



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale

2627-1-E1503N006

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

Contemporary social reality is subject to continuous transformation, with particularly rapid changes observed in recent decades -especially within the tourism sector, influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic and international conflicts. Sociology, as a scientific discipline, seeks to deconstruct the taken-for-granted nature of everyday social life and to analyse and interpret the processes through which it evolves.

The overall aim of the course is to provide students with a solid foundation of conceptual and methodological tools necessary to analyse and interpret contemporary social phenomena and their transformations. Methodological skills will also be reinforced through guided practical exercises. These competences are fundamental in training professionals working in the tourism sector and within organisations operating in local communities.

Applying knowledge and understanding

The specific objective of the course is to equip students with the skills required to navigate the field of empirical social research, enabling them to critically and consciously identify problems and develop suitable methodological approaches for intervention within diverse organisational settings and local contexts.

Judgement Autonomy – Communication Skills – Learning Skills

The course aims to strengthen the students' ability to interpret complex phenomena, to critically evaluate methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks, and to formulate reasoned and evidence-based judgments. This is achieved through the critical analysis of research case studies, structured discussions with invited experts, and individual exercises.

Furthermore, the course enhances communication skills through group presentations, written assignments, and the use of academic discussion forums.

Finally, the course fosters strong autonomous and continuous learning abilities thanks to its progressive modular structure, active learning methodology ("learning by doing"), supplementary materials, and tutoring support..

Contents

The course is organized on five foundational issues developed in four units:

1. the concepts and the technical tools through which students can understand and interpret social reality;
2. introduction to social research;
3. quantitative and qualitative social research;
4. participatory and collaborative research;
5. gender sensitive research.

Detailed program

The course aims to provide students with an expertise of sociological concepts, a knowledge of the main paradigms and methods of sociological research. Specific attention is dedicated to tourism; indeed, the course offers conceptual and methodological tools for the knowledge of the sociological dimensions underlying the tourist demand.

It starts from a theoretical and general study of central issues, categories and tools of Sociology, after it continues analyzing some specific problems and research fields of Sociology: tourism and local communities.

With regard to tourism, in particular, gender differences will be addressed in the design, implementation and evaluation of tourism experiences. With reference to local communities, specific attention will be dedicated to strategies to involve the inhabitants in specific research activities aimed at enhancing their needs and their points of view. These issues will be discussed, also with external experts, with students both during the traditional lessons in the classroom and through individual and group exercises.

Module 1 – Concepts and tools for interpreting contemporary society

What is the sociological imagination and with what concepts is the social world described

Culture, media and communication

Power and politics

Markets and work organisation: what is the impact of globalisation?

Social stratification, inequality and poverty

Migrations

Gender and sexuality

Families and family life

Religion

Crime, deviance and social control

Module 2 - Social research

Common Sense vs. Scientific research

Quantitative research and qualitative research

Research design

Research phases

Ethics of/in research

Module 3 – The implementation of social research

Choice of topic (relevance)

Literature review

Conceptualization

Selection of analysis unit, sampling, contact method, number of data collection

Quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques

Module 4 - Social research and the impact on society

Analysis of quantitative data and qualitative empirical material

Writing the research report

Dissemination and Communication

Impact on society

Prerequisites

Basic educational skills in logic, social culture, and reasonable ability in learning, writing and communication.

Teaching methods

The course consists of 56 hours and will take place according to the following structure:

23 2-hour lessons carried out in presence mode in the initial part which is aimed at involving students in an interactive way in the subsequent part.;

1 2-hour problem solving exercise carried out individually (with the support of the teacher and tutor) in person;

4 2-hour exercise activities carried out in interactive mode in person.

Assessment methods

Attendance at the course includes the evaluation of the following activities:

- a problem solving exercise (individual open-ended essay) at the end of module 1. This exercise will contribute 30% of the final grade.
- A practical activity (group work starting from a paper in English to be discussed collectively) which will contribute 30% of the final grade.
- The remaining 40% of the grade will be awarded through the final exam. This test will be oral and will consist of the answer to an open question on the texts of program no. 1, focusing on modules 2 to 4.

Evaluation criteria:

Written examination

- Relevancy of the answer towards the subject of question;
- Ability to grasp the essential elements of the proposed issue;
- Ability to present the proposed issue in a coherent and consequential manner;
- Completeness of the elements that constitute the answer;
- Spelling and syntactic accuracy.

Oral examination

- Knowledge related to the topics analyzed in the bibliography and discussed in classroom;
- Ability to expose the proposed issue in an orderly and complete manner;
- Understanding and appropriate use of specific concepts relating to complex sociological phenomena;
- Ability of critical thinking and reflection.

Each intermediate and final exam will receive a mark:

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Program no. 1:

1. J. Manza, R. Arum, L. Haney (a cura di M. Santoro, 2025), Progetto Sociologia. Guida all'immaginazione sociologica (Capp. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12 e 16), Torino, Pearson;
2. Fasanella A., Mauceri M., Nobile S. (2024), Metodologia della ricerca sociale: approcci, strategie e tecniche di indagine (Capp. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 e 24), Milano, FrancoAngeli Open Access Platform: <https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa/catalog/series/inferenze>
3. Decataldo A., Russo C. (2022), Metodologia e tecniche partecipative. La ricerca sociologica nel tempo della complessità (Capp. 1, 3 e 5), Torino, Pearson.
Further papers and the reference website will be indicated during the teaching activities to carry out practical activities in small groups.

Program no. 2:

1. J. Manza, R. Arum, L. Haney (a cura di M. Santoro, 2025), Progetto Sociologia. Guida all'immaginazione sociologica (tutti i capitoli), Torino, Pearson;
2. Fasanella A., Mauceri M., Nobile S. (2024), Metodologia della ricerca sociale: approcci, strategie e tecniche di indagine (tutti i capitoli), Milano, FrancoAngeli Open Access Platform: <https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa/catalog/series/inferenze>
3. Decataldo A., Russo C. (2022), Metodologia e tecniche partecipative. La ricerca sociologica nel tempo della complessità (tutti i capitoli), Torino, Pearson.

Erasmus students may ask for an alternative bibliography in English language.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES
