# Sociology of Communication and Digital Media

## Prof. Nicoletta Vittadini

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

The course aims to explore the relationship between the media system (both analogue and digital) and the contemporary social context. In particular, it will introduce the key concepts at the basis of sociology of communication, which are fundamental to understand: the social effects of media communication; the relationship between media and collective processes (finding information, forming opinions, producing and consuming culture, taking action and mobilising oneself); the characteristics of digital media (internet and social media).

By the end of the course, students will be able to develop their knowledge of the main theories about the following topics: the relationship between media and social context, the role of public opinion in the digital world, the development of communication in the digital context and a number of problematic issues such as privacy and trust in the digital media system. On the basis of this knowledge, students will be able to develop independence of judgement regarding the main communicative phenomena of the contemporary era.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will be focused on the following topics:

– media communication, the effects of analogue and digital media on social processes and on the forming of public opinion;

– crucial questions raised by digitisation: new forms of applying classical theories, datafication, logics of influence.

– The development of algorithmic media: definition, characteristics and criticality. All these topics will be introduced through the presentation of main authors, and the analysis of case studies and research works. The relevance of the theories illustrated in class will be demonstrated through their application to the contemporary scenario.

***READING LIST***

S. Bentivegna-G. Boccia Artieri, *Le teorie delle comunicazioni idi massa e la sfida digitale*, Laterza, Roma, Bari, 2019

J. Van Dijck-T. Poell-M. DeWaal, *Platform society. Valori pubblici e società connessa*, Guerini, Milano, 2019.

Vittadini, N – Locatelli, E. *Digital Media, piattaforme algoritmiche e società*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2023

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures; classes held by subject matter experts; case study analysis.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Written assessment. The exam, consisting of four open-ended questions to be answered in one hour time, will take place at the end of the course. Students will be tested on their knowledge of: the topics explained during the course related to interpersonal communication; authors and theories about the social effects of media; authors and processes at the basis of the transmission of culture in the digital context; the main characteristics of digital audiences.

The final mark will be expressed in thirtieths, with a maximum of 7.5 points for each question.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Any changes to the course syllabus will be made available on Blackboard, so students are strongly invited to regularly check the platform on the university website.

There are no prerequisites for attending the course.

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.