# Sociology of Education

## Prof. Maddalena Colombo

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with the key tools to carry out a sociological reading of social phenomena and processes, with a focus on school and education. In particular, students who wish to work as teachers in kindergartens and primary schools will be invited to analyse the reality of childhood and educational services using the following interpretative tools: the so-called *agire di ruolo* (the behaviour expected from a person with a specific role in the society), the functional and dysfunctional dynamics at the basis of the school system, and the relationships between the agents of socialisation.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. understand the role played by individuals in their system of social relations, and the socio-cultural and economic background of the contemporary society, characterised by different cultural and educational trends;
2. make full use of current sociological approaches to analyse the relationships between school institutions, families, and the different agents of socialisation on the territory;
3. observe and interpret childhood as a social category, and make a distinction between the role played by adults and peers in the definition of their respective cultures and in mutual interactions.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The following aspects will be addressed during the course:

1 SEM

– *sociology as a scientific discipline*: the main approaches in the study of society, in the interpretation of the individual-society relationship and of socialisation: functionalism; the currents of conflict; the communication turn, and symbolic interactionism;

– the *education-society relationship*;

– the *main topics for reflection relating to the sociology of childhood* *education*:

* socialisation changes in the ways, time, and places: educational polycentrism
* the construction of personal and social identity
* equality of opportunity in education
* multimedia and multiculturalism

– *Social research methods in childhood sociology*: macrosociological and microsociological methods; actors and processes to be investigated in field research: teachers, students, parents, and the youth world.

* the theory of interpretive reproduction by W.A. Corsaro,
* how the *childhood condition* changes and how *socio-educational contexts* adapt: socio-demographic changes in the USA and in Europe, family problems; family and childhood policies; preteens and digital culture,
* the cultures of children and preteens (peer cultures and infant agency); agencies of socialisation: family, early childhood services, school, TV, web, and social media.

*Single-subject theme: Teachers in Italy*: role, social prestige, gender issues and ageing; professional resources.

***READING LIST***

For the final exam, students will have to study the following textbooks:

1. E. Besozzi, *Educazione e società,* Carocci, Rome, 2nd edition 2017.
2. W. A. Corsaro, *Sociologia dell’infanzia,* FrancoAngeli, Milan, 2020.
3. M. Colombo, *Gli insegnanti in Italia. Radiografia di una professione*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2017.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures based on didactic units. The teaching material will be made available on Blackboard. Some of the lectures may be held by national and international experts. In addition, students will be invited to attend sociology seminars focused on relevant topics and other initiatives organised at the Faculty. Students who participate in the seminars will be able to opt for a different single subject tetbook specified from time to time by the teacher, at no. 3 of the list.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Written and oral examination (consisting of an interim test and a final exam). The interim test is written with open-ended questions, in compliance with the health prevention regulations in force at the time of the exam session, and is focused on the general parts of the course and on the contents of the 1st semester.

The final test (oral exam) will be focused on the study of children’s conditions and socio-educational contexts; students will be asked to make a distinction between different types of sociological approach, and use argumentation to answer open-ended questions based on interpretation of data, trends, and social problems. With regard to the single-subject part of the course, students will be asked some oral questions on textbook number 3. The final assessment will take account of the results obtained in the parts of the exam; use of appropriate lexis during the presentatiokn (in every test) will be highly appreciated.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board*.*