SOCIOLOGY OF ORGANIZATION
2020-21 LM 59, 63, 87/88 9 ECTS
Prof. Matteo Villa

WARNING: option 1 of the third part of the program could be dropped depending on the Coronavirus mitigation measures, as it is based on the possibility to carry out the laboratory in presence (frequency: mandatory) in June 2021.

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 (**depending on Coronavirus conditions and mitigation measures**)*: 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 change in public administration and 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.
- Option 4. THEMATIC PATH: *IV Industrial revolution and organizational processes: the political, socio-economic and environmental implications of the second machine age*: organizational changes and opportunities and risks of digitization of production and information processes through the development of robotics, additive technologies, integrated automation, internet of things, virtual reality, big data, cloud and artificial intelligence.

Attention: Besides the texts to be prepared, some short, non-mandatory readings on the Coronavirus crisis (Covid-19) related to the course topics are proposed. Proposals for integration/modification of the program including this topic (work, oranization, environment and the Covid 19 crisis) are accepted upon agreement with the lecturer.

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: a cybernetic vision*
- G. Bateson: *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Chandler publications, New York, 1972.. Only the Chapters: "Cybernetic Explanation", "Conscious Purpose versus Nature", "Effects of Conscious Purpose on Human Adaptation", "Form, Substance, and Difference"
- G. Bateson, *Mind and nature. A Necessary Unity*, 1979. Only the Chapter: 2 "Every schoolboy knows"
- 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:*

- E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York: Garden City, 1959. Only the third chapter: "Regions and Region Behaviour"
- G. Bateson: *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Chandler publications, New York, 1972. Only the Chapter "The Logical Categories of Learning and Communication ".
- 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 Dynimics*
- P. Allen, S. Maguire, B. McKelvey (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Complexity and Management*, Sage, London 2011. Only the Chapters 20 "Organizational learning and complexity science: exploring the joint potential" and 22 " *Implications of complexity science for the study of leadership*"

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. Solo: "Premessa", Capitolo 1 "Tempi moderni" e Capitolo 6 "Gabbie di vetro".
- D.A. Sotiropoulos, *Public Administration in Europe North and South: Enduring Differences and New Cleavages*, in E. Ongaro, S. Van Thiel (eds.), "*The Palgrave Handbook of Public Administration and Management in Europe*", Palgrave, 2017 (capitolo 46).
- T. Kilkauer, *What Is Managerialism?*, Critical Sociology, 2015, Vol. 41(7-8), pp. 1103-1119 https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0896920513501351
- M. Bonetti, M. Villa, *In the shadow of legalism: understanding community participation in an overly-bureaucratic context*, Critical Policy Studies, 2014, Vol. 8/4, pp. 447-464 https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2014.950305

- 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 https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-11-2014-0114

Option 3. THEMATIC PATH: *Ecology, evolution and organizational processes: a cybernetic vision*

- G. Bateson: *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Chandler publications, New York, 1972. Only the chapters: "The Role of Somatic Change in Evolution", "Ecology and Flexibility in Urban Civilization"
- 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 https://doi.org/10.1108/09534819410061351
- S. Benn, E. Baker, *Advancing Sustainability Through Change and Innovation: A Co-evolutionary Perspective*, Journal of Change Management, 2009, 9:4, pp. 383-397 https://doi.org/10.1080/14697010903360574
- N. Abdelkafi, K. Täuscher, *Business Models for Sustainability From a System Dynamics Perspective*, Organization & Environment, 2016, Vol. 29(1), pp. 74–96 https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1086026615592930
- J. Good, A. Thorpe, *The Nature of Organizing: A Relational Approach to Understanding Business Sustainability*, Organization & Environment, 2020, Vol. 33(3), pp. 359–383 https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1086026619858858

Non-mandatory readings about the Covid-19 crisis:
- I. Gough: *In times of climate breakdown, how do we value what matters?*, Open Democracy, April 2020: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/times-climate-breakdown-how-do-we-value-what-matters/
- D. Reuschke, U. Felstead, *Changing workplace geographies in the COVID-19 crisis*, in Dialogues in Human Geography, 2020, Vol. 10(2) pp. 208–212, https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820620934249
- O. Mallettand, A. M. Stirling, L. Skountridaki, *Where does work belong anymore? The implications of intensive homebased working*, Gender in Management, September 2020, download: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/GM-06-2020-0173
- Villa M., *Dire, fare, pensare qualcosa di diverso: il Coronavirus come crisi ecologica*, Scienza e Pace Magazine, aprile 2020

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. Whether online (remote teaching) it will be adapted to the possibilities offered by the available tools, trying to encourage the active participation of students. Information will be available on the lecturer's website: https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/

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, a practical exam consisting of a group oral presentation (2 or 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 programme during the individual exam. Group presentations can be made in one of the three planned days per year. Dates and other information can be found on Lecturer's Institutional website at the page Studenti > Esami.
At the student's choice it is possible to take the exam in English.

Depending on the security and organizational conditions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, oral and practical tests will be handled online or in attendance. Information on the lecturer's website https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/ and on Valutami.

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 (see below). To clarify any possible doubt, getting further information about courses, lectures and examinations held by the lecturer, or to discuss the syllabuses you can write an e-mail or access to the Office Hour (see below).

Where to find more information:

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.

E-mail lecturer: matteo.villa@unipi.it

Lecturer institutional website: https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/

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

Other students' info: https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/studenti/

Where to find texts:
- Articles of Options 2 and 3 of Kilkauer, Bonetti and Villa, Sabatinelli and Villa, Stead and Stead, Benn and Baker, Abdelkafi and Täuscher, Good and Thorpe 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.
- All other texts can be found in bookshops, online shops and in books or e-books available from the Library of Political Sciences.