

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: SOCI 478: **Social & Economic Development of Italy**
Credits: 3 Credits
Instructor: **Pierluca Birindelli, Ph.D.**



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Office Hours

By appointment: pierluca.birindelli@email.it

Meeting times

Wednesday: 15:35 - 18:35

Course Description and Objectives

This course introduces students to the key approaches for the study of relationships between society and economy. In the light of social relations in the contemporary economy, we shall focus on the links among social, cultural and economic capital. This course shall especially emphasize social exchange theory, network analysis, and social stratification. The modernization process and its effects on individual and collective identities will be studied within the conceptual and interpretative framework of the course.

The concepts and theories of the first part of the course will be applied to the study of Italian national and local development, with a special focus on the role of extended family and intergenerational relationships.

To achieve a holistic representation of the sociological phenomena investigated, we will analyze the role of social capital not only within the field of economic development, but also in the field of political and civic development.

Finally, the assumption that all social capital is positive will be critically examined within the comparative perspective of Italy and United States.

Requirements

Throughout this class, you are expected to contribute your thoughts, ideas, questions, etc. To do so, you must do the readings, and be ready to contribute. Course requirements include a mid term exam and a final research paper.

The final research paper consists of the social, cultural and economic capital reconstruction of a given individual. You will carry out an in-depth narrative interview with this person, trying to depict his/her position on the social stratification; biographical itinerary. You will be working on this paper throughout the course, and will be submitting elements of the paper at various times. You are expected to make reference to the interpretative concepts and methods of analysis acquired during the course.

Attendance is mandatory. Unauthorized absences will have negative consequences for your final grade.

There is no final exam.

Method

The course has a seminar format. Lectures will introduce the main topic, with the support of slides synthesizing concepts, paradigms, theories and examples extracted from the readings.

Grading

Grading is based on a point scale of 500 total points.

- Class participation: 100 points.
- Mid-term exam: 150 points.
- Final research paper: 250 points.

Readings

A course pack with readings will be made available.

Course Outline & Schedule

Week 1 Sept. 24	Community and Society: Strong and Weak Ties
Week 2 Oct. 1	Late Modernity and Self-Identity. Global, Local and the Mediation of Experience
Week 3 Oct. 8	The Culture of Narcissism and the Fall of Public Man: Producers, Consumers and Citizens
Week 4 Oct. 15	Social Stratification, Social Mobility and Inequalities: Myths of Meritocracy
Week 5 Oct. 22	Social, Cultural and Economic Capital: Concepts, Theories and Findings (1)
Week 6 Oct. 29	Social, Cultural and Economic Capital: Concepts, Theories and Findings (2) <i>Mid-Term Exam</i>
Week 7 Nov. 5	Qualitative Sociology: Reality Reconstruction, Participant Observation and Narrative Interview
Week 8 Nov. 12	Citizenship, Civicness and Particularism: Social Capital in Italy and the United States
Week 9 Nov. 19	Italian Extended Family and Intergenerational Relationships
Week 10 Nov. 26	The Structure of Power: Elites in Italy and the United States
Week 11 Dec. 3	Social Capital and Organized Crime: Mafia, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta and Sacra Corona Unita
Week 12 Dec. 10	Trust: The Social Virtues and The Creation of Prosperity
Week 13 Dec. 17	<i>Final Paper and Presentation</i>