# Sociology of Collective Phenomena

## Prof. Cristina Pasqualini

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

The course on the Sociology of collective phenomena aims to offer students

1. An in-depth study, from a sociological and interdisciplinary perspective, of two key issues of our times: fraternity and ecological transition. These two issues, at the top of the sociological agenda, guide the action of new social movements, mainly youth movements, and generate new forms of collective life, at national and international level.
2. The opportunity to read and interpret the most significant current social transformations, identifying the main collective social actors which are involved through: a. the sociological perspective of the main news in the media; b. in-depth study of theoretical and empirical (qualitative and quantitative) sociological literature written during recent decades.
3. Direct exposure – also through (individual or group) experience of sociological research in the field – to the numerous collective social actors involved in social change processes, such as movements and the new collective forms, both national and international.
4. The opportunity to be aware of – through the literature, secondary sources, field research, presentations by the actors, walking ethnography - the main collective forms which reshape the geography of our society locally and globally according to a new humanism, inspired by the principles of fraternity and ecological transition.
5. The chance to contribute individually and as member of a group to knowledge on a specific collective phenomenon, innovative and/or niche, on which there are no available specific theoretical reflections and empirical studies.

***Intended learning outcomes***

*Knowledge and understanding*

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

1. Master sociological and interdisciplinary literature on the themes of fraternity and ecological transition.
2. Use the main sociological theories and empirical research data to understand and analyse society and its transformations, starting from its actors.
3. Be aware of the social collective phenomena which are reshaping our society locally and globally, which draw attention to the quality of social relationships and to the quality of relationships between society and the environment.
4. Select – inside one’s toolbox – the most appropriate theories and research methods for the study of social transformations and of its main colective social actors.

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*

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

1. Describe contemporary society and its main transformations using sociological interpretative categories.
2. Recognise and describe the characteristics of the main collective phenomena of our times – movements and new community forms – which increasingly move online, at national and international level.
3. Conduct a case study on a collective phenomenon which has not been studied to date at empirical level by sociologists, hence contributing originally and significantly to state-of-the-art.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into two sections:

1. Part One (1st semester): *Social movements and new youth collective action models: the toolbox*

The first part of the course provides “basic” knowledge for the analysis of complex collective phenomena, that is social movements and new forms of collective life which in the past – particularly thanks to the youth – have contributed to generate social change. In recent years, fraternity and ecological transition are at the origin of new collective phenomena, involving the youth and Internet, which deserve to be studied with sociological tools.

The course will specifically focus on:

1. Sociological column: every week, students will provide a sociological perspective illustrating social change and the role of collective actors.
2. The sociological definition of the addressed phenomena – through sociological and interdisciplinary literature – with work and in-depth study in small groups: ecological transition, fraternity, social movements, crowds, communities, youth participation, social networks, etc.
3. Analysis – by reading the literature and available empirical research (qualitative and quantitative) – of the main social movements of the past, both national and international.
4. Analysis – by reading the literature and available empirical research (qualitative and quantitative)– of the main new social movements and new communities, in which the new generations are especially involved, locally and globally, which network thanks to Internet. Examples include: Fridays For Future; Extinction Rebellion; Giovani per la Pace; Movimento Laudato Si’; Comunità Laudato Sì, Comunità giovanili, Comunità di famiglie, Famiglie missionarie Km0, etc.

Parte Two (2nd semester): *Listening to social movements and to the new youth communities:* *classroom research*

In Part Two, students will continue to monitor the news through the weekly sociological column. The issues covered during the first semester will be developed and will be studied more in-depth by reading the sociological literature, enhancing students’ interests and knowlege.

Furthermore, students will undertake three specific activities:

1. meeting key real-world informants and specialists in the aforementioned new social phenomena, who will take part during lectures;
2. walking ethnography sessions in selected places in the city of Milan, which host community experiences and where the studied movements organise themselves/demonstrate;
3. classroom empirical research, carried out in small groups using qualitative social research techniques, in which a particularly interesting and topical social movement will be studied, at national and international level. All the steps of the research will be carried out by the students together with the lecturer; from the design of tools for the collection of information in the field, to the analysis of results, to the communication of results. Moreover, it is participatory research, whereby the studied movement is involved during the various steps of the survey. On the Teams platform students will find a special collaborative workspace, and they will have access to a chat on WhatsApp in which they can comunicate between themselves and with the lecturer on issues concerning the research.

 ***READING LIST***

*Students may choose between two programme options (A e B) . The first (A) is for attending students; the second (B) is for non-attending students.*

Students following programme A will have to study the following material:

Bignardi P., Introini F., Pasqualini C. (a cura di), Oasi di fraternità. Nuove forme di vita comune giovanile, Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2021.

