

Syllabus

Course description

Updated on 19 December 2019

Course title	General sociology
Course code	51073
Scientific sector	SPS/07
Degree	Bachelor in Social Work
Lecturer	Poggio Teresio
Teaching language	English
Semester	1 st
Course year	1 st
Credits	6
Modular	<i>no</i>

Total lecturing hours	45
Total lab hours	-
Office hours	Usually on lecturing days + (about) one month before the exam sessions + (about) one week after exams (exam view). Detailed schedule for Office Hours is to be discussed and fine-tuned in the classroom and posted on the Reserve Collection, soon after the course start.
Attendance	According to the regulation. Students able to attend are expected to benefit most from the course. All students – and especially the ones who do not attend classes – are strongly suggested to contact the instructor well in advance, for communications and agreements on the exam (see below in the Assessment sections), possible suggestions and clarifications.
Prerequisites	No

Specific educational objectives	<p>The course aims to introduce students to:</p> <p>Sociological thinking as a useful tool for professionals in social work and social policy, allowing them a better understanding of: social problems and critical cases they have to manage; their broad social context; the rationale for social intervention; interaction with clients, colleagues and other relevant actors in welfare systems;</p> <p>The basics of social theory and research strategies;</p> <p>The basic concepts and lexicon in sociology;</p> <p>How several social problems are framed within general social theory and research;</p> <p>Critical thinking on the social realm, including the adoption of multiple sociological perspectives when addressing social phenomena;</p> <p>The ability to develop a simple literature review in sociology that includes: bibliographical research, reference management,</p>
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	summarising information of interest, appropriate documents reference/citation.
List of topics covered	<p>The importance of sociological lenses in the toolbox of social work and social policy professionals;</p> <p>Sociology as a multifaced science: its development; the main theoretical traditions and views on the social realm; the relations with other sciences;</p> <p>The link between social theory and the real world: main strategies for social research;</p> <p>Key concepts and sociological perspectives on selected domains of contemporary European societies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - modern societies, their development; globalization; - social change; - work, production and the economy; - individual and family life courses; related 'social risks'; - social interaction and the basics of 'micro-sociology'; - everyday life; - families and intimate relationships; - sexuality; - inequality, social stratification and social class; - poverty and social exclusion; - social stratification beside class: gender, race, ethnicity; - inequality at the global scale; - migration; - politics, government, administration; - the welfare state and overall welfare systems; - social deviance and crime; - culture; education; religion; - body, health, illness and disability
Teaching format	<p>Traditional lectures, class discussion, interactive activities; Reading Club.</p> <p>READING CLUB: Additional exemplary readings – short texts (scientific journal articles, book chapter or reports) – are presented by students and discussed in class, as a complement to the themes presented in the lectures and/or in the textbook. Arrangements for the Reading Club will be discussed when the course starts and posted in the Reserve Collection. All in all, students' required efforts are quite modest: during the whole course, each student will read in advance and prepare for discussion 1-2 short texts, amongst the ones listed below, in the dedicated list within the Required Readings section.</p> <p>Instructor SLIDES are provided after the lecture where they have been displayed. They are intended as a convenient way to support communication in the classroom and not as a substitute for attending the lecture, nor as a substitute for required readings.</p> <p>COURSE ETIQUETTE: Appropriate behaviour is expected during class time. This specifically includes that all electronic devices (smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, laptops, mp3-players, ...)</p>

