esade

TEACHING GUIDE - 2025-2026

Socio-Political Context of Business

UGRA_016407

Departments	Department of Society, Politics and Sustainability
Teaching Languages	English
ECTS	6
Teacher responsible	Liliana Arroyo Moliner - liliana.arroyo@esade.edu

Course Goals

1. Critically analyse contemporary social structures and dynamics using key sociological concepts

2. Use sociological frameworks to understand how power, identity, and inequality operate in everyday social settingss

3. Develop a critical awareness of one's own position in society; understanding how individual experiences are shaped by broader societal structures and the moral and civic responsibilities that come with it.

4. Identify and assess the impact of digital society is reshaping several sociopolitical and economic dimensions

5. Compare and contrast major ideologies and explain their influence on modern sociopolitical thought.

6. Strengthen skills in critical thinking, reflective analysis, and sociopolitical critique.

Previous knowledge

None

Prerequisits

None

Teaching methodology

The course is structured in two interrelated parts. The first part introduces the theoretical foundations of Sociology, equipping students with key concepts, frameworks, and critical perspectives necessary to understand the structure and dynamics of contemporary societies. The second part shifts the focus to the political and sociopolitical context, exploring how ideologies, institutions, and power relations shape social life—particularly within the framework of today's digitally-mediated world.

Each session is organized into two segments:

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Part 1 – Main theme: The session opens with a core sociological theme (e.g., social stratification, socialization, role theory, ideologies such as liberalism or socialism). This section will involve short lectures, guided readings, and concept-based discussion.

Part 2 – Focus theme (Real-World Themes): In the second half of the session, the class will be divided into two groups to engage in case-based discussions or applied activities. Focus topics will center on real-world dilemmas and current issues connected to the digital society—such as algorithmic bias, online identity, surveillance capitalism, and platform labor. These themes will serve as springboards for students to apply the theoretical tools introduced earlier in the session.

Sessions are intentionally designed to foster active participation, critical inquiry, and self-reflection. Through structured debates, collaborative analysis, and reflective exercises, students will be challenged to interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions, explore normative tensions, and engage diverse perspectives with intellectual openness and respect.

This experiential and discussion-based approach will also encourage students to bridge academic knowledge with lived realities. Activities will incorporate elements of experiential sociology, allowing learners to analyze the social world not only conceptually but also through direct observation and engagement.

Student preparation and engagement are essential. Participants are expected to arrive ready to contribute thoughtfully to discussions, having completed all assigned readings and prepared reflection tasks. Respect for contrasting viewpoints, curiosity, and a willingness to grapple with complexity will be core expectations throughout the course.

All course materials, resources, and communications will be managed through the university's eCampus platform (Moodle).

Description

Course contribution to program

This course makes a significant contribution to the overall programme by equipping students with the analytical tools and interpretative frameworks necessary to understand and navigate the complexity of contemporary social realities. By engaging with key sociological concepts and applying them to real-world scenarios, students will enhance their ability to critically assess the societal forces that influence individuals, organizations, and institutions. For future professionals in management and business administration, the course fosters an awareness of their potential role as agents of change, promoting socially responsible and ethically grounded decision-making. In addition, the course strengthens core academic and

professional competencies—such as oral and written communication, critical reading, and effective teamwork—further supporting students' development as reflective, articulate, and collaborative practitioners.

Short description

We often take the world around us for granted—our identities, roles, institutions, and values can seem natural, fixed, or inevitable. Sociology invites us to question this illusion by revealing how much of what we consider "normal" is, in fact, socially constructed. From everyday behaviors to large-scale political systems, everything is social.

This course introduces students to the foundational theories and methods of sociology, helping them uncover the invisible structures that shape individual lives and collective experiences. It encourages a critical examination of modern society and equips students—especially those pursuing management and business studies—with the tools to understand and navigate the complexity of today's interconnected, rapidly changing world.

Students will explore key sociological concepts such as socialization, identity, inequality, culture, power, and social change. Each session pairs a core theoretical theme with an applied focus on real-world dilemmas, particularly within the context of digital society. Topics include digital surveillance, algorithmic discrimination, platform capitalism, the future of work, and contemporary political ideologies—from liberalism and neoliberalism to socialism and participatory democracy.

Through active participation, group work, and self-reflection, students will develop their ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and understand their potential as transformative agents in society.

Bibliography

Diana Kendall, Sociology in Our Times: The Essentials (Book)
, Other readings and materials will be posted in the Moodle

Activities

In-class discussions and debates

Written and/or oral exams

Role-play exercises and simulations

Quizzes/tests

Group presentations

Readings

Content

#	Topic
1	Whys and whats of Sociology. Self, privilege and identity map
2	Socialisation processes, roles and identities. The fallacy of digital natives. Socialisiation in digital times
3	Social control and deviance. Surveillance societies in digital age. Attention economy, behavioural design and dark patterns in digital interfaces.
4	Social stratification and inequalities (gender, race & ethnicity, class, education, abilities and capacities, age)
5	Culture and cultural processes (appropiation, assimilation, appreciation; prejudice vs bias, culture clash)
6	Social structure and institutions (families, religions, education, health and social care). The platformisation of traditional institutions
7	Power Dynamics, social change and reproduction. Digital delegation? From neurorights to Agentic AI
8	Postmodernity & liquidity. Postmoderm condition in times of AI (truth, reality, authorship, and identity)
9	Liberal ideas and practices today. The problems of meritocracy. Care & Merit.
10	Neoliberal ideas and practices today. Platform capitalism, Gig Economy & Cryptocurrencies
11	Socialist ideas and practices today. Cooperativism and employee ownership (platform coop)
12	Democracy and its variants. Workplace democracy and participation
13	Authoritarism today. Populism and Corporate involvement in politics
14	Welfare state today. Housing: Whose responsibility?
15	Social movements. Digital activism, green transition, data geopolitics, technological sovereignty
16	Colonization and de-colonization today. The arquitecture of International Cooperation. Climate change: who causes it and who suffers from it?
17	Global governance and geopolitical crisis. The role of MLOs in conflict times
18	Sociology of the future: Utopias, dystopias and prototypign new societies

Assessment

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
Attendance and punctuality	Attendance. In accordance with ESADE regulations, attendance is mandatory for this course. Students who fail to attend 80% of the course will not be allowed to pass the first sitting of the course and will be required to sit the retake exam.	Ordinary round	0.00%
Written and/or oral exams	Mid-term exam. A minimum score of 4/10 is required	Ordinary round	23.00%
Written and/or oral exams	Final exam. A minimum score of 4/10 is required	Ordinary round	22.00%
In-class analysis and	Active and open-minded	Ordinary round	15.00%

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
discussion of issues	participation		
Individual or team exercises	Individual assignments	Ordinary round	25.00%
Group project	Group tasks	Ordinary round	15.00%
Written and/or oral exams	A minimum score of 4/10 is required to pass the course	Retake	50.00%
Written and/or oral exams	Activities (midterm, quizzes, presentation) done during course	Retake	50.00%

PROGRAMS

DBAI23-Double Degree in Business Administration and Artificial Intelligence for Business (Undergraduates: Business)

DBAI23 Year 1 (Mandatory)

DBAI25-Double Degree in Business Administration and Business and Artificial Intelligence (Undergraduates: Business)

DBAI25 Year 1 (Basic)