**Theory of Communication and the Media**

Prof. Fausto Colombo; Prof. Simone Carlo

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

The course aims to offer students:

– An understanding of the characteristics of communication processes, of the media’s role in shaping rules and customs, of the media system’s characteristics, of the media’s evolution from analog-to-digital to the present media platforms.

– A general knowledge of the history of Italian media, in the context of the international development of means of communication.

*Knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the first teaching module, students will have acquired basic knowledge on interpersonal communication, on the evolution of the media system in Italy (and also an overview of the evolution worldwide) during the first half of the twentieth century.

At the end of the second teaching module, students will be aware about the main development processes of the media system and their main historical phases in Italy starting from the end of the Second World War.

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the first module, students will have acquired critical understanding skills regarding contemporary forms of communication, the ability to analyse the media system and the communication and media products system, also in view of the most recent transformations generated by media platforms, as well as basic knowledge for the analysis and production of communication.

At the end of the second module students will be able to detect and acknowledge the significance of various difficult junctures in the historical and development process which has been presented to them.

Given the introductory nature of the course, scheduled during the first year of the degree, the course intends to stimulate autonomous judgement and the acquisition of a proper study method. With specific reference to the latter, specific lectures cover the guided application of analysis methods and mock exams.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Module I (semester I): *Theory of the media*  (Prof. Fausto Colombo)

In the first module (half of the lessons of the first semester) students will acquire basic knowledge for the understanding of communication processes. There will be a focus on the understanding of the meaning of “comunication”, on the relational aspects of communication processes, on the evolution of communication media as a whole, on the questioning of their consequences on ways of living. Starting from the most recent theories, the module will try to answer the following questions: what is communication nowadays? What is communication’s role in relational processes? And how do communication processes develop in the media ecosystem? What tools do we have, as citizens and communicators, for guiding the media in a more fruitful direction, which does not limit itself to following the steps of technological progress or market rules?

Module II (semesters i and ii ): *History of the media, from modernity to convergence* (Prof. Fausto Colombo and Dr Simone Carlo)

In the second module (half of the lessons of the first semester and all the second semester) the course will cover the historical development of mass culture in Italy, through an analysis of products, authors, forms of reception and of consumption. The national experience will be viewed in the context of tranformations worldwide.

***READING LIST***

G. Boccia Artieri-F. Colombo-G. Gili, *Comunicare. Persone, Relazioni, Media*, Laterza, Rome, forthcoming (published by October 2022).

C. Bernardi-E. Mosconi (ed. by), *Storia della Comunicazione e dello Spettacolo in Italia. Vol. I I media alla sfida della modernità,* Bompiani, Milan, 2009 (selected chapters indicated during the course ).

F. Colombo-R. Eugeni (ed. by), *Storia della Comunicazione e dello Spettacolo in Italia. Vol. II: I media alla sfida della Democrazia,* Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2015 (selected chapters indicated during the course).

A. Grasso (ed. by), *Storia della Comunicazione e dello Spettacolo in Italia. Vol. III: I media alla sfida della Convergenza,* Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2017 (selected chapters indicated during the course).

During the course other reading material may be distributed or made available online and lecture notes may be made available online (see Notes).

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lessons in the classroom. In-person or online group work.

The lectures will build on texts recommended in the reading list, and further information will be available on the Blackboard platform, on the blog [*http://keepcalmandlearnsocialstudies.wordpress.com/*](http://keepcalmandlearnsocialstudies.wordpress.com/), and on the published lecture notes (see Notes).

Attendance is particularly recommended for two reasons:

- because the interim test will be based also on lecture topics and focuses.

- because work carried out during lessons, discussions and active participation during lessons will be assessed, through comments in the course forum on Blackboard.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

At the end of the first semester, students will take an interim test, consisting in a written test on the first volume of *Storia della Comunicazione e dello Spettacolo in Italia* and on the text *Comunicare. Persone, Relazioni, Media*. The exams will be assessed with a letter corresponding to a range of marks: A (28-30), B (25-27), C (22-24). To pass the exam students must at least obtain a C mark.

Should there be problems organising the written exam due to health emergencies, the exam will be taken orally remotely.

At the end of the second semester, students will take an oral exam, which will be on the remaining volumes for those who have passed the interim etst and on the entire reading list for the other students.

In the oral exam, students will have to prove to have acquired the content of the texts included in the reading list, as well as – if they make a request – the topics and basic issues discussed during lessons.

Assessment criteria for the oral exam will include relevance of answers, proficiency in the use of the lexicon, a well-argued and coherent structuring of the discussion, the ability to identify conceptual links and open issues.

Possible contributions made during the course, in the form of papers or posts for the teaching blog *http://keepcalmandlearnsocialstudies.wordpress.com/*and for the course forum on Blackboard will also be assessed.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

On the lecturer’s webpage, students may find all the information regarding the programme, the course in general and possible changes of classroom or times. Teaching material, documents, information and useful recommendations for the course will be available on the Blackboard platform. The blog, *http://keepcalmandlearnsocialstudies.wordpress.com/* contains summaries of lectures and possible topics of discussion, and it is considered an essential teaching resource. It is possible to contact Prof. Colombo at the email address a *fausto.colombo@unicatt.it.* and Dr Simone Carlo at the email address *simone.carlo@unicatt.it**.*

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.

 *Prerequisites*

These are the preferred prerequisites for students wishing to attend the course: an advanced knowledge of syntax and rhetoric of the Italian language, a basic knowledge of contemporary history and a basic knowledge of English.

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.