UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Pedagogy of Work

2627-2-F5703R020

Course title

Ecologies, systems and work. Pedagogical issues

Topics and course structure

Work is a complex phenomenon situated at the core of social, political and economical interests, crossed by a plurality of individual and collective meanings as well as invested by conflictual expectations such as economic growth and social justice.
Among these issues, sustainability plays a leading role, as highlighted by Agenda 2030, and the first part of the course will trace its origins in relation to different work cultures. Pedagogical knowledge, interdisciplinary at its core, will be particularly useful to explore different dimensions of the phenomenon and converge reflections on the subjectification processes triggered by learning contexts connected to these drivers. The itinerary will be structured on different levels of analysis conceived as deeply interconnected.
At the macro level the focus will be on the role of national and international actors (OECD; EU; UNESCO; WORLD BANK, IMF) in developing policies connected to sustainable development.
At the meso level we will identify institutions, as well as public and private agencies, committed to activate interventions as well as learning and cultural processes connected to the working sphere (from universities to CPIA, from charities to recruiting agencies). Regarding sustainability issues, a particular attention will be dedicated to highlight systemic fragilities and capacities and the role of social protections like active employment policies. At the meso level we will also explore the role of companies and public sector in promoting a fertile dialogue within society (e.g. corporate social responsibility) and in managing inclusion and diversity issues. A series of interesting entrepreneurship activities strictly linked to sustainability dimensions will be proposed along with the analysis of their relationship with external contexts as well as their effects on internal organizational learning processes.
Finally, at the micro level, we will thematize the different individual ways of experiencing working contexts. In particular we will thematize issues related to competence development, professional transitions, the relationship between work and social justice and emerging interactions with AI in workplaces.
This second part of the course will be hence dedicated to understand the different actors reciprocal ways of

positioning as well as their potential contributions to sustainability processes.
The course aims to explore an ecological perspective on issues related to work, understood as a complex set of relationships connecting different dimensions (individual trajectories of subjectivation, internal balances within organizations, the relationship between heterogeneous socio-economic and environmental systems, etc.) through different theoretical perspectives and a pedagogical thematization.

Objectives

The course aims to achieve the following learning objectives and expected learning outcomes.

Knowledge and understanding, with particular reference to:

- knowledge of the main theoretical assumptions that have shaped, over time, different perspectives on the relationship between work and ecological issues;
- the ability to understand and critically deconstruct the historical, cultural, and disciplinary premises underpinning different approaches to conceptualizing and discussing the relationship between work and sustainability;
- knowledge of the role and underlying assumptions of the various social actors engaged in fostering learning processes aimed at promoting the sustainability of work.

Applied knowledge and understanding, with particular reference to:

- the ability to identify the roles attributed to education and training within the contemporary debate on the relationship between work and sustainability;
- the ability to identify and critically apply existing ideas, theories, and practices concerning the nexus between education, learning, and work, while developing a reflective and informed position in relation to them;
- the ability to critically examine the key concepts currently shaping human resource selection and management (e.g., competence, employability, flexibility, lifelong learning) in relation to sustainability-related concerns;
- the ability to identify a distinctive professional profile that can be situated across the different levels of analysis addressed in the course and that enhances one's professional identity in light of the emerging role of organizations in responding to the current ecological crisis.

The course also seeks to foster the following transferable skills:

Independent judgment: the ability to develop, articulate, and substantiate an informed perspective on the issues addressed in the course, and to position oneself critically in relation to the topics discussed.

Communication skills: the ability to present situations, case studies, critical issues, and opportunities for intervention within the broad contemporary debate on work using appropriate, technically informed, precise, and well-structured academic language.

Learning to learn: an openness to engaging with the questions and challenges raised throughout the course, with a view to both theoretical inquiry and professional development.

Methodologies

From a methodological point of view, the course favours active methodologies - such as group work and case studies - through which experiences presented by guests and students themselves will be analysed and discussed, drawing inspiration from the principles of community of practice, open teaching and the flipped classroom. In this sense, students in the classroom are required to participate actively and critically in order to recognise, in the analysis of concrete cases, the theoretical assumptions and operational models used in management and coordination actions, linking theory to practice. Teaching encourages simulation activities and the application of knowledge in professional contexts.
As a guideline, all training activities included in the 56 hours are carried out in person.
Lectures will be held as indicated by the rector's and government decrees; approximately 50% of the hours will be delivered as teaching and 50% as interactive teaching (group work, simulations, meetings with experts, exercises, design, case studies).
All activities are usually carried out in person, but at the same time, a careful selection of classroom teaching is video-recorded and made available to non-attending students to support their study activities.
Teaching is delivered in Italian, but the professor is available to support students speaking in English and French.

