

SOCIOLOGY OF WORK AND ORGANIZATION

2017-18 LM 59, 63, 87/88 9 ECTS

Prof. Matteo Villa

Course title

Organizational processes in complex societies. Theoretical-methodological approaches, practices and experiments in the face of new challenges.

Purpose. The aim of the course is to learn some theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of organizational processes in the world of production, associative systems and welfare systems. Reflection and analysis are based on international studies and research aimed at understanding these mechanisms in a complex and deeply changing society in the face of the social, economic and environmental challenges. To this end, for a part of the course students are offered the choice between a practical experimental laboratory and two thematic paths on current topics.

Programme (contents of the course).

Syllabus and examination program are divided into three parts, connected to each other:

The first part, "*Institutional - Theory and Practice of Organizing: The Different Approaches*", is mainly devoted to the exploration and study of the main organizational theories. The path revolves around some metaphors proposed by the author of the handbook: organizations as machines, organisms, brains, cultural systems, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation, instruments of domination.

The second part, "*Single-subject - Complexity, ecology and organizational processes: the contribution of Gregory Bateson*", goes deep into one of the approaches discussed in the first part, the complexity theory, moving from the original and eclectic contribution of Gregory Bateson up to few current developments.

The third part, "*Research - Organizational change and the current challenges*" discusses the problems of organizational knowledge, learning and change with three options on highly topical issues among which the student must choose one:

- Option 1. *LABORATORY: Learning, leadership and decision-making processes in democratic organizations*: knowledge, experimentation and learning of methods and tools to support decision-making processes in democratic organizations (with particular reference to nonprofit, cooperative, associative and spontaneous organizations and to public-private systems of participatory governance).
- Option 2. *THEMATIC PATH: Bureaucracy, Managerialism and Participation: ambivalence of changes in welfare systems*: theoretical analyses and case-studies on the current processes of transformation in the forms of government, participation and management of public-private welfare systems and on the ambivalent effects on the relationship between citizens and Institutions and in the system of rights and duties.
- Option 3. *THEMATIC PATH: Ecology, evolution and organizational processes: systemic approaches to sustainable development*: problems and theoretical and methodological perspectives on the relationship between society, economy and the environment, and tools for organizational innovation towards sustainability.

Bibliography (Required texts):

I PART – *Institutional. Theory and Practice of Organizing: The Different Approaches*

- G. Morgan, *Images. Le metafore dell'organizzazione*, Milano, FrancoAngeli 2002 (reprint 2015). EN Edition: *Images of Organizations*, Sage, London
- G. Bonazzi, *Il cambiamento del paradigma organizzativo nel 20° secolo: alcune ripercussioni sulle convinzioni profonde*, Sociologia del lavoro, N. 100, 2005

II PART – *Single-subject. Complexity, ecology and organizational processes: the contribution of Gregory Bateson*

- G. Bateson, *Verso un'ecologia della mente*, Adelphi, 2000. Only the Chapters: "Le categorie logiche dell'apprendimento e della comunicazione" "Il ruolo del cambiamento somatico nell'evoluzione", "Ecologia e flessibilità nella civiltà urbana"
- G. Bateson, *Mente e Natura. Un'unità necessaria*, Milano: Adelphi, 1984. Only the Chapters: 2. "Ogni scolareto sa che...", 7. "Dalla classificazione al processo"
- H.Tsoukas, *Complex Knowledge. Studies in Organizational Epistemology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005. Only the "Introduction" and the Chapters 8. and 9.

III PART – *Research. Organizational change and the current challenges* Choose one option between the following ones:

Option 1. LABORATORY: *Learning, leadership and decision-making processes in democratic organizations:*

- K. Polanyi, *L'economia come processo istituzionale*, in "Economie primitive, arcaiche e moderne", Einaudi, 1980 (capitolo VII). EN Version: "The economy as instituted process"
- E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York: Garden City, 1959. Only the third chapter: "Regions and Region Behaviour"
- G. Bateson, *Verso un'ecologia della mente*, Milano, Adelphi, 2000 (o edizione più recente). Solo i capitoli: Solo i saggi: "Verso una teoria della schizofrenia" e "I requisiti minimi di una teoria della schizofrenia". EN Edition: *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Only the Chapters: "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia", "Minimal Requirements for a Theory of Schizophrenia"
- K. Lewin, *La teoria, la ricerca, l'intervento*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 2005. Solo il capitolo VIII "Il problema della democrazia e il gruppo". EN Edition: *Paragraphs drawn from Resolving Social Conflicts. Selected Papers on Group Dynamics*
- F.J. Varela, *Il circolo creativo: abbozzo di una storia naturale della circolarità*, in Watzlawick P. (a cura di) (1981), "La realtà inventata. Contributi al costruttivismo", Feltrinelli, Milano. EN Edition: *The Creative Circle: Sketches on the Natural History of Circularity*, in "The Invented Reality". Edited by Paul Watzlavick, Norton Publishing, New York, 1984