	<p>must be turned off and kept not at hand. Students with documented disabilities who need any electronic devices, in order to benefit most from classes, can contact the instructor in advance, for appropriate arrangements.</p> <p>Classroom discussion should be civilized and respectful to everyone and relevant to the topic we are discussing. Everyone is entitled to their opinion. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints. This can only happen if we respect each other and our differences. Possible email or online (any forms) follow-ups should respect these same rules and expectations.</p> <p>Proper ethical conduct and academic honesty is expected of all students at all times. The literature review (see below) required to all students as a final project is checked against plagiarism using cutting-edge technologies.</p> <p>COMMUNICATIONS: The instructor can communicate with students in the classroom, through email or the Reserve Collection. Students are responsible for regularly checking their institutional email account (i.e., name@unibz.it) and the Reserve Collection for possible important communications on the course organization, readings, exams.</p>
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<p>Learning outcomes</p>	<p><u>Knowledge and understanding:</u> Sociology as a scientific discipline, its theoretical and research traditions, its links with other sciences, its importance to professions in social work and social policy. The main sociological theories; the basics theoretical concepts and the sociological lexicon.</p> <p><u>Applying knowledge and understanding:</u> Capacity to address a social problem in a sociological frame, and in multiple theoretical and research perspectives, when relevant.</p> <p><u>Making judgments:</u> Ability to use the main coordinates of sociology theoretical and research traditions, in order to understand where a sociological contribution collocates in the discipline. Ability to choose, among sociological theories and researches, the relevant ones that best fit for purpose, given a social problem and a task to be accomplished.</p> <p><u>Communication skills:</u> How to communicate the summary of a sociological text, or a simple literature review. How to communicate and discuss own ideas and opinions.</p> <p><u>Learning skills:</u> Ability to address new sociological themes using reference texts; Capacity to develop a bibliographical research and to properly manage references; Ability to develop a literature review on sociological themes.</p>
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<p>Assessment</p>	<p>ATTENDING STUDENTS:* Attending students are assessed through the following 5 steps:</p>
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- 1) Active attendance and discussion in classes (it counts for 10% of the final vote);
- 2) Own presentation(s), active attendance and discussion in the Reading Club sessions (20% of the final vote);
- 3) Four Training Quizzes scheduled during the course (10% of the final vote);
- 4) An individual Final Project, consisting in a short literature review – on either one social issue, or one social theory or one sociologist – to be agreed with the instructor well in advance (30% of the final vote);
- 5) A final written exam (30% of the final vote).

* Students must attend a minimum of ~~70%~~ 60% of course lectures – as will result from the course register - in order to qualify as attending students and for this 5-steps assessment route.

NON-ATTENDING STUDENTS (and default assessment):

Non-attending students are assessed through the following 3 steps:

- 1) An individual Final Project, consisting in a short literature review – on either one social issue, or one social theory or one sociologist – to be agreed with the instructor well in advance (30% of the final vote);
- 2) A final written exam (35% of the final vote);
- 3) A final oral exam (35% of the final vote) on the same day of the written exam.

RULES FOR ASSESSMENT 1 (ALL STUDENTS):

1.1. The FINAL PROJECT consists in a short literature review (between one-two pages, excluding references; single space, 12-pt font, 2 cm margins) on a social issue, a social theory or a sociologist (their work, theories, research – please do not consider biography). Students are asked to well balance ideas from the course reference materials (or other textbooks and resources) with ideas from their own bibliographical research in the library. Expectations for a fair work is a 50% - 50% equilibrium. All students must contact the instructor in order to agree on the object of their literature review, at least one month before the exam.

The project is to be delivered at least ten days before the exam.

1.2 The FINAL WRITTEN EXAM lasts 1:30 hours and covers knowledge required by attending and non-attending students (see points 2.1 and 3.1 below, respectively). It consists of a set of 10-15 multiple choice questions and/or mini open questions (where the required answer implies writing 2-3 rows) plus a mini essay question, on a course theme chosen by the instructor. No notes, books, electronic devices are allowed during the final written exam.

	<p><u>RULES FOR ASSESSMENT 2 (ATTENDING STUDENTS):</u></p> <p>2.1. Attending students are assessed on their knowledge of the main textbook (see below) required readings, and on the contents of materials presented and discussed in the classroom during the course, including the Reading Club sessions. Should students miss any classes, it is their responsibility to acquire an equivalent knowledge through additional readings, remedial work and/or sharing notes with class-mates.</p> <p>2.2. The four TRAINING QUIZZES are primarily intended as a way to train students for the final written exam – even if they are graded, in order to recognize students’ effort – and to provide the instructor with a feedback on students’ understanding of contents that have previously been discussed. Each quiz last 15-20 minutes and covers knowledge required by attending students (see previous point 2.1). Contents discussed in the classroom – and related readings – during the 10 days before the quiz are not tested.</p> <p>Each quiz consists of a set of 5-10 multiple choice questions and/or mini open questions (where the required answer implies writing 2-3 rows).</p> <p>They are tentatively scheduled on: October 24; November 12 and 28; December 17. Final schedule is to be posted on the Reserve Collection soon after the course start.</p> <p>No notes, books, electronic devices are allowed during quizzes.</p> <p><u>RULES FOR ASSESSMENT 3 (NON-ATTENDING STUDENTS):</u></p> <p>3.1. Non-attending students are assessed on their knowledge of the main textbook (see below) required readings, and on their knowledge of a selection of the required readings for the Reading Club sessions, corresponding to what is indicated at points 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 (see below).</p> <p>Non-attending students are welcome to take advantage of course materials posted in the Reserve Collection, as additional resources supporting their learning process. They should be aware, however, that these materials do not compensate for missing lectures and do not substitute the required readings.</p> <p>3.2. The FINAL ORAL EXAM lasts about 10-15 minutes for each non-attending student. It aims to assess their knowledge on the course contents (details in previous point 3.1). The oral exam takes place after the written exam, and after a short break. Non-attending students are required to make appropriate traveling arrangements on the day of the exam, in order to take the oral exam.</p>
<p>Assessment language</p>	<p>English</p>
<p>Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks</p>	<p><u>1. ALL STUDENTS:</u></p> <p>1.1. Passing the final written exam (marks ≥ 18 is the minimum requirement to this purpose) and delivering the individual final project are two prerequisites for passing the course exam. I.e. students failing to pass the written exam do not pass the course</p>