Specific teaching material and further reading will be communicated, and when possible made available, by the lecturer during the course on the Blackboard platform, in the section “Materiali”.

Students following programme B will have to study the following material:

Bignardi P., Introini F., Pasqualini C. (a cura di), Oasi di fraternità. Nuove forme di vita comune giovanile, Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2021.

Neveu E., I movimenti sociali, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2001.

Morin E., Cambiamo strada. Le 15 lezioni del Coronavirus, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2020.

Morin E., La fraternità, perché? Resistere alla crudeltà del mondo, Ave, Rome, 2000.

One of the following:

Morin E., Kern A.B., Terra-Patria, Raffaello Cortina, Milan, 1994.

Tumberg G., Nessuno è troppo piccolo per fare la differenza, Mondadori, Milan, 2019.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Different teaching methods will be used during the course, some more traditional and others more innovative: besides frontal lessons by the lecturer there will be interactive moments of reflection and discussion between the lecturer and students, seminar activities and small group work, meetings with specialists, empirical research activities in the field and field trips. Specifically:

In Part One (1st semester): the weekly sociological column, frontal lectures by the lecturer and lessons in which students give presentations on specific themes in front of the class. To this purpose, at the beginning of the course the students, organised in small groups (each group formed by 3/4 students), will receive assigned reading – available on Blackboard – on which students will be expected to carry out a presentation by preparing a powerpoint, according to a previously agreed and communicated schedule.

In Part Two (2nd semester): the weekly sociological column, frontal lectures by the lecturer, lessons with specialists and key real-world informants on the studied collective phenomena, field trips in selected places in the city of Milan, which host community experiences. Moreover, a common research topic will be assigned on which the entire class, divided into groups of 2/3 students, will have to conduct case studies, whose results will be shared with the class and edited in a written report.

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 and consequently exams may be organised differently.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

With reference to programme (A):

*The overall final mark will be the arithmetic average of the marks of the three tests – oral exam, group exercise and group written report – to which from 0 to 4 points, obtained in the various activities offered by the lecturer, are added.*

*1. Oral exam*: The oral exam will be on the volume “Oasi di fraternità”, which is in the reading list, and on all the readings presented and discussed in class (available on the Blackboard) and on course notes. The exam consists in three questions. The subject matter of the first question, which will be on theoretical aspects, will be the volume “Oasi di fraternità”. The second question will be on an empirical case study examined in class. The third question will concern the written group report. The questions will be assessed separately with a mark ranging between 0 and 10 and the final result of the oral exam will be the sum of the marks obtained answering the three questions, hence the final mark will be out of 30. The oral exam can be taken on official call dates (appelli).

1. The *Oral group exercise* consists in the case study conducted by the students, organised in small groups of 3/4 persons, who, on the basis of the material assigned by the lecturer, will produce a powerpoint presentation, which will be presented and discussed in class with the lecturer and fellow students. The presentation will be marked out of thirty, with a maximum mark of 30/30. The assessment criteria for the presentation will be the following: a. proficiency in the use of the lexicon of the discipline and technical vocabulary (20%); b. thoroughness in the identification of the themes contained in the reading material provided by the lecturer (30%); ability to work in a group and to organise one’s work (20%); output quality (effective communication, conceptual organisation) (30%).
2. *The group written* exercise consists in writing a group report (approximately 40,000 characters including spaces) on the research topic assigned to the class, whose final draft will have to be submittted by the date communicated by the lecturer during lessons. The report will be discussed during the oral exam, will be marked out of thirty, with a maximum mark of 30/30. The assessment criteria for the report will be the following: a. proficiency in the use of the lexicon of the discipline and technical vocabulary (20%); b. thoroughness in addressing the theme (30%); c. methodological competence in using sources and materials (30%); d. report writing skills (20%).
3. *Other activities*: the lecturer may allocate a maximum of 4 marks for specific activities (sociological column, seminars with specialists, walking ethnography sessions) which involve students’ participation.

*With reference to programme (B):*

Students will take an oral exam on the material indicated in the reading list (programme B). The exam will consist in a question on each volume included in the programme’s reading list, for a total of 5 questions. The questions will be assessed separately with a mark ranging between 0 and 6 and the final result of the oral exam will be the sum of the marks obtained answering the questions, hence the final mark will be out of 30. The lecturer may give an extra mark to students for proficiency shown in the use of the lexicon of the discipline.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Programme updates, activity schedule, material and other documents will be communicated on the course Blackboard platform, which will also be the tool to communicate changes of times, information on exams, possible changes in the programme, etc.. All students are invited to register on the course Blackboard page and to keep up to date.

For students following programme A: should sound and acceptable reasons arise which prevent students from attending the course, they must discuss them promptly with the lecturer.

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.