Option 2. THEMATIC PATH: *Bureaucracy, Managerialism and Participation: ambivalence of changes in welfare systems:*

- L. Bifulco, *Gabbie di vetro. Burocrazia, governance e libertà*, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2008. Only the Chapters: Premessa, Chapter 1. "Tempi moderni" and Chapter 6. "Gabbie di vetro".
- J. Clarke, J. Newman, *Managerialism and the continuing project of state reform*, in 'Generacionalismo', Educação & Realidade, 2013, Maio/Ago, V.37 n.2: 353-382.
- J. Clarke, *Citizen-consumers and public service reform: At the limits of neo-liberalism?*, in Policy Futures in Education, 2007, 5(2), pp. 239-248.
- M. Bonetti, M. Villa, *In the shadow of legalism: understanding community participation in an overly-bureaucratic context*, Critical Policy Studies, 2014, Vol. 8 No. 4, pp. 447-464.
- S. Sabatinelli, M. Villa, *Happy ever after in the quasi-market place? The dowry logic of active labour policy in Lombardy Region*, International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 2015, Vol. 35, Issue 11/12.

Option 3. THEMATIC PATH: *Ecology, evolution and organizational processes: systemic approaches to sustainable development:*

- G. Bateson, *Verso un'ecologia della mente*, Milano, Adelphi, 2000 (o edizione più recente). Solo i saggi: "La spiegazione cibernetica", "Finalità cosciente e natura", "Forma, sostanza e differenza". EN Edition: *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Only the

Chapters: "Cybernetic Explanation", "Conscious Purpose versus Nature", "Form, Substance and Difference"

- W.E. Stead, J.G. Stead, *Can Humankind Change the Economic Myth? Paradigm Shifts Necessary for Ecologically Sustainable Business*, Journal of Organizational Change Management, 1994, Vol. 7 No. 4, 1994, pp. 15-31.
- S. Benn, E. Baker, *Advancing Sustainability Through Change and Innovation: A Co-evolutionary Perspective*, Journal of Change Management, 2009, 9:4, 383-397.
- B. Siebenhüner, M. Arnold, *Organizational Learning to Manage Sustainable Development*, Business Strategy and the Environment, N. 16 2007, pp. 339-353.
- A. Espinosa, T. Porter, *Sustainability, complexity and learning: insights from complex systems approaches*, The Learning Organization, Vol. 18 No. 1 2011, pp. 54-72

Methodological indications. Lectures are based on theoretical-active teaching methods, mainly based on Action-Research methods for learning and integrated use of Theory, Experience, Reflection. Lessons include mixes of oral presentations, practical exercises, discussion and comparison.

Exam mode. Exams are based on oral test according to the art. 23 of University Regulations on Teaching Activity. The third part of the program can be addressed in a different way, consisting of a group oral presentation (up to 3 people) to be performed in the classroom based on the contents of the texts of the chosen option. Those who choose this way will not be asked to answer questions on the third part of the program during the individual exam. Group presentations can be made in one of the three planned days per year. Dates and other informations can be found on Professor's Institutional website. Exams can be carried out in English.

Indications for non-attendants. All the Students, particularly Non-attending students, Not Italian Native Speakers and Erasmus Students, are encouraged to get as soon as possible all the informations about courses, exams and other teaching issues from the Professor's Institutional website https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/. To clarify any possible doubt, getting further information about courses, lectures and examinations held by Prof. Villa, or to discuss the syllabuses you can write an e-mail to matteo.villa@unipi.it or access to the Office Hour (see schedules and variations on the same website).

Course Web Page: https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/sociologia-del-lavoro-e-dellorganizzazione/

Note. Students are encouraged to carefully check the institutional Professor's web site to find additional information on programs and on their validity for courses of previous Academic Years and information on where to find the required texts

Attention: Students are not authorized to use unofficial handouts or photocopies beyond legal limits for preparing exams.

Where to find texts:

- Watzlawick's volume "La realtà inventata. Contributi al costruttivismo", in which you can find the essay of F.J. Varela, *Il circolo creativo: abbozzo di una storia naturale della circolarità*, is located at the Library of Philosophy and History and at the Juridical Library of the University of Pisa.
- Articles of Options 2 and 3 of Bonetti and Villa, Sabatinelli and Villa, Stead and Stead, Benn and Baker, Siebenhüner and Arnold are published in online Scientific Journals to which the University of Pisa Library System is a subscriber. They can be downloaded for free by connecting through the University network. Information on the Library System website and on the Professor's Institutional Website.

- The text of Bifulco, *Gabbie di vetro. Burocrazia, governance e libertà* (Option 2), is hardly available in bookstores and on-line stores because out of the catalog. It is available at the Political Science Library.
- The texts of Clarke and Newman and Clarke (Option 2) can be downloaded from the course web page.
- All other texts can be found in bookstores, online shops, and in the Political Science Library.