## **Sociology of Family**

## Prof. Diego Mesa

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

The course aims to provide students with a general understanding of the current condition of families in light of the demographic, social and cultural changes that have characterised Italian society in recent decades.

Specifically, the course aims are:

1. provide awareness of the methods of sociological work;
2. delve into changes in the family in relation to changes in society;
3. develop an understanding of the family as an institution and as a complex and multidimensional system of relationships;
4. develop an articulated understanding of the relationship between the family and educational services.

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

Identify the different factors (socio-economic, cultural, and relational) that characterise families and contribute to the definition of their modus vivendi.

Recognise the specific characteristics and basic issues of the training courses of young couples and families with minors aged 0-3 years.

Describe the basic social research methodologies and tools used for the study of the family and the relationships between family and other socialisation contexts.

Define the different family forms and associated social phenomena using specialist lexicon.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Part 1: Family transformation in contemporary society

The family from a sociological perspective: definitional issues, interpretative approaches, and long-term changes. The family as a group and as an institution. Paternal and maternal identity in contemporary family. Couple relationships, power, conflict. Transformation of welfare systems to support families. Families and early childhood education services. Media and technologies in educational relations. The impact of Covid-19 on family pathways.

Part 2: Do research in family contexts

Standard and non-standard approaches to the study of families. The main methods and tools for social research (studies; use of social indicators; experiments; observation; life stories; case studies; analysis of secondary sources) and their application to the study of family contexts and relationships between family and other agencies of socialisation.

Part 3 Single-subject: Young people between the family of origin and the chosen family

The transitions of young people from the family of origin to the family of choice.

A specific approach to the analysis of intergenerational relationships: the M/M model; the deinstitutionalisation of transition paths to adult life; the formation of a new family as a *life marker*; family relationships, reflective styles, and fundamental cares. The impact of Covid-19 on work and family life projects.

***READING LIST***

Part 1

P. Di Nicola, *Famiglia sostantivo plurale. Nuovi orizzonti e vecchi problemi*, FrancoAngeli, Milan, 2017.

M. L. Bosoni - D. Bramanti – L. Boccacin, *Famiglia, infanzia e servizi educativi. Partecipazione, reti e alleanze,* Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2021.

Part 2

E. Besozzi - M. Colombo, *Metodologia della ricerca sociale nei contesti socio-educativi,* Guerini, Milan, 2014 (chs. 1, 2, 3 from pg. 15 to pg. 196; par. 4.2 on the family from pg. 209 to pg. 230).

Part 3

D. Mesa - *Giovani tra famiglia d’origine e famiglia d’elezione,* course pack with a theoretical part and practical exercises on single-variant statistical analysis published on the Blackboard platform.

The slides are also a fundamental part of the course; the course will also be supplemented with thematic insights. Slides and any further information will be available on Blackboard.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Classroom lectures, group and individual activities in the classroom and online (analysis of texts and audio-video documents, short presentations and analysis of statistical data, discussion forums on specific topics). Information on how to participate in sociology seminars promoted by the university research centers will also be provided.

Attending students have the opportunity to participate in small-group practical exercises on the use of the interview and the questionnaire;

The materials used will be made available *online* through the *Blackboard* platform (<http://Blackboard.unicatt.it>).

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam is oral. Students can divide it into two parts with an interim written test (optional) which will take place during the January-February 2023 break. In this case, the final assessment will account for 50% of the outcome of the interim test and 50% of the outcome of the final oral interview. The interim exam, structured with multiple choice questions and open-ended questions, will focus on the topics covered in the first semester. It will be possible to register via the Blackboard platform.

The assessment will be based on the following criteria: knowledge of the concepts, theories and methodology of social research, the ability to recognise the different types of variables and to interpret statistical matrices and tables, the understanding of the main issues taken into consideration from sociological studies on the family, mastery of the sociological lexicon.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Prerequisites for the course is a basic knowledge of the fundamental concepts of sociology.

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.