# Sociology of Inequality and Difference

## Prof. Maddalena Colombo

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

Starting from a sociological perspective, the course aims to place the analysis of disability and marginalisation within the framework of wider processes of social inequalities and situations of material and relational impoverishment. Attention will be directed, on the one hand, to areas of inequality production (education, work, health and welfare) and, on the other hand, to processes of exclusion and segregation that affect the most fragile people.

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

1. understand and correctly interpret the multiple and sudden social and cultural transformations, which require constant adjustments when caring for people with disabilities or who are marginalised;
2. use the results of empirical research carried out in the sociological field for the design of adequate interventions;
3. contextualise the analysis of target category needs in relation to the exclusion processes that concern them.

***COURSE CONTENT***

1. *Conceptualisations and paths of analysis*

– Inequalities, diversity, differences: the processes of social differentiation and theoretical approaches in sociology.

– Social inequalities with respect to: work, education, access to welfare and health.

* Ethnic inequalities.
* Descending social mobility: vulnerability, marginality, disaffiliation, impoverishment. Social classes and poverty in Italy.
* Sociological paradigms for interpreting disability and the multidimensional model.
* Social identity and stigma (against marginalised or disabled subjects).

2. *The treatment of diversity: total institutions and segregation*

– Segregation and institutionalisation: what are the differences?

* Research into the segregation of people (with a focus on the prison world).
* Urban safety and marginalization as a “social risk”

***READING LIST***

For point 1:

L. Zanfrini, *Sociologia delle differenze e delle disuguaglianze,* Zanichelli, Bologna, 2011 (solely: Part 1 (all), Part 2 (Ethnicity) (pp. 117-138), Part 3 chapters 1 (Education) (pp. 157-178), 2 (Work) (pp. 179-196), 6 (Welfare) (pp. 257-276).

G. Giarelli, *Modelli esplicativi delle disuguaglianze di salute: una riflessione sociologica,* in “Salute e Società”, a. VIII, no. 1, 2009, pp. 19-30 (saggio fornito su Bb).

A. Pretto, *Disability is part of the human condition,* in Id., *Prigionieri di una diagnosi. Punti di vista sulla disabilità*, Libreria Universitaria.it, Padua, 2016 (only chapter 1, pp. 19-34) (essay available on Blackboard platform).

L. Battilocchi, *Traiettorie di impoverimento: oltre l’esperienza migratoria,* in M. Colombo (ed.), *Immigrazione e contesti locali*. Annuario CIRMiB 2017, Vita e Pensiero, Milan*,* 2017, pp. 53-65 (essay available on Blackboard platform).

For point 2):

G. Gilardoni, *Razzismo situato. Ragioni storiche, culturali ed etiche per contrastarlo,* Vita e Pnesiero, Milano, 2021.

S. Padovano, *La sicurezza urbana: da concetto equivoco a inganno,* Meltemi, Milano, 2021.

P. Rizzi – M. Magnaschi (edited by), *La* *città in controluce. Volti, legami, storie di povertà a Piacenza*, Educatt, Milano, 2017.

(Upon agreement with the lecturer, students can prepare for the exam studying a different text not included in this reading list).

An in-depth reading list will be provided during the course, with notices on Blackboard.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course is structured in teaching units, with study materials that will be made available online on the Blackboard platform. The slides, together with the compulsory essays, will form an integral part of the exam materials. During the course, critical readings, seminars and open lectures may be organised.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Assessment consists of an oral exam on the points 1 and 2 of the syllabus. Students are required to argue about causes and consequences of social inequalities covered during the course, either referring to the authors and theoretical concepts or making practical examples.

The assessment is aimed at evaluating the skills in linking opinion and the ability of critical content analysis by means of provided material.

Assessment of acquired skills will be based on: correct use of domain-specific terminology; analytical and descriptive skills for the analysis of key concepts; the interpretative maturity level of the social processes studied during the course, also demonstrating a correct use of sources and data.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Attendance to the course requires some background knowledge of sociological fundamentals, in relation to the main concepts (society, group, organisation, roles, system, stratification, inequality, integration, etc.).

Students who have not taken preliminary sociology exams are advised to use a basic Sociology manual to understand these concepts.

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.

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.