



Italian code: SPS/11 (old) – GSPS-07/A (new)

Credits: 6

Course: Political Sociology

Main language of instruction: Italian

Other language of instruction: English

Head instructor

Professor Roberto De Rosa - roberto.derosa@unicusano.it

Objectives

The course aims to provide students with an understanding of the general concepts and fundamental themes of political sociology, contributing to a solid foundation in Political Sociology. Particular attention will be given to political communication, with a specific focus on the role and function of political language and propaganda as factors influencing opinion processes and the construction of political identities at the core of civil society.

Prerequisites for admission

Basic knowledge of General Sociology and contemporary history is presumed.

Course structure

The course in Sociology of Political Phenomena has the following learning objectives:

- Explain and define the basic concepts of Political Society: State, Power.
- Present the fundamental theories on the distribution of power: Elitism, Pluralism, Democracy, Totalitarianism.
- Illustrate the dynamic analysis of political socialization processes, political culture, and processes of political participation.
- Explain the concept of democratic quality and its fundamental components.
- Illustrate the mechanisms of political communication.

Competencies

A. Knowledge and understanding:

The expected outcomes of the course include the development of analytical skills necessary to understand and internalize the mechanisms underlying politically significant phenomena. In this regard, the course enables the acquisition of knowledge related to topics concerning the social dimensions of political phenomena and fosters the sensitivity required to identify political and social issues characteristic of contemporary societies.

B. Applying knowledge and understanding:

Students must demonstrate the ability to professionally apply the topics covered in the course, particularly in the analysis of situations related to the typical processes of power relations in the political field. They should identify potential connections between various areas of disciplinary knowledge and their application to political practices, developing an appropriate analytical profile and reflective capacity regarding participatory and communicative practices in politics.

C. Making judgements:

Students should be able to apply the acquired knowledge to develop analyses that are as original as possible and to process analytical data for defining systemic or specific scenarios, contexts, or climates.

D. Communication skills:

Students must acquire an appropriate disciplinary vocabulary and be capable of articulating it through various communication channels, considering the need to communicate clearly and thoroughly with specialists in the field while also effectively addressing non-specialists.

E. Learning skills:

Students must be able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course in an integrated manner, complementing it with instruction provided in other courses of the study program. Additionally, they should develop methodological skills that enable them to independently pursue new learning paths in the field of Political Sociology.

Syllabus

Subject 1 –STATE AND SOCIETY

- State and society



- The origins of the state
- Theories on the formation of the state
- The birth of the nation-state
- The Marxist conception of the state

Subject 2– POWER, AUTHORITY, AND LEGITIMACY

- Power, authority, and legitimacy
- Definition and analysis of power
- Authority and legitimacy
- Legitimacy and obedience
- Sovereignty

Subject 3– THE DISTRIBUTION OF POWER

- The distribution of power
- Elite theory:
- The organizational approach: Mosca and Michels
- The psychological approach: Pareto
- Contemporary approaches: Dahl and pluralist theory
- Totalitarianism, authoritarianism, and democracy

Subject 4 – POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND RECRUITMENT

- Political socialization and recruitment
- Theories of political socialization: what, when, and how learning occurs
- Political culture and political behavior
- Political recruitment: practical examples of socialization and recruitment

Subject 5– POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- Political participation
- Forms of political participation
- The spread of political participation
- Explaining political participation

Subject 6– QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Quality of democracy and social capital: definitions and requirements in the search for a concept of democratic quality
- The concept and its practices
- Trust and social capital
- Foundational variables of social capital
- Reflections of these variables in political action

Subject 1 – POLITICAL COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC OPINION, AND PROPAGANDA

- Political communication, public opinion, and propaganda
- Political communication: influence and effects of political communication
- Sources of influence: media, interpersonal communication, political actors
- Effects on political socialization
- Effects on public opinion
- Political propaganda: types and objectives

Evaluation system and criteria

The exam consists of an oral and/or written test aimed at assessing the ability to analyse and re-elaborate the concepts acquired, as well as a series of interactive activities carried out during the course.

Erasmus students are encouraged to contact the professor to agree on a customized syllabus.

Study materials (available in both Italian and English) will be provided directly by the professor if not available in the library. The oral exam can be taken in English.

The examination will be aimed at:

- ascertaining the knowledge and comprehension of the main IR theories and concepts;
- ascertaining the ability to apply that knowledge to current trends and events in international politics;
- ascertaining the mastery of the specific language concerning the IR vocabulary

Bibliography and resources

1. Materials to consult

Notes written by the instructor are available in Italian (part of the notes are also available in English).

2. Recommended bibliography

Suggested readings are:

- Italian Version- Rush M., *Politica e società. Introduzione alla sociologia politica*, Il Mulino Bologna, 2007.
- English Version- Rush M., *Politics and Society: An Introduction to Political Sociology*, Routledge London, 2016.