Media Literacy Against Hate Speech

PROF. STEFANO PASTA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the postdigital age, educational institutions are increasingly called to prevent and address hate speech. Contemporary forms of hate speech encompass a wide range of diverse behaviours; flame wars and online polarisation spread across a wide range of cultural contexts. Nevertheless, it is possible to investigate what unites them, blending online and offline dimensions (onlife). Understanding these dynamics is essential if we are to believe in the possibility of a non-naive form of education, one that confronts and challenges these phenomena in their cultural, social, and political dimensions.

At the crossroads of Media Education and Intercultural & Citizenship Education, this course explores educational methods to promote participatory approaches on the social web. It examines the potential of digital technologies to empower individuals and transform communities, while critically understanding the social and cultural dynamics of technological appropriation and re-invention.

The course investigates the historical connections between media, technology, and migration studies. It introduces the framework of Postdigital Intercultures, which assumes that media play a role in shaping intercultural conditions, while at the same time, socio-cultural contexts influence media-mediated representations and uses of reality. Within the broader field of Hate Studies, the course focuses on methods for detecting, countering, and creating counter-narratives in response to hate speech, fake news, and informational distortions related to AI and algorithmic logics. Special attention is given to minority groups often targeted by online hate (Roma and Sinti, Jews, and Muslims…). Case studies of media education projects will be analysed as forms of digital activism and artivism. The analysis will include both Italian projects aimed at countering online hate and initiatives led by activist groups from the Global South, with a focus on contexts in which digital technologies and media literacy can serve as transformative tools.

PREREQUISITES

A background in Education and Media Studies may prove helpful, but it is not compulsory.

METHOD OF TEACHING

Lectures, Open and Guided discussions, case study analysis.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Students have to comply with the following requirements:
- Students are expected to actively contribute to in-class debate.
- Students are expected to study in advance some course readings, when assigned.
- Students will have to take a written exam, at the end of the teaching period (open questions)
- Students are required to do a written assignment on a course-related subtopic, before the final exam, according to given guidelines.

CREDITS

5 ECTS (30 CONTACT HOURS)

GRADING

Attendance and Class participation	20% of final grade
Group assignment	30% of final grade
Written test	50% of final grade

COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS
All the readings will be available in a course pack and the lecturer's slides will be available on Blackboard.

INSTRUCTOR BIO
Stefano Pasta is a Researcher at the Department of Pedagogy at Università Cattolica. His research lies at the intersection of media education and intercultural pedagogy, within the framework of Onlife Citizenship Education. He focuses on information literacy in the age of artificial intelligence, the analysis and counteraction of hate speech and various forms of targeting, as well as educational interventions to promote media literacy. He has coordinated working groups in anti-hate projects, with particular emphasis on the involvement of minority groups

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