UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Territory and Social Cohesion

2627-2-E3902N020

Learning objectives

1. Knowledge and Understanding
   The student will acquire foundational knowledge of urban sociology, with particular focus on the urban phenomenon, its historical evolution, and emerging social issues.
   They will understand the fundamental concepts of territorial cohesion and the main factors that influence it.

2.Applying Knowledge and Understanding
The student will be able to apply theoretical concepts and tools to analyze urban and territorial social dynamics.
They will be capable of interpreting complex phenomena related to urban quality of life, residential patterns, deviance, immigration, and poverty.

3. Critical Skills
   The student will develop critical skills in evaluating processes of social and spatial cohesion within urban contexts.
   They will be able to propose independent and well-founded interpretations based on the concepts acquired.

4. Communication Skills
   The student will be able to clearly and coherently present the results of their analyses, both orally and in written form.
   They will be able to work in a group, sharing and synthesizing content effectively.

5. Learning Skills
   The student will develop the ability to independently deepen their understanding of the topics covered in class, including through case study analysis and the reading of academic sources.

Contents

The course is structured into three parts. The first part is dedicated to the theoretical framework of urban sociology, with the aim of understanding the urban phenomenon, its historical evolution, and the possible perspectives of investigation. Particular emphasis will be placed on the close relationship between society and spatiality, seen as inextricably connected factors.
The second part introduces the concepts of territorial cohesion and the two main spatial levels of analysis: neighborhood and territory. This section will then explore the main factors that influence social cohesion, such as housing, deviance, immigration, poverty, quality of life, and the quality of urban public space.
The third part of the course will be dedicated to the preparation of the final project (to be carried out in groups or individually, depending on the total number of students enrolled). The project will be based on a case study selected by the student and located at one of the following scales: territorial system, urban neighborhood, or small municipality. The final goal of the project will be to describe the degree of territorial cohesion.

Detailed program

Students will address the following topics:

Part 1: Introduction to urban sociology; the urban phenomenon; different perspectives for understanding the nature of cities.

Part 2: The concept of territorial cohesion; the concept of neighborhood; the concept of territorial system; the factors that influence territorial cohesion.

Part 3: Group project work on a case study chosen by the students, analyzing the various aspects explored during the course.

Prerequisites

Sufficient educational skills in logic, social culture and reasonable capacities in learning, writing and communication.

Teaching methods

Lecture delivery will be organized as follows:

14 lectures (two per week, one of 2 hours and one of 3 hours) delivered through lecture-based teaching (in-person lectures using slides, audio, and video). Two of these lectures, one of 3 hours and one of 2 hours, will be recorded and delivered asynchronously owing to circumstances that make it impossible to hold them in presence.
9 lectures (two weekly, one 2-hour and one 3-hour) with interactive didactics (group or individual work) in presence.

No remote lectures are scheduled unless unforeseen.

Assessment methods

There are two assessment methods, depending on the learning path chosen by the student. Both paths are consistent with the course's learning objectives. The two final assessment methods are described in detail below:

1. Attending students: oral presentation and submission of a short written report of the project work. The topic of the project will be chosen by the students based on their own interests and must have an analytical approach that incorporates the various concepts studied during the course.
   This assessment path allows for the evaluation of the following competencies: knowledge and understanding, applied knowledge and understanding, independent judgement, communication skills, and learning skills.

2. Non-attending students: written exam based on the mandatory reading list, to be completed on the "esami online" platform. The exam consists of three open-ended questions and has a maximum duration of 1 hour and 30 minutes. Students must answer at least two out of three questions to receive a grade; if only one question is answered, the exam is automatically failed.
   Each question can earn a maximum of 10 points. The total score from the three questions will determine the final grade.
   This assessment path allows for the evaluation of the following competencies: knowledge and understanding, applied knowledge and understanding, and learning skills.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Mandatory bibliography for both participant and not-participant students:

1. Mela, A. (2018), Sociologia delle città, Carocci: Roma (capitoli: 1,2,3,4,5)

2. Nuvolati , G. e D'Ovidio, M. (2022), Temi e metodi per la sociologia del territorio, UTET: Torino (capitoli: "Abitare", "Devianza", "Immigrazione", "Povertà", "Qualità della vita", "Spazio Pubblico").

3. Schiefer, David, and Jolanda van der Noll. 2017. "The Essentials of Social Cohesion: A Literature Review." Social Indicators Research 132(2):579–603. doi: 10.1007/s11205-016-1314-5.

Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES