# 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 functioning of the school system and the relationships between educational institutions, families and other socialisation agencies in the area;
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:

– *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 and school-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 as innovation factors

– *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.

* *Teoria della riproduzione interpretativa* by W.A. Corsaro regarding childhood and children condition in society:
* Socio-constructivist models of socialisation;
* The “demographic winter” and the transformation of the family in the USA and Europe; family problems; family and childhood policies; *care* processes and prevention;
* the cultures of children and pre-adolescents (peer cultures and child agency) between family, school, TV, web, and social media. Sharing, conflict, and symbolic reappropriation.

*Single-subject theme: The school system in Italy, the pandemic emergency and the hypotheses of change.* How the school system works and what role teachers have in the processes of inequality and innovation.How teachers and early childhood educators reacted to the cultural trauma caused by the lockdown and what adaptations to the training system are expected for the post-pandemic.

***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. one choice between:

* M. Colombo, M. Romito, M. Vaira & M. Visentin (Eds.), *Education & Emergency in Italy.How the education system reacted to the first wave of Covid-19*, Brill, Leiden, 2022 (only pages 1-53; 77-99), or:
* G. Argentin, *Nostra scuola quotidiana. Il cambiamento necessario*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2021.

***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 one of the textbooks indicated in no. 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.

The written interim test will be assessed with the same criteria as the entire exam: grammatical and syntactic correctness; ability to summarise in the presentation of the required topics, appropriate use of the subject-specific terminology; coverage of 60% of the required topics and compliance with the contents set out in the mandatory text.

***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*.*