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UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI URBINO
CARLO BO

Gender History, Globalization and a Caring Democracy

Online advanced course

The course is organized by the University of Urbino Carlo Bo in collaboration with the Società Italiana delle Storiche (Italian Society of Women Historians) (SIS) and with the Italy and San Marino Office of the International Labor Organization (ILO / ILO).

It is sponsored by the Comitato Unico di Garanzia per le pari opportunità, la valorizzazione del benessere di chi lavora e contro le discriminazioni (CUG) (Guarantee Committee for equal opportunities, the enhancement of the well-being of those who work and against discrimination CUG) of the University of Urbino Carlo Bo.

Introduction

The gender division of labour: historical perspectives

Gender is crucial for the distribution of labour. Women and men perform partly different tasks and jobs. The current division of labour is the result of long-term historical processes that have assigned care and domestic chores to women. The growing female participation in the formal labour market has only partially affected family work: domestic and care work is still mainly carried out by women.

At the same time, however, especially in countries such as Italy, because of the ageing of population, the family has expanded its traditional role of assistance to the elderly, increasingly becoming the employer of paid carers (*badanti*) and domestic workers. These workers are mostly women. Private households increasingly turn into workplaces, but care and the domestic sphere largely remain associated with women.

If for about two centuries the division between activities performed within and outside the domestic sphere has been strengthening, in recent years the development of the internet has boosted working from home. The domestic sphere, even in this respect, is once again the site of paid labour, that is to say a workplace. The Covid-19 pandemic has imposed an unexpected acceleration of this trend, offering an interesting vantage point of both the potential and the problems of working from home for women and men.

Globalization, migration and the international division of care work

Carers and domestic workers are largely immigrants: in addition to a gender division of care and domestic work, there is a geographical division which mirrors the imbalances of the globalized post-colonial world.



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Knowledge of the historical processes of globalization, colonization and its heritage are therefore crucial to understand the imbalances and contradictions of the present.

Many problems of our globalized world, dominated by capitalist market economies, are made particularly obvious today by the Covid-19 pandemic. The circulation of people and goods also involves the circulation of pathogens.

Public and private welfare

The pandemic has highlighted the different ability of different health and welfare systems to cope with the emergency. Systems based on private, rather than free, universal public health care, prevent a share of the population from being treated. While this threatens the collective well-being at all times, it is even more so during a pandemic: in the case of infectious diseases, in fact, the presence of infected but untreated people is also a risk for those who support the exclusion of part of the population from the opportunity of being treated. Thus, ensuring the health and well-being of everyone guarantees the same for everyone, and vice versa.

Over the coming months, the comparative analysis of different welfare systems will unveil their different rates of success in ensuring the population's health and well-being. However, it is already clear that systems based on the so-called "do-it-yourself family welfare", on private health systems, on few, albeit excellent, health centres, and on limited territorial units prevent a balanced management of different levels of need. In Italy, the fragmentation of regional health systems creates unequal opportunities of access to services and care, making it necessary to look for fairer solutions

Rights and well-being

The presence of people whose health is not well protected contradicts the principle of equality, implying that some people are most likely to suffer and thus lowering the overall level of well-being. At the same time, it is precisely from the least protected groups and among the immigrants, in part irregular, that domestic workers who care for the elderly, as well as cleaners, social and health workers employed in hospitals, social welfare homes and sheltered accommodation are recruited.

The variable intersection of gender, origin, class, place of residence etc. creates, on the one hand, different privileges and, on the other, disadvantages, forms of marginalization and exclusion.

To ensure well-being, it is essential to rethink and guarantee rights: equality rights, the right to work, the right to health, the rights of migrant people.

A caring democracy

A feminist perspective on care is crucial in the aforementioned issues, especially as concerns a caring democracy. This approach suggests putting the pursuit of care at the centre of political life: care for people and the environment. In the Italian case, translating such suggestions into actions might imply strengthening the national health system, as well as developing a denser and more efficient network. Such a perspective entails a rethinking of the relations between public and private, families and institutions. It could also imply the re-evaluation of both the work of the people who take care of their families, friends, neighbours, hitherto largely ignored, and the work of those who carry out these activities professionally, such as domestic workers, carers for the elderly, and childminders, introducing, among other things, adequate migration policies.



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Such a rethinking could or should involve the times and places of work, considering the potential but also the dangers of working from home, especially for women who risks being trapped in new forms of marginalizing domesticity, becoming once more chained to care activities. On the contrary, the theorists of a caring democracy suggest that care should be a concern shared by all citizens, not just women. Care should not be a source of marginalization and frustration for those who provide it, without being able to enjoy it, but an attention, by all, to collective and individual well-being.

Aim and audience of the course

The course aims to provide an adequate historical, anthropological, sociological, political, legal and economic preparation allowing attending students to understand our present as the result of complex historical developments. Furthermore, it aims to provide knowledge and skills useful to plan policies to overcome present imbalances and promote individual and collective well-being thanks to a new way of considering care (a caring democracy).

In particular, the course aims to provide attending students with knowledge and skills about:

- gender relations,
- the gendered division of care work, domestic and extra-domestic work,
- the evolution over time of the domestic sphere as a workplace and the economic value of the work carried out in it: unpaid care and domestic work performed by family members, primarily by women; paid domestic and care work (domestic workers, carers, childminders etc.); industrial homework; smart working,
- the worldwide divisions of care and domestic work as linked to globalization
- the globalization and imbalances of the post-colonial world
- international migrations and the rights of migrants
- the right to work and the right to health
- gender equality and the policies to pursue it
- the relationship between public and private welfare
- public policies to improve welfare
- a caring democracy.

The course is primarily addressed at policy makers, members of Parliaments, trade unionists, administrators, people working in the service sector, people working in the health, social-health and welfare sectors, professors and teachers, as well as people with other professional or personal interests in the topics of the course.

Programme and ETCS

The course will be held from October 2020 to June 2021 and includes 108 hours of online lectures (20 CFU-ETCS).

The course is divided into 3 modules of 9 weeks each, for a total of 27 weeks. There will be 4 weekly hours of lectures, thus 36 hours for each module, equal to 6 CFU-ETCS. The writing of a final essay is also expected (2 CFU).



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Students will have access to an internet platform, will be able to follow the lectures in streaming and ask questions of lecturers. The teaching materials will be made available for individual study.

Lectures will be held on Friday afternoon, starting on 23 October, from 3.15 pm to 5.00 pm and from 5.15 pm to 7.00 pm.

Lectures will be mainly in Italian. The Italian translation of English lectures will be provided.

For the detailed programme of the course, see:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SKv-ge5DduDwKh7Uqs_yvVhw13zT04hs/view?usp=sharing.

Deadlines, available places and enrolment fees

Pre-registration is free and must be done by 9 October 2020; the deadline for registration is 16 October 2020.

The course will take place following the pre-registration of at least 25 people. Maximum enrolment is 60 participants.

For information on how to register, see <https://www.uniurb.it/corsi/1755940>.

Enrolment on the course is allowed to students currently enrolled on a bachelor's or master's degree course, or a research doctorate.

The course may be audited.

Fees: € 1,000.00 to be paid as follows:

- first instalment: € 600.00 by 16 October 2020
- second instalment: € 400.00 to be paid by 18 December 2020.

Auditors: € 750.00 to be paid in a single instalment upon registration by 16 October 2020.

Contacts

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