



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Le Organizzazioni Complesse

2627-3-E1601N078

Learning objectives

Knowledge and Understanding

By the end of the course, students will have acquired the fundamental knowledge required to understand and analyze mafias as complex organizations. They will be familiar with the organizational forms adopted by the main Italian mafia organizations, in particular the 'Ndrangheta, Cosa Nostra, and the Camorra, as well as their evolution over time. They will also understand the mechanisms of coordination, recruitment and socialization, and the relationships these organizations establish with their social and economic environment.

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

Students will be able to use the theoretical and methodological knowledge acquired during the course to analyze mafia organizations through the main analytical categories of organizational sociology. They will be able to identify their structural characteristics, internal dynamics, and capacity to adapt to external environments. Students will also be able to apply these conceptual tools to the interpretation of empirical cases and to the critical examination of judicial documents, institutional reports, and other sources relevant to the study of mafia organizations.

Making Judgements

By the end of the course, students will be able to critically evaluate different types of sources, including judicial documents and institutional reports, recognizing their strengths and limitations for the analysis of mafia organizations. They will also be able to formulate independent judgements based on empirical evidence and to compare and critically discuss alternative interpretations of mafia phenomena.

Communication Skills

Through project work activities and classroom discussions, students will acquire mastery of the specialized language used in the study of mafia organizations and develop the ability to discuss these organizations in a clear, rigorous, and effective manner, using the appropriate terminology and analytical categories of the discipline.

Learning Skills

Students will develop the ability to independently deepen their understanding of mafia organizations by identifying, critically analyzing, and interpreting judicial sources, scientific literature, and other relevant materials, while

autonomously applying the conceptual tools acquired during the course.

Contents

The course examines mafias as complex organizations through the application of concepts and analytical tools drawn from organizational sociology. The course is structured in three parts focusing respectively on the internal functioning of mafia organizations, their relationships with the external environment, and the empirical application of the conceptual tools acquired through a project work based on the analysis of judicial documents.

Detailed program

The first part of the course is focused on the analysis of the internal functioning of mafia organizations through an organizational and comparative perspective. In particular, the course examines organizational structures, the relationship between organization and the use of violence, internal rules, mechanisms of coordination and control, communication processes, recruitment issues, and initiation rituals.

The second part explores the relationship between mafia organizations and their external environment. Particular attention is devoted to the extra-legal services provided by mafias, the role of external networks, communication strategies directed toward civil society, and the processes through which mafia organizations expand and become embedded in non-traditional territorial contexts.

The third part consists of a project work activity in which students, working in groups, are required to apply the conceptual tools acquired during the course to the analysis of mafia organizations. Through the examination of judicial documents, students will reconstruct the organizational structures, economic activities, patterns of violence, and external relational networks of the organizations under study, thereby developing methodological skills relevant to the empirical study of complex organizations.

Prerequisites

None

Teaching methods

The course is taught in Italian and includes lectures, case study analysis, and group work, for a total of 56 hours, distributed as follows:

- 60% lecture-based teaching activities (DE)
- 40% interactive teaching activities (DI)

All teaching activities, both lecture-based and interactive, are conducted exclusively in person.

Assessment methods

No mid-term assessments are scheduled. Student learning will be assessed through a written examination consisting of four open-ended questions based on the course textbook. Each question is worth between 0 and 7.5 points, for a maximum total of 30 points.

The examination is designed to assess students' learning outcomes according to the following criteria:

- knowledge of the main theoretical concepts and empirical aspects relating to mafia organizations;
- ability to establish connections between the different topics;
- clarity of exposition and logical coherence in the organization of arguments;
- mastery of the specialized terminology of the discipline.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Catino, M. (2020), *Le organizzazioni mafiose. La mano visibile dell'impresa criminale*, il Mulino, Bologna (da studiare integralmente).

Erasmus students who do not understand Italian can consult the English-language version of the textbook: Catino M. (2019), *Mafia Organizations: The Visible Hand of Criminal Enterprise*, Cambridge University Press.

Sustainable Development Goals

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
