Sociology of Communication (with Workshop on Fashion Ethnographies)

Prof. Emanuela Mora

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

The course aims to provide students with the fundamental notions to understand what the main *practices of communicative interaction* between people consist of. It also aims to explain how they form the *basic material* companies are made of. To this purpose, the course presents contributions of some of the sociology classics. The last part of the course will provide some of the theoretical and methodological approaches to conduct empirical analysis of communicative interaction practices.

At the end of the course, students are expected to have acquired the *vocabulary* and *the conceptual apparatus* - developed by the authors studied in the course – used nowadays to critically analyse the phenomena of communicative social interaction. Students are also expected to combine this knowledge with the ability to apply at least one of the *methodological tools* studied in the last part of the course to carry out a simple empirical analysis of social phenomena of cultural production.

***COURSE CONTENT***

1. Communication and everyday life, actors and meanings.

2. Communicative interactions build society.

– Simmel: sociability and reciprocity as foundations of society.

– Mead: from ‘conversation of gestures’ to communication to act.

– Tomasello: the orientation towards cooperation at the origin of communication

– Goffman: representing the self in the world and being recognisable.

– Habermas: communicating for mutual understanding.

– Bourdieu: the practical power of speeches.

3. Methodological approaches to study social communicative interactions.

– The culture circuit. Learning from the example of Sony Walkman.

– The approach to practices. Learning from the example of Nordic Walking.

***READING LIST***

Material uploaded on Blackboard by the lecturer.

P. Berger - T. Luckmann, *La realtà come costruzione sociale*, Il Mulino, Bologna, edition of student’s choice

E. Mora, *Comunicazione e riflessività*, pdf uploaded on BB

*Further recommended reading, at students’ choice, to prepare for the exam:*

G. Simmel, *La socievolezza,* Armando Editore, Rome, 1997

G. Simmel, *Le metropoli e la vita dello spirito*, Armando Editore, Rome, 1995.

[Attention: for those who choose to read Simmel, the two texts proposed are not alternatives; both must be read]

E. Goffman, *La vita quotidiana come rappresentazione,* Il Mulino, Bologna 1969.

P. Bourdieu, *Il dominio maschile,* Feltrinelli, Milan 1998.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures, reading of classical texts, practical activities, and discussions based on empirical data.

The teaching method may be based on interactive distance learning and/or pre-recorded lectures.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final mark is a weighted average of the marks obtained for the course Sociology of Communication (6 ECTS) and for the workshop Fashion Ethnographies (3 ECTS). In order to take the Sociology of Communication exam, students must have successfully passed the tests of the workshop Fashion Ethnographies. The exam of Sociology of Communication is oral and assesses students on the theoretical and practical content studied during the course. Students may opt to take a practical group exercise. Dates for the practical exercise will be provided during the course. If the group exercise is awarded a mark between 28 and 30 with honours, students will be awarded 2 points to be added on to the mark of the oral exam. If the group exercise is awarded a mark between 24 and 27, students will be awarded 1 point to be added on to their mark of the oral exam. Lower marks will not result in any increase of students’ mark. Students who have carried out the group exercise, will be first asked about it and they will have the opportunity to explain and comment on their work.

Please note that the increase in points awarded to the group exercise will be applied only to students who have completed the group exercise and will take the exam by the exam session of February 2022, the first one available after the end of the course.

In order to take the Sociology of Communication exam, students must have successfully passed the tests of Fashion Ethnographies workshop.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching and assessment 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.

*Workshop: Fashion Ethnographies*

Prof. Eleonora Noia

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

The workshop aims to introduce students to cultural studies on fashion and to illustrate how fashion changed from an object of class distinction to an expressive and communicative form. In particular, in light of the increasing importance acquired by fashion in the late-capitalist consumer society, the workshop aims to offer a vision of the fashion sector and its close relationship with the world of communication.

At the end of the course, students will have to demonstrate to be able to decode fashion phenomena, with particular reference to communication forms; they will be able to summarise and explain some key themes that recur in *fashion studies*; they will understand the social and cultural role of fashion in the creation of individual and collective identities; they will identify and apply different methodological approaches to fashion studies, in particular to traditional and digital ethnography.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is organised around some basic issues that pertain to sociology of communication and fashion:

1. Fashion as a language between individual and collective identities;

2. The relationship between fashion and advertising;

3. The relationship between fashion and media (traditional, digital and social);

4. The digital evolution and its impact in the communication sector for fashion;

5. Digital ethnography as a tool for analysing cultural trends in the fashion system.

Each issue will be presented both through the contribution of fashion theorists and that of designers and stylists. Reference to the evolution of the modern fashion system will be made in the examples, highlighting the variable of geography of fashion: from Parisian haute couture to Italian prêt à porter; from English to Japanese fashion etc.

***READING LIST***

A digital course pack will be available on the Blackboard page of Sociology of Communication course. At the beginning of the course a reference textbook used for the workshop will be communicated to students.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The workshop lasts 20 hours and alternates theoretical and in-depth lectures on the most urgent issues in the study of fashion sociology. There will be guest speakers and meetings with experts in the sector.

In presenting the topics the workshop will make extensive use of illustrated, iconographic and audio-visual material.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Assessment method for knowledge and skills consists of a brief group work concerning the study of the relationship between fashion and communication. Working students who cannot attend the workshop should promptly contact the workshop lecturer and explain the reasons for their absence and agree on an alternative programme. In this case, students will be assessed through an individual paper.

The final evaluation will take into account usage and correct application of concepts and theories typical of the sociology of fashion; students’ ability to apply these theories and methodologies to empirical research; the ability to articulate and structure their point of view; correct syntax and vocabulary (correct syntax, clear presentation, appropriate language, etc.); students’ personal elaboration of the material (argumentative and coherent structuring of the discourse, ability to identify conceptual links and unsolved issues, use of examples etc.).

The evaluation is out of thirty.

It will be possible to take the Sociology of Communication exam only after passing the workshop final test.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites to attend the course. However, a minimum knowledge of sociological terminology is expected. To this purpose, students are advised to consult a Dictionary of Sociology.

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

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