UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Contemporary Social Theory

2627-1-F8804N031

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide students with the necessary tools to understand the concepts used in contemporary social theory; develop the ability to recognize the different interpretative views and modes of analysis elaborated by it; refine skills in the application of theoretical models to the analysis of social phenomena and processes.

Knowledge and Understanding: Students will acquire advanced knowledge and skills on major contemporary social theories.
Applying knowledge and understanding: The course aims to provide students with the ability to use concepts and theories to understand and analyze the dynamics of contemporary social processes.
Making judgements: through the writing of individual or small group papers, the course aims to promote autonomous and critical reflection with respect to theoretical interpretations in the sociological and political fields.
Communication skills: through both individual and small group oral presentations in the classroom, the course aims to foster students' ability to expound, argue and critically discuss the contents of selected texts.
Learning skills: the adoption, during the course, of a critical approach that is open to the plurality of theories and the epistemologies that support them will enable students, at the end of the lectures, to pursue their study independently and consciously.

Contents

The course is divided into two parts. The first part provides an overview of the main approaches in contemporary social and political theory. The second part deals with some of the key themes that have characterised the debate in the social sciences: the individual-society relationship, the analysis of forms of power, interpretations of contemporary modernity and social change, globalisation and processes of individualisation.

Detailed program

Part one
Society and social theory
Everyday life, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology
Dramaturgical approach and order of interaction
Structuralism and poststructuralism
The cultural and interpretative turn
Contemporary critical theory

Part two
Self, everyday life, new individualism
Interpreting contemporary modernity

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of the main classical social and political theories

Teaching methods

The course consists of 56 hours of instruction, approximately divided as follows:

- 70% traditional lectures (supported by slides and multimedia materials)
- 30% interactive teaching (exercises, individual or small group presentations and reports).
  The course is taught in Italian.

Assessment methods

The learning assessment method consists of a 90-minute written test, during which students will have to answer three open questions, based on the contents of the suggested teaching material. The aim of the test is to bring out the student's ability to understand concepts and theories, the ability to compare different interpretative visions and the ability to reflect independently. Each answer will be given a score from 0 to 11. The final grade will be calculated by adding the scores of the three answers. A sum lower than 18 will result in an insufficient result for the test; a sum equal to or higher than 31 will correspond to the maximum grade of 30 cum laude. The criteria for evaluating the written test are: the level of knowledge of the topic, the appropriate use of scientific language, clarity of exposition and argumentative ability.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Recommended text for the first part of the course
Baert P. Carreira Da Silva F. (2010), La teoria sociale contemporanea Bologna: il Mulino.

As an aleternative to the manual:

Elliott A. (2022, 3rd ed.) Contemporary Social Theory; an introduction Abingdon: Routledge

Further bibliographical information will be provided during the course.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | REDUCED INEQUALITIES