



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Lavoro, Salute e Benessere

2627-2-E1602N019

Learning objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Understand the concept of job quality and its main dimensions, with particular reference to changes in the contemporary world of work and their implications for health and well-being.
- Explain the main theoretical perspectives in the sociology of work, the sociology of health, and work and organisational psychology that address the relationships between work, health, and well-being.
- Describe the main theoretical models of organisational well-being, psychosocial risks, and the social determinants of health and well-being.
- Understand the main policies and organisational strategies aimed at protecting workers' health and promoting well-being in the workplace.

Applying Knowledge and Understanding

- Critically analyse working conditions and assess their effects on the health and well-being of individuals, organisations, and communities.
- Apply sociological and psychosocial theories to examine the relationships between work organisation, health, and well-being.
- Analyse empirical evidence and case studies on job quality, organisational well-being, and workplace health and well-being policies.
- Critically evaluate organisational interventions and public policies aimed at preventing occupational risks and promoting health and well-being at work.

Making Judgements

Students will develop the ability to make informed and independent judgements on issues related to work, health, and well-being by critically interpreting empirical evidence, scientific literature, and public policies. They will also be able to assess the social implications of changes in work organisation, with particular attention to inequalities,

vulnerability, and social exclusion.

Communication Skills

Students will be able to communicate and discuss issues related to work, health, and well-being using appropriate academic and professional terminology. They will also be able to present and critically discuss empirical evidence, research findings, and case studies in a clear, coherent, and well-structured manner.

Learning Skills

The course will foster independent and lifelong learning by providing students with the conceptual and methodological tools needed to critically engage with current research on work, health, and well-being. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to use scientific literature, research reports, and empirical evidence to deepen their understanding of the topics covered and to critically assess developments in working conditions, workplace health and well-being policies, and organisational practices.

Contents

The course examines the relationships between work, health, and well-being from a sociological and interdisciplinary perspective. It explores how changes in labour markets, work organisation, technological innovation, and demographic trends affect working conditions and shape workers' health and well-being.

A central focus of the course is job quality, considered a key social determinant of health and well-being. The course analyses the organisational, social, and institutional factors that influence working conditions, with particular attention to psychosocial risks, work-related stress, burnout, and workplace well-being.

The course also examines inequalities in access to good-quality work, highlighting the role of gender, age, employment status, and socio-economic conditions. Particular attention is devoted to organisational practices, industrial relations, and public policies aimed at improving job quality and promoting health and well-being at work.

Throughout the course, theoretical perspectives are combined with the analysis of empirical research, official statistics, and case studies, enabling students to critically assess contemporary developments in work, health, and well-being.

Detailed program

1. Work, Health and Well-being: Concepts and Perspectives

Work as a social institution: economic, social, and cultural dimensions.

Health and well-being in the social sciences.

Work as a social determinant of health and well-being.

From health as the absence of disease to well-being as capability and quality of life.

2. Contemporary Transformations of Work

Work from the perspective of the sociology of work.

From Fordism to post-Fordism.

Digitalisation, automation, digital labour platforms, and the gig economy.

New forms of employment, labour market flexibility, and job insecurity.

Workforce ageing and demographic change.

The impact of changes in work and employment on health and well-being.

3. Job Quality as a Determinant of Health and Well-being

The multidimensional concept of job quality.

Dimensions of job quality: job security, autonomy, participation, skills development, work-life balance, and social relations at work.

Indicators and measures of job quality.

International comparative surveys on working conditions and job quality (Eurofound, ILO, OECD, EU-OSHA).

4. Theoretical Models of Work, Health and Well-being

Job Demand-Control(-Support) model.

Effort-Reward Imbalance model.

Job Demands-Resources model.

Work-related stress, burnout, and psychosocial risks.

Organisational well-being, work engagement, and quality of working life.

Empirical applications of the main theoretical models.

5. Inequalities in Work, Health and Well-being

Inequalities in access to good-quality work.

Gender, age, migration background, and employment conditions.

Labour market vulnerability, job insecurity, and health.

In-work poverty, social exclusion, and well-being.

Empirical evidence and case studies.

6. Policies and Practices for Promoting Health and Well-being at Work

Workplace health promotion and workplace well-being.

Prevention of occupational and psychosocial risks.

Collective bargaining, occupational welfare, and industrial relations.

National and European policies to improve job quality.

Evaluation of policies, organisational interventions, and good practices.

Prerequisites

Students are expected to have a basic understanding of the main economic, social, and organisational processes shaping labour markets and contemporary societies. Familiarity with basic concepts and methods of social research, including the interpretation of social and statistical data, is also recommended.

Students should be able to read academic texts, engage in critical discussion, and communicate effectively in both written and spoken form.

Previous coursework in the sociology of work, economic sociology, or related disciplines may be helpful but is not required.

Teaching methods

The course comprises a total of 56 teaching hours and combines lectures (Didattica Erogativa – DE) with interactive learning activities (Didattica Interattiva – DI).

Teaching activities are organised as follows:

- 40 hours of lectures (approximately 70% of the course), introducing the main concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical evidence on the relationships between work, health, and well-being.
- 16 hours of interactive learning activities (approximately 30% of the course), including guided discussions of case studies, research articles, policy documents, and the analysis and interpretation of empirical data from

national and international sources, including Eurofound, ISTAT, the World Health Organization (WHO), INAIL, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the OECD, and EU-OSHA.

The course is delivered in person and encourages active student participation through guided discussions, case studies, group activities, and the critical analysis of empirical evidence and research findings.

Online teaching may be exceptionally adopted only in the event of major disruptions to rail transport or other unforeseen circumstances that prevent the regular delivery of in-person classes, and in accordance with University regulations.

Assessment methods

Student learning will be assessed through a 100-minute written examination.

The examination consists of:

- Five multiple-choice questions (0–1 mark each), assessing knowledge and understanding of the key concepts, theories, and analytical frameworks covered in the course.
- Three short-answer questions (0–5 marks each), assessing the ability to define key concepts, explain theoretical perspectives, and use appropriate disciplinary terminology.
- One essay question (0–10 marks), assessing the ability to critically analyse issues related to work, health, and well-being, apply theoretical perspectives to empirical evidence and case studies, and develop clear, coherent, and well-argued responses.

Assessment will take into account the accuracy and completeness of the answers, the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to empirical issues, the quality of critical analysis and argumentation, and the appropriate use of scientific and disciplinary terminology.

There are no mid-term assessments.

International and Erasmus students will complete a 100-minute written examination in English consisting of two essay questions. The examination is assessed using the same marking criteria as the Italian-language examination.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The required reading list will be made available at the beginning of the course and published on the course e-learning platform. It will include a selection of books, book chapters, journal articles, and research reports in Italian (and English), chosen to support the topics covered throughout the course.

Upon request, international and Erasmus students will be provided with an alternative reading list in English.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