Online and offline teaching materials

- Presentations
- Lectures notes;
- Case studies;
- Other didactic materials presented during the lessons.

Programme and references

The course will address issues related to work in an ecological perspective, with a main focus on sustainability, unfolding the historical, cultural and socio-economic dimensions through the distinctive interdisciplinary perspective of pedagogical science. Specifically the focus will be on assumptions, cultural backgrounds and intentions of a plurality of actors involved, nationally and internationally, in developing the relationship between learning aspects, working issues and sustainability through policies or professional practices.
Coherently with the professional profile that the Degree aims to develop, the ability to master cultural aspects and operative dimensions connected to the relationship work-sustainability is carried out is consider a special resource for a professional that will operate as HR specialists in changing and unstable contexts.

Bibliography

Alessandrini G. (a cura di) (2017). Atlante di pedagogia del lavoro. Franco Angeli: Milano**Solo i capitoli 1, 3, 4 e 7 della Prima parte

Ferrante A., Gambacorti-Passerini M.B., Galimberti A. (2022). Ecologie della formazione. Inclusione, disagio, lavoro. FrancoAngeli: Milano (in particolare la terza parte).

One text among the following:

Imperatore P., Leonardi E. (2023). L'era della giustizia climatica. Napoli: Ortothes

Zannini L., Daniele K. (2025). La tutoship nella formazione sul campo. Milano: Guerini.

Galimberti A., Muschitiello A. (a cura di) (2022).Pedagogia e lavoro: le sfide tecnologiche. Fano: Aras Edizioni.

Biesta G. (2023) Oltre l'apprendimento. Un'educazione democratica per umanità future: Milano: Franco Angeli.

Romeo S. (2026). Pedagogia del lavoro. Precariato, incertezza, educazione informale. Roma: Carocci.

Assessment methods

The exam will consist of an oral test and will last approximately 20-40 minutes depending on the progress of the dialogue itself; there will be no intermediate tests.
The choice of an oral interview as the exam method is consistent with the objectives of the course, as it allows for interaction with the student through dialogue, in order to assess their critical understanding of the course topics, their pedagogical analysis, and their ability to connect theory and practice.
The oral exam will assess:

- understanding of the content covered during the course and present in the bibliography;
- critical and reflective thinking skills in relation to the subjects explored;
- the ability to analyze, understand, and interpret problems in workplaces, using independent judgment and positioning oneself in relation to the theories discussed in the course and/or present in the bibliography;
- the ability to make meaningful connections with the content of other courses and with one's own personal and/or professional experiences.

Assessment will be graded on a 30-point scale, according to the following grading criteria:

Not sufficient
Insufficient knowledge of the main topics covered in the course syllabus and required readings; very limited and insufficiently independent skills in argumentation, analysis, and critical thinking; inadequate ability to relate theory to practice and to establish relevant connections between the assigned readings and the course topics; inaccurate academic communication and inappropriate use of discipline-specific terminology.

Satisfactory (18–23/30)
General knowledge of the course content, with uncertainty or gaps in several topics covered in the syllabus and required readings; argumentation, analytical, and critical thinking skills that are at times limited and insufficiently independent; difficulties in relating theory to practice and in identifying relevant connections between the assigned readings and the course topics; partially accurate academic communication and only partial command of discipline-specific terminology.

Good (24–27/30)
Adequate knowledge of the main topics covered in the course syllabus and required readings, although some more specific issues are not addressed in sufficient depth; satisfactory skills in argumentation, analysis, and critical thinking, though not always precise or fully independent; good ability to relate theory to practice and to establish relevant connections between the assigned readings and the course topics; generally accurate academic communication and appropriate use of discipline-specific terminology.

Very Good – Excellent (28–30/30 with Honours)
Comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of the topics covered in the course syllabus and required readings; well-developed and independent skills in argumentation, analysis, and critical thinking; very good to excellent ability to relate theory to practice and to establish relevant connections between the assigned readings and the course topics; very good to excellent communication skills and full command of discipline-specific terminology.

Office hours

Please write to andrea.galimberti1@unimib.it

Programme validity

Two academic years

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH