills developed during the course.

Students' communication skills will be enhanced by the many examples of critical textual analysis, in relation to which they will be invited to examine empirical materials independently and discuss them.

Learning skills will be encouraged through the continuous dialogue between theoretical concepts, analytical tools, empirical materials, and examples presented by the instructor or proposed by the students.

#### Contents

The course addresses the most important system of production and distribution of meanings in contemporary societies, namely mass communications, which today go through profound transformations by which precise effects

of power are perpetuated and at the same time transformed.

An interdisciplinary and multilevel approach is preferred in the course, which will range, moving from major scenarios to everyday practices, from historical reconstruction to economic aspects, and from sociological to linguistic investigation.

## **Detailed program**

The course is divided into four parts. The first part adopts an economic and infrastructural perspective, providing a framework for understanding the media apparatus and its political economy. It focuses on the consolidation of an industrial structure of information and its consequences, as well as on the role of advertising and platforms. Particular attention will be paid to changes in the “public sphere” following the rise of digital media, the current situation of information disorder, and the new forms taken by attempts to control information.

The second part adopts an organizational perspective. Elements of the sociology and ethnography of news production, together with more general sociological models, will be used to examine the routines of news production and, consequently, the nature of mediatized reality: that is, the dominant representations through which our perception of the world is formed. To investigate this phenomenon more deeply, the analysis will be broadened to include the other agencies, institutions, and actors that interact with the news media, as well as the logics governing their relationships.

The third part adopts a semiotic perspective, investigating the forms of journalistic storytelling, the various media languages and their remediation, and those of newsfluencers. The concept of news and its structure will be examined, along with its different types according to the publics to which it is addressed, the changes brought about by the transition to digital media, and those to be expected with the advent of AI.

The fourth part adopts a ritual perspective, focusing in particular on the media’s capacity to negotiate the public definition of problems and shared values. The analysis is broadened to the role of news media in the construction of social problems, considering phenomena such as agenda-setting, moral panic, and media hype.

## **Prerequisites**

None

## **Teaching form**

The lessons will be held in presence, in Italian. Teaching is assisted by slides and audio/video materials to synthesize concepts and analyze with the class concrete examples and case studies taken from everyday news. 48 hours will be devoted to lecture-based teaching, and 8 hours to interactive teaching.

## **Textbook and teaching resource**

The text to be studied is the reader “Informazione e potere. Sistema, processi, linguaggi, rituali”, available on the e-

learning page and at the "copisteria Fronteretro" in Viale Sarca 191 since the start of the lessons. .

## **Semester**

Second semester

## **Assessment method**

Some coursework by students may be evaluated during the term.

The final exam is written. In the first part, multiple-choice questions will test the understanding of the various topics of the program. In the second part, two open questions that ask students to write a short essay will be used to assess the ability to develop an argument, illustrate it in a clear and precise way, provide examples, and establish connections with relevant concepts.

The student - and the Professor - will have the possibility to ask for an oral exam in order to receive another assessment of her/his preparation, provided that she/he has received a passing grade in the written exam.

## **Office hours**

Students can refer to the webpage of the course on the e-learning platform..

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

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