exam, irrespective of positive evaluations in the other steps of their assessment procedure. Students not delivering their individual final project do not pass the course exam, irrespective of positive evaluations in the other steps of their assessment procedure.

1.2. Marks awarded in each step of the assessment procedure are in the range 0-30. The overall final marks for the course exam are in the same range, and result from the weighted average of the marks awarded in the single steps of assessment. Weights applied are presented in the previous section (e.g., written exam counts for 30% of the final grade, etc..).

In order to pass the course exam, students weighted average marks must be equal or higher than 18, and conditions set in the previous point 1.1. must be met. Students with lower grades do not pass the course exam, even if positively evaluated in the final written exam and if they delivered their final project.

1.3. The FINAL PROJECT is evaluated according to the following criteria: application of knowledge learnt during the course; critical judgement as evident from discussion presented in the literature review; level of originality in the literature review (rather than exclusively relying on reference books); use of appropriate citation and reference systems.

For late delivery – with respect to the 10 days before the exam deadline – there is a 10% penalty in the marks awarded, for each day of delay.

The instructor may sparingly consider – at his own discretion - alternative arrangements in case of late delivering under exceptional circumstances, like serious documented health problems, for instance. While it is under the sole student responsibility to meet deadlines in case of ordinary competing professional or family commitments, or when they plan to travel, to participate optional activities, family events, ...

Should plagiarism be detected in the final project, marks would be lowered proportionally to the gravity of this issue.

1.4. The FINAL WRITTEN EXAM assesses knowledge and understanding of the course contents and of the required readings for attending and non-attending students (see above, point 2.1 in the Rules for attending students and point 3.1. in the Rules for non-attending students, respectively). As already mentioned, the exam has two parts:

a. Multiple choice questions and mini open-questions: each of them reports the score awarded when the answer is correct (0, if not correct), in order to allow students for better management of their exam time.

b. Mini essay: knowledge and understanding of one selected course theme (instructor choice) is tested in this part of the exam, also considering students' critical judgment. Marks awarded in this part of the exam are also reported in the exam sheet, for better time management.

Marks for the final written exam are obtained summing scores awarded in the two parts of the exam. The theoretical minimum is 0 (unlikely complete failure); the theoretical maximum is 30 (excellent exam, both parts).

	<p><u>2. ATTENDING STUDENTS:</u></p> <p>2.1. Participation and active discussion in the classroom is assessed considering attendance and – more specifically – active engagement of students in class activities (marks range is 0-30).</p> <p>2.2. Own presentations and active discussion in the Reading Club sessions: presenters are assessed according to knowledge they are able to summarise from their assigned readings, their ability to link it to other course contents and their critical judgement. Other participants to the sessions are assessed considering attendance and their active engagement in discussion. Students roles rotate during the course. Marks for these activities are in the range 0-30.</p> <p>2.3. Each question in the four Training Quizzes report the score awarded when the answer is correct (0, if not correct), in order to allow students for better management of their exam time. The sum of each quiz score is between a 0 minimum (unlikely complete failure, or student not taking the quiz when not present) and a 30 maximum (excellent test). The overall marks for Training Quizzes (also in the range 0-30) are the average of three individual quiz scores; the fourth quiz, with the lowest score (including the 0-scored ones due to absence), is not considered.</p> <p><u>3. NON-ATTENDING STUDENTS:</u></p> <p>3.1. The ORAL EXAM assesses knowledge and understanding of the course contents and of the required readings for non-attending students (see above, point 3.1. in the Rules for non-attending students).</p>
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<p>Required readings</p>	<p>Given the economy of the course and the need for a fair students' workload, only a selection of readings is listed below and in the next section. Students are encouraged to read more – during the course or at later points – following their own interests and curiosities in the field of sociology. The course lets students 'taste' themes and authors in the discipline, with the aim to raise curiosity and to invite students to more systematic readings on the themes students are more interested in.</p> <p>REQUIRED READINGS (below in this section of the syllabus) provide students with the knowledge that is assessed during the course. This is an elegant way to say that students need to study these texts if they want to pass the exam.</p> <p>Both attending and non-attending students are assessed on their knowledge of the MAIN TEXTBOOK specified below.</p> <p>While attending and non-attending students are required to use differently the other required readings, which are related to the READING CLUB activities. They are consequently assessed differently on the latter readings, as discussed above in the</p>
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assessment sections of the syllabus. What are the readings that each attending student has to study is something to be discussed in the classroom, when organizing the Reading Club sessions. While non-attending students have to prepare the readings related to the following points below: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3.

