# Sociology

## Prof. Giovanna Mascheroni; Prof. Emma Garavaglia

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

The course aims to provide students with the fundamentals of sociological knowledge.

The course is divided into one module of forty hours (fall term) and a twenty hours workshop (spring term). The first module is focused on ten essential issues which enhance the students’ ability to look at the world through a sociological lens. Students will learn how to ask sociological questions, in order to understand who is doing what with whom under what circumstances and with what consequences, i.e. to make sense of what is happening around us. The workshop explores the same key social issues, from an economic sociology perspective, paying specific attention to the impact of digital technologies on social and economic processes.

*Intended Learning Outcomes (knowledge and understanding)*

As a result of the course the students will be able to understand the main sociological theories and concepts.

*Intended Learning Outcomes (applying knowledge and understanding)*

Students will also manage to apply their knowledge to the critical evluation of key contemporary issues such as social interaction, social stratification and inequalities, diversity, globalization, migration, power, etc.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The issues are:

First Module

1. The sociological imagination: how to avoid taking everything for granted. Learning from classical theorists.

2 From individuals to societies: cultures, groups, organisations, institutions.

3. Social interaction: how we develop a sense of *self*, and make sense of *others* and *our* worlds?

4. Social stratification and inequalities: do all people have equal opportunities to succeed in life?

5. Diversity as a social resource: gender, ethnicity, religion etc.

6. Globalisation: drivers, benefits and drawbacks, for whom and where?

7. Power and politics: who has power, where, how, and over whom? How do social movements and political forms of (local and global) resistance emerge?

8. Cities and communities: how are cities changing?

9. Migration: Who is moving where and why? How do migrants settle in new cities (between integration and interaction)?

10. Sustainability: How does the quality of the environment affect social life? Which are the main issues that a sustainable development model arises on the side of production chains and on the side of consumption practices?

Second Module

1. Sharing economy: How do Internet-based applications affect economic relations? Does a new mode of accumulation, based on sharing resources, work? and how? Which are the conflicting aspects of sharing economy?

2. Platform capitalism and surveillance capitalism: How do digital platforms and the new data systems change the economic system? How do producer-consumer reciprocities change?

3. Platform society: How do digital platforms affect institutions and social practices? What role do digital platforms play in the transformation of cities? What role do digital platforms play in the organization of public values?

4. Digital economy, digital labour and precarious work: How have labour markets changed in the digital economy? Why and how has job instability become so diffused? What does contingent employment means for various groups of workers (from creative workers to low-skilled ones)? How can we address the risks that come with precarious work?

5. How to resist and thrive: how can the pitfalls of the digital economy be questioned? Which forms of resistance do we have? Which opportunities does the digital economy give us to respond to the challenge of sustainability? How can we face the risk of growing social inequalities related to the digital divide?

***READING LIST[[1]](#footnote-1)***

First Module:

A. Giddens-P.W. Sutton, *Essential Concepts in Sociology,* 2nd Edition, Polity Press, 2017 [*Acquista da VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/scheda-libro/giddens-sutton/essential-concepts-in-sociology-9781509516674-550778.html)  (Theme 1 Thinking Sociologically – Globalization, Modernity, Postmodernity, Society, Structure/Agency; Theme 2 Doing Sociology – Ideal Type, Qualitative/quantitative Methods, Reflexivity, Social Constructionism; Theme 3 Environment and Urbanism – Migration, Urbanism; Theme 4 Structures of Society – Bureaucracy, Capitalism, Consumerism, Religion; Theme 5 Unequal Life Chances – Gender, Race and Ethinicty; Theme 7 Interaction and Communication – Culture, Identity, Interaction, Public Sphere; Theme 8 Health Illness and the Body – Stigma; Theme 9 Crime and Social Control – Anomie, Deviance, Labelling; Theme 10 Political Sociology – Conflict, Democracy, Nation State, Power, Social Movement).

A. Giddens-P.W. Sutton (2010), *Introductory Readings,* 3rd Edition, Polity Press (Readings 1, 2, 5, 14, 15, 16, 19, 27, 31, 34, 51). [*Acquista da VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/scheda-libro/giddens/sociology-introductory-readings-9780745648842-683983.html)

M. Savage et al., *A new model of social class?* Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey experiment. Sociology, 2017, 47 (2). pp. 219-250. Available from: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/49654/

Second Module:

N. Srnicek (2017), *Platform Capitalism,* Polity Press.

D. Arcidiacono-A. Gandini-I Pais (2018), *Sharing what? The ‘sharing economy’ in the sociological debate,* The Sociological Reviw Monographs, 66(2), pp. 275-288*,* Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0038026118758529>

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course is based on lectures, and students-led seminars (group presentations).

Group assignments will be planned as part of the final evaluation.

In case the evolution of Covid-19 pandemic does not allow teaching in presence, online lectures and distance learning will be guaranteed. Channels and modalities will be communicated in due time to all students.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Attending students: two written tests (one for each module): 70%; three group assignments and class discussions: 30%. More specifically, in the written text attending students will be required to answer to 5 open question on the topics of module I (40% of the final evaluation); and to 3 open questions on the topics of module II (30% of the final evaluation). The assessment of the test is based on the number of answers, the ability to use the correct terminology, the reference to the appropriate concepts and theories, the identification of critical issues, the clarity and soundness of the argumentation. Students will also be involved in 3 groups presentations: two in the first term (20% of the final evaluation) and one in the second term (10% of the final evaluation). For the group presentations, students are expected to read the recommended reading list, find additional resources on the given topic and apply the theories and readings to the analysis of case studies. The presentations will be assessed considering the originality of the work, the ability to refer to theories and concepts, the use of the correct terminology, the quality of the presentation.

Non-attending students will give a final exam in which they will have to answer to 10 questions on the topics of module I (60% of the overall evaluation) and 7 questions on the topics of module II (40% of the overall evaluation).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites.

*In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.*

*Place and time of consultation hours*

Prof. G. Mascheroni: Monday, 16,30 – 18,00, Department of Communication and Performing Arts, via Sant’Agnese 2, 4th floor.

Prof. Emma Garavaglia: Tuesday, 10,30 – 12,00, Department of Sociology, L.go Gemelli 1, 3rd floor.

1. I testi indicati nella bibliografia sono acquistabili presso le librerie di Ateneo; è possibile acquistarli anche presso altri rivenditori. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)