# Sociology

## Prof. Benedetta Nicoli; Prof. Lorenzo Giuseppe Zaffaroni

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

The course aims to provide students with the fundamentals of sociological knowledge.

The course is divided into one module of forty hours (fall term) and a twenty hours workshop (spring term). The first module is focused on a selection of essential concepts which will enhance the students’ ability to look at the world through a sociological lens. More specifically, students will learn how to use the “sociological imagination”, questioning the taken-for-granted social reality, looking beyond “the private orbits” in which we live, and understanding the mutual influence relationship between personal issues and structural social forces.

The workshop explores theoretical issues and research on crucial contemporary phenomena from a cultural sociology perspective, referring in particular to the large and growing sector of the cultural or creative industries.

*Intended Learning Outcomes (knowledge and understanding)*

As a result of the course, the students will be able to understand the main sociological theories and concepts.

*Intended Learning Outcomes (applying knowledge and understanding)*

Students will also manage to apply their knowledge to the critical evaluation of key contemporary social phenomena related to issues such as social stratification and inequalities, diversity, globalization, migration, etc.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The issues are:

First Module

1. The sociological perspective: how to avoid taking everything for granted.

2. The key founders of sociological thought: the individual-society relationship.

3. From individuals to societies: culture

4. Social interaction and the social self: how we develop a sense of *self* and make sense of *others*

5. Diversity as a social construction: ethnicity and gender.

6. Social stratification and inequalities: do all people have equal opportunities to succeed in life?

7. From individuals to societies: power

8. Globalization: drivers, benefits, and drawbacks, for whom and where?

9. Migration: Who is moving where and why? How do migrants settle in new cities (between integration and interaction)?

10. Religion and secularization

Second Module

1. Creativity is social: what are the sociological approaches to creativity and the creative industries? What are the critical conceptions of creative autonomy?

2. Social processes of valuation in cultural markets and creative industries: how are cultural and economic value intertwined? How commodities and individuals acquire high status?

3. Trends as opportunities: what do the sociological approaches to fame and celebrity tell us about contemporary superstars and their “empires”?

4. The global and the local: what is the relationship between central and peripheral creative industries?

5. The designer in the city and the city in the designer: how cities shape creative work and vice versa?

6. Sharing economy and the platform society: what is the impact of the digital on the creative industries?

Any changes will be discussed and communicated during the course.

***READING LIST***

First Module:

Lecture notes and class notes (slides, which are part of the course material, will be made available on Blackboard).

A. Giddens-P.W. Sutton, *Essential Concepts in Sociology,* 3rd Edition, Polity Press, 2021.

A. Giddens-P.W. Sutton (2010), *Introductory Readings,* 3rd Edition, Polity Press.

Any changes will be discussed and communicated during the course.

Second Module:

Lecture notes and class notes (the slides will be made available on Blackboard).

Reading list (also available on Blackboard):

D. Hesmondhalgh. (2019). *The Cultural Industries* (4th ed.). Sage (Chapter 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 15).

F. Godart-S. Seong-D.J. Phillips (2020). The Sociology of Creativity: Elements, Structures, and Audiences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *46*(1), 489-510.

B. Uzzi-J. Spiro (2005). Collaboration and Creativity: The Small World Problem. *American Journal of Sociology*, 111(2), 447–504.

P. Aspers-J. Beckert (2011). Value in Markets. In J. Beckert & P. Aspers (Eds.), *The Worth of Goods: Valuation and Pricing in the Economy* (pagg. 3–38). Oxford University Press.

C. Kurzman-C. Anderson-C. Key-Y.O. Lee-M. Moloney-A. Silver-M.W. Van Ryn (2007). Celebrity Status. *Sociological Theory*, 25(4), 347–367.

A. Van de Rijt-E. Shor-C. Ward-S. Skiena (2013). Only 15 Minutes? The Social Stratification of Fame in Printed Media. *American Sociological Review*, *78*(2), 266–289.

Griswold, W. (1987). The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary Interpretation in the United States, Great Britain, and the West Indies. *American Journal of Sociology*, *92*(5), 1077–1117.

C. Lane. (2019). Reverse cultural globalization: The case of haute cuisine in one global city. *Poetics*, *75*.

B.E. Duffy-T. Poell- D.B. Nieborg (2019). Platform Practices in the Cultural Industries: Creativity, Labor, and Citizenship. *Social Media + Society*, 5(4), 1–8.

K. Mikołajewska-Zając (2018). Terms of reference: The moral economy of reputation in a sharing economy platform. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *21*(2), 148–168.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course is based on lectures, and students-led seminars (group presentations).

Group assignments will be planned as part of the final evaluation.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Attending students:

First Module: 1) a written text (40% of the final evalutation). Attending students will be required to answer to 5 open questions on the topics of module I) + 2) a group presentation (15% of the final evalutation). Students are expected to read the recommended reading list, find additional resources on the given topic and apply the theories and readings to the analysis of case studies).

Second Module: 1) a written text (30% of the final evalutation). Attending students will be required to answer to 3 open questions on the topics of module II) + 2) a group presentation (15% of the final evalutation). Students are expected to read the recommended reading list, find additional resources on the given topic and apply the theories and readings to the analysis of case studies).

The assessment of the test is based on the number of answers, the ability to use the correct terminology, the reference to the appropriate concepts and theories, the identification of critical issues, the clarity and soundness of the argumentation.

The presentations will be assessed considering the originality of the work, the ability to refer to theories and concepts, the use of the correct terminology, the quality of the presentation.

Students who have not completed the group assignments will give a final exam in which they will have to answer to 10 questions on the topics of module I (60% of the overall evaluation) and 7 questions on the topics of module II (40% of the overall evaluation).

Any changes will be discussed and communicated during the course.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites.

*Place and time of office hours*

Prof. B. Nicoli: Office hours by appointment – ARC Centre, Edificio Franciscanum, 5rd floor - L.go Gemelli 1. To schedule a meeting send an email to benedetta.nicoli@unicatt.it.

Prof. L. G. Zaffaroni: Office hours by appointment - Department of Communication, Via Sant’Agnese 2, 4th floor. To schedule a meeting send an email to lorenzogiuseppe.zaffaroni@unicatt.it