



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Fondamenti di Organizzazione

2627-1-E1602N002

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide students with a basic theoretical foundation for analysing organisations from a sociological perspective, with particular attention to their relevance, complexity, and transformation in contemporary societies.

- **Knowledge and understanding:** to develop awareness of the centrality of organisations in contemporary society and to become familiar with the main theoretical approaches for analysing their dynamics and dimensions (structure, environment, power, and culture).
- **Applied knowledge and understanding:** to be able to use different theoretical concepts and approaches to analyse and interpret organisational structures and processes.
- **Making judgements:** to recognise and critically assess the complexity of organisational structures and processes, taking into account the interaction between actors, rules, resources, and constraints.
- **Communication skills:** to clearly and coherently present theoretical concepts and perspectives related to organisational phenomena, using specialist language appropriately.
- **Learning skills:** to develop an autonomous learning method through the study of theoretical approaches, case analysis, and critical reflection on the main paradigms of the discipline.

Contents

During the course, various topics related to the structure and functioning of organizations will be addressed. Organizations are understood as particular social entities, conceived as a process of actions and decisions aimed at pursuing one or more goals. They rely on mechanisms of differentiation and integration, with distinct roles

assigned to participants and a system of authority recognized and accepted by members as the legitimate decision-maker, in dynamic interaction with the external environment. The course will focus, in particular, on the four dimensions of the so-called cloverleaf of organizational complexity: structure, environment, power, and culture.

Detailed program

The program is structured according to the following thematic path. Acknowledging the centrality of organizations in contemporary society, a definition is proposed that synthesizes the main theoretical contributions and approaches of organizational thought. Starting from this framework, the course explores the mechanisms and logics that shape organizational functioning. Particular attention is devoted to four key dimensions: the variety of organizational structures, the influence of the external environment, power dynamics, and the relevance of organizational culture. More specifically, the topics covered will include:

- what organizations are;
- organizational structures;
- the organization-environment relationship;
- power, control, and rules;
- organizational culture;
- decision-making and sensemaking in organizations;
- organizational change, innovation, and learning;
- the dark side of organization.

Prerequisites

None.

Teaching methods

The course is delivered in Italian and includes lectures, practical exercises, and guest talks. The teaching approach is interactive: the presentation of key concepts from the sociology of organizations is complemented by the analysis of empirical cases and/or targeted exercises, aimed at reinforcing the most important concepts. Guest lectures by experts and practitioners will also be organized.

Specifically, the course includes:

- 21 two-hour sessions of traditional teaching (75%);
- 7 two-hour sessions of interactive teaching (25%).

All sessions (both traditional and interactive) are conducted exclusively in person.

Assessment methods

No interim assessments are scheduled. Both attending and non-attending students will be evaluated through a written exam based on the textbook content. The exam consists of 15 multiple-choice questions (1.2 points for

each correct answer) and 2 open-ended questions (up to 6 points each). The multiple-choice questions are designed to assess overall preparation, while the open-ended questions aim to evaluate in depth the students' ability to engage in autonomous reflection on critical aspects of the course.

The assessment has two interrelated objectives: on the one hand, to verify students' knowledge of the course content; on the other, to test their ability to make connections between topics and authors. The evaluation criteria for the written exam, which apply to all students, are as follows:

1. knowledge of the fundamental concepts of organizational sociology;
2. understanding of the thought of classical authors and its impact on the study of organizations;
3. ability to apply theoretical concepts to empirical cases and situations;
4. clarity and logical coherence in the organization of content;
5. ability to draw connections among different topics.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The required textbook for all students, both attending and non-attending, is:

Catino, C., Tirabeni, L. (2023), Fondamenti di organizzazione, il Mulino: Bologna [full textbook].

Lecture slides will be made available on the e-learning platform. These materials are intended to serve as a study guide and must not be regarded as a substitute for the textbook.

Erasmus students who do not understand Italian may agree with the lecturer on an ad hoc syllabus in one of the following languages: English, Spanish, or Portuguese.

Sustainable Development Goals

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