MAIN TEXTBOOK:

Giddens, Anthony & Sutton, Philip W. (2017), *Sociology*. 8th edition. Polity Press. ISBN: 978-0745696683 (chapters 5, 6, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 excluded).

Previous editions can also be used. In this case, students are required to check the contents, for chapters matching between the editions.

READING CLUB REQUIRED READINGS:

THEMES: MID-RANGE THEORIES; THE CONSTRUCTIVIST VIEW

1.1. Merton, Robert K. (1968 [original ed. 1949]). "On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range". In *Social Theory and Social Structure*. The Free Press. Pages 39-53 only.

1.2. Rosenhan, David L. (1973), "On Being Sane in Insane Places". *Science*, vol. 179. Pp. 250–58.

THEME: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

2.1. Berger, Peter L. & Luckmann, Thomas (1991 [original ed. 1966]). "Introduction: The Problem of the Sociology of Knowledge." in *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Penguin. Pp 13-30.

2.2. Berger, Peter L. & Luckmann, Thomas (1991 [original ed. 1966]). "The Foundations of Knowledge in Everyday Life." in *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Penguin. Pp 33-61.

THEME: FAMILY GENERATIONS

3.1. Attias-Donfut, Claudine & Arber, Sara (2000). "Equity and solidarity across generations". In *The Myth of Generational Conflict: The Family and State in Ageing Societies*. Routledge. Pp. 1-19.

3.2. Saraceno, Chiara & Keck, Wolfgang (2010). "Can We Identify Intergenerational Policy Regimes in Europe?". *European Societies*, vol. 12, issue 5. Pp. 675–96.

THEME: TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

4.1. Buchmann, Marlis C. & Kriesi, Irene (2011). "Transition to Adulthood in Europe." *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 37, issue 1. Pp. 481–503.

4.2. Poggio, Teresio (2012). "The First Steps into the Italian Housing System: Inequality between Generational Gaps and Family Intergenerational Transfers." In Forrest, Ray & Yip, Ngai-Ming (eds.), *Young People and Housing: Transitions, Trajectories and Generational Fractures*. Routledge. Pp. 60–81.

	<p>THEME: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WELFARE STATES</p> <p>5.1. Briggs, Asa (1961). "The Welfare State in Historical Perspective." <i>Archives Européenne de Sociologie</i>, vol. 2, issue 2. Pp. 221–58.</p> <p>5.2. Kahl, Sigrun (2005). "The Religious Roots of Modern Poverty Policy: Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Protestant Traditions Compared." <i>Archives Européenne de Sociologie</i>, vol. 46, issue 1. Pp. 91–126.</p> <p>5.3. Marshall, Thomas H. (1950 [original ed. 1949]) "Citizenship and Social Class." In <i>Citizenship and Social Class. and other essays</i>. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-85.</p>
<p>Supplementary readings</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY, SUGGESTED, READINGS refer to contents and knowledge that is not assessed but that students may find helpful during the course. These materials include reference resources, books providing different views on the course contents, materials dedicated to specific themes or parts of the course. The instructor may provide additional supplementary readings during the course. Students are welcome to ask for supplementary readings on their own sociological interests.</p> <p>Students who wants to more systematically address sociological theory may refer to the following essential introduction: Ritzer, George & Stepnisky, Jeffrey (2018), <i>Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots. The Basics</i>. 5th edition. Sage. ISBN: 9781506339412. Previous editions may also be used.</p> <p>Students may refer to this textbook for an introduction to topics not covered in the course and/or topics of special interest to social workers: Yuill, Chris & Gibson, Alastair (eds.) (2011), <i>Sociology for Social Work. An Introduction</i>. Sage. ISBN: 9781848606517</p> <p>Students are welcome to refer to the chapters in the main textbook that are not included in the required readings: i.e. Giddens, Anthony & Sutton, Philip W. (2017), <i>Sociology</i>. 8th edition. Polity Press. ISBN: 978-0745696683, chapters 5, 6, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22.</p> <p>As a general reference resource in sociology, students may use: Turner, Brian S. (ed.) (2006), <i>The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology</i>. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9780521832908, 9780511369759</p>