# Sociology of Digital Media

## Prof. Piermarco Aroldi

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

The course aims to provide theoretical perspectives, conceptual tools and research approaches useful for a critical understanding of the evolution of the phenomena connected to the diffusion of digital and network communication technologies, both in the media system and in different contexts of life. Particular attention will be paid to the macro and micro-social phenomena that characterise the processes of socialisation and cultural reproduction connected to digital media, and to the development of Media Education practices and policies as training intervention strategies in this area.

Knowledge and understanding

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

* know the main theoretical approaches to digital media;
* understand the main categories that constitute the scientific debate on the role of digital media in the current social context.

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding

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

– orient themselves in the main lines of sociological research applied to the digital media system and the development of network technologies;

– research and use sociological research data in order to guide the design of learning, formative and education paths aimed at a critical and conscious use of communication technologies and at a creative, expressive and participatory production of texts and/or media environments;

– critically evaluate cultural products, online platforms, applications, communication strategies, social discourse, formative projects and intervention policies in the digital media that imply an educational or formative perspective;

– connect and integrate sociological knowledge with that offered by other disciplines that nourish the theoretical reflection and operational practice of Media Education.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into eight modules, four for each of the two semesters.

The first semester of the course focuses on a reflection on the relationship between society and digital media in late modernity in the light of the tradition of media studies and studies on technological innovation and social change; the course will address both structural and macrosocial issues (the mediatisation of society, the rise of the network society, the various types of digital divide), as well as micro-sociological aspects (social interaction and online identity production, cultural and symbolic forms that feed these processes).

In the second semester, the course develops and explores these issues through the analysis of some areas of the digital media system and their particularly relevant audiences in an educational perspective, with special attention to young people and the family context.

***READING LIST***

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

F. Colombo, *Ecologia dei media. Manifesto per una comunicazione gentile,* Vita e Pensiero, 2020.

A volume chosen from the following:

E. Bissaca, M. Cerulo, C. M. Scarcelli, *Giovani e social network. Emozioni, costruzione dell’identità, media digitali*, Carocci, Milano, 2020.

D. Buckingham, *Un manifesto per la Media Education,* Mondadori Università, 2020.

P. Aroldi (a cura di), *Piccolo schermo. Che cos’è e come funziona la Children’s Television,* Guerini, 2015.

The in-depth readings, the lesson materials made available on Blackboard, and the activities carried out during the course are an integral part of the exam syllabus, as described in the programme published online, to which students are referred for a detailed description of the structure of the individual course modules.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course is delivered in blended mode, 50% in presence and 50% online, and includes alternation of classroom lectures, recorded video lessons accessible online, activities to be carried out individually and in groups. In the classroom lectures, students are expected to discuss the main theoretical concepts, to apply the interpretative categories proposed to one's personal and professional experience, and to present their papers for joint discussion; the remote lessons require consulting the video lectures and in-depth readings, the analysis of the case studies indicated, participation in periodic feedback and troubleshooting webinars and forum activities, and the production of the specified assignments.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The assessment of the knowledge and skills acquired by students occurs throughout the course and includes the activities developed by the students (two assignments, one per semester), an interim theoretical written test on the first part of the course (in January and February), an authentic task (at the end of the course, aimed at one of the three professional figures) and a final interview on the entire educational path. All materials produced for the assessment will remain documented in the student portfolio. Procedures, types and scheduling of the tests will be made available on the Blackboard page of the course.

The weight and function of the individual assessment elements are as follows:

Interim written test, aimed at assessing students’ knowledge of the main theoretical categories: 30%

Assignment (one per semester, at the end of modules 2 and 6), aimed at assessing the ability to apply the theoretical categories to individual case studies: 5% + 5%

Authentic task (to be carried out and submitted before the exam date on which the student intends to be interviewed), aimed at assessing the ability to apply the knowledge and understanding gained during the year to the various professional figures of Media Education: 30%

Final interview, aimed at assessing the students' meta-reflexive ability concerning their formative path and the integration of the disciplinary knowledge learnt with those gained in other disciplines of the programme of study: 30%

The final mark is on a 30-point scale.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course. However, prior knowledge of the main media theories may facilitate the understanding of some concepts. Reading list information on this is provided in the course syllabus published online.

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.