# Sociology of Organisation and Work

## Prof. Massimiliano Monaci; Prof. Alberto Vergani

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

The general aim of the course, which is divided into two modules, is to provide students with the concepts and tools they need in order to reconstruct, understand and analyse, from a sociological perspective, the fundamental profiles and dynamics characterising, on the one hand, labour in the modern and contemporary capitalist economies and, on the other, the functioning of organisations in various sectors.

*Knowledge and understanding*

Upon completion of the module on labour, students will:

* be able to describe the main distinctive characteristics - in terms of method and content - of the contribution of sociology to the representation, understanding and explanation of labour as a social phenomenon;
* know the main conceptualisations that have characterised and still characterise the development of the sociology of work in European and North American capitalist societies;
* be able to describe the key elements and the *state of the art* of the sociological analysis of the most important topics and transformations of labour in modern and contemporary capitalist societies;
* know the meaning and the analytical practice of the most important concepts and structures in industrial sociology.

Upon completion of the module on organisational analysis, by the end of the course, students will be able to:

* interpret the phenomena of organisations as one of the most important features of contemporary society;
* recognise the main theoretical and research perspectives on organisational analysis, intended both in relation to its sociological roots and, more broadly, to the multidisciplinary study sector;
* identify the strong and weak points of each analytical model so as to develop a conscious “multi-perspective” approach to be applied reflectively in terms of the specific organisations and organisational situations studied;
* understand essential factors and dynamics (formal and informal, individual and collective, internal and environmental) that influence the action of - and life within - organisations;
* understand, on a general level the operational implications of the topics and concepts addressed.

*Applying knowledge and understanding*

Upon completion of the module on labour, students will be able to:

* apply, on a basic level, the concepts and categories of sociology to the analysis and understanding of the various contemporary configurations and forms of labour;
* use existing documentary sources from various provenances, to analyse and reconstruct - at an introductory level - the topics and typical issues of contemporary industrial sociology.

Upon completion of the module on organisational analysis, students will be able to:

* conduct basic analyses on central issues and aspects of the practical functioning of an organisation, such as management and motivation of human resources, conflict resolution, changes of culture and interaction with the environment and external stakeholders;
* Formulate, at an elementary level, appropriate managerial interventions in response to specific problems.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Module 1: *Prof. Alberto Vergani*

* The contribution and the specific of sociology to describing, analysing and understanding labour within modern and contemporary capitalist societies.
* The main conceptualisations of the sociology of work in relation to industrial, post-industrial and contemporary capitalist societies.
* Labour and society within industrial economies: themes and contributions of the sociology of work.
* Labour and digitalisation within contemporary capitalist societies: emerging themes and unresolved issues.
* Labour, jobs and the pandemic new-normal: elements of analysis and perspective reflections.
* Investigating contemporary labour: tools and exercises.

Module 2: *Prof. Massimiliano Monaci*

* Preliminary reflection: an overview - objectives and methods - of organisational analysis.
* The relational and mechanistic model: the formal structure of organisations; objectives and roles; specialisation and hierarchy; coordination processes.
* The organismic and human resources model: the informal dimension of organisational life; managing human resources and leadership styles; fields and the stakeholders in organisational action; “organisational technology” in the face of context-based uncertainties.
* The political and strategic model: interests, conflicts and processes of power in organisations.
* The cultural model; organisational culture and its symbolic mechanisms; the influence of institutional logic; learning and cultural change.
* Emerging aspects of the contemporary organisational scenario, also from the point of view of the challenges of the post-pandemic period.

***READING LIST***

For Module 1

A. Accornero, *Il mondo della produzione (Sociologia del lavoro e dell’industria)*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2013.

E. Reyneri, *Introduzione alla sociologia del mercato del lavoro,* il Mulino, Bologna, 2017 (chapters to study for the exam will be indicated during the course).

L. Cigna (edited by), *Forza lavoro! Ripensare il lavoro al tempo della pandemia*, Fondazione Feltrinelli, Milan, Quaderno 37, 2020, only e-book.

The chapters for the final exam will be specified during the course.

Any additions or changes to the texts to be studied for the exam will be promptly communicated during the course.

For Module 1

G. Morgan, *Images. Le metafore dell’organizzazione*, F. Angeli, Milano, 2015 (only chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

P. Gagliardi-M. Monaci (ed.), *Prospettive teoriche sulle organizzazioni. Materiali e document*, EDUCatt, Milan, 2002 (only essays by Barnard, Selznick, Thompson, Crozier, DiMaggio & Powell).

V. Cantoni Mamiani, *Leadership di cura. Dal controllo alle relazioni*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2021.

Directions on the use of texts and other information will be provided during the course.

Any changes to the exam text will be promptly communicated during the course and on the Blackboard platform. The materials presented and discussed in class will also be made available on Blackboard.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The standard mode of delivery for the course is participatory lectures, in which students are required to participate directly. Module 2. Both modules include guided practical work, while Module 2 will also have meetings with external experts and speakers.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

For both modules, students will be assessed by means of an oral exam which can be taken on various exam dates. There are no access requirements in terms of previous exams.

During the exam, students must demonstrate theoretical and conceptual knowledge of the topics covered; their ability to use relevant terminology appropriately; and a capacity for expressing their own arguments clearly and coherently. Other assessment criteria include the ability develop ideas independently and to critically reflect on the topics covered in the exam and, where relevant, the ability to identify and develop connections between the theoretical content and their practical and empirical application.

The final overall mark (out of 30) will be calculated by finding the arithmetic mean of the marks awarded for the two exams (both out of 30).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

It is not necessary for students to have taken any particular courses or exams in order to attend and take this one.

*Prerequisites*

Given the introductory nature of both modules, students require no specific knowledge or experience to benefit from the course. However, some familiarity with basic topics and concepts in general sociology would be useful, if not necessary.

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.