Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	From theory to practice: participatory methods for public policy design
Course Code	89204
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	GSPS-02/A
Language	Italian; English; German
Degree Course	Studium Generale - basic course
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	
Lecturers	Prof. Stefania Baroncelli, Stefania.Baroncelli@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/981 dr. Benedetta Carlotti, Benedetta.Carlotti@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/45699 dr. Giulio Rivellini, Giulio.Rivellini@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/53029
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	First semester
Course Year/s	1
CP	3
Teaching Hours	18
Lab Hours	0
Individual Study Hours	0
Planned Office Hours	
Contents Summary	Introduction: from theory to practice in participatory policy design Public participation, co-design and stakeholder engagement

	Participatory methods for identifying public issues Gathering and synthesising evidence: surveys, interviews, focus groups and qualitative data
Course Topics	Introduction: from theory to practice in participatory policy design Public participation, co-design and stakeholder engagement Participatory methods for identifying public issues Gathering and integrating evidence: surveys, interviews, focus groups and qualitative data The case of Bolzano's night-time economy: stakeholders, issues, conflicts and priorities Translating evidence and participation into policy recommendations Communication of results, public reporting and accountability Legal and administrative framework: division of competences and regulatory powers, institutional constraints and administrative tools. Participation in the EU and European projects (New European Bauhaus, Community-Led Local Development) Participation at provincial and regional level and across European regions (within the Euregio).
Keywords	Participative democracy; participation;
Recommended Prerequisites	None. An interest in public policy, civic engagement, public administration or applied social research is useful, but not essential.
Propaedeutic Courses	
Teaching Format	Face-to-face at unibz; any activities in the city or in laboratories are to be confirmed. Online support may be provided for materials and coordination. Short lectures, guided discussions, case studies, small-group exercises, a practical workshop on the 'night-time economy' in Bolzano, reading of selected materials and a short final project. Indicative structure: 9 sessions of 2 hours each. Sessions 1–5: participatory methods and case study, Benedetta Carlotti. Sessions 6–7: legal and administrative framework and regulatory instruments, Giulio Rivellini. Sessions 8–9: in-depth examination of European projects, Stefania Baroncelli

Mandatory Attendance	from
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes	The course is taught by a team of lecturers and is divided into three sub-modules: Dr Benedetta Carlotti – The first part of the course introduces students to the main participatory approaches to the design, analysis and evaluation of public policies, combining theoretical foundations, methodological tools and practical applications. The aim is to provide a general understanding of the concepts of participation, co-design, stakeholder engagement, deliberation and policy design, as well as practical skills useful for designing participatory processes in urban and administrative contexts. The course uses the 'night-time economy' project developed with the Municipality of Bolzano as a case study, through which students will be able to understand how one moves from identifying a public problem to collecting data, establishing priorities and formulating policy recommendations. Dr Giulio Rivellini – The second module provides a legal framework for the institutional and regulatory constraints governing the interventions described in the first module. In particular, the module focuses on national and provincial regulations concerning so-called 'shared administration', and how this can be utilised in the design of public policies. Prof. Stefania Baroncelli – The third module covers participatory models within the EU and at local level, analysing case studies of European projects such as the New European Bauhaus and community-led local development, in the fields of sustainability, urban planning and the environment.
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	Subject-specific skills Knowledge and understanding: by the end of the course, students will be able to understand the main theoretical approaches to public participation and policy design, distinguishing between consultation, co-design, deliberation, stakeholder engagement and public feedback. They will also be able to recognise the role of the legal and administrative framework, including at European Union level, in defining the scope for action in urban policies. Ability to apply knowledge and understanding: students will be able to apply basic tools to map stakeholders, issues and priorities; design a simple participatory process; and interpret evidence from different sources and translate it into realistic policy

	recommendations. Transversal skills / soft skills Independence of judgement: the ability to critically assess the strengths and limitations of participatory processes, including in relation to institutional and administrative constraints. Communication skills: the ability to clearly present a public issue, a proposal for a participatory process and a policy recommendation to a non-specialist audience. Learning skills: the ability to apply the tools learnt to other urban or administrative contexts, identifying appropriate sources, stakeholders and methods.
Assessment	Project work and an oral presentation prepared with the class. Students, either individually or in small groups, develop a brief proposal for the practical application of participatory policy design. Italian or English, at the discretion of the student or group, in line with the course's bilingual format.
Evaluation Criteria	Single final mark. Written project work: 60 per cent. Assesses the clarity of the problem analysis, the appropriateness of the participatory design, the consistent use of evidence, the realism of the recommendations and the quality of the argumentation. Oral presentation: 30 per cent. Assesses communication skills, conciseness, presentation structure, appropriateness of language and ability to answer questions. Participation in classroom activities: 10 per cent. Assesses contribution to discussions, collaboration within the group and the ability to link theory and practice. Alternative arrangements for non-attending students may be agreed with the lecturers.
Required Readings	Bobbio, L. (2004). *A più voci. Amministrazioni pubbliche, imprese, associazioni e cittadini nei processi decisionali inclusivi*. Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane. Andorlini, C., & Pedretti, T. (a cura di) (2025). *Apprendere, crescere, partecipare. Politiche giovanili territoriali in Italia e il caso dell'Alto Adige*. Milano: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli

	S. Baroncelli, La democrazia partecipativa: lo slancio innescato dall'Unione europea. La politica di coesione, il New European Bauhaus e la CLLD (Community-led local development), su federalismi.it
Supplementary Readings	
Further Information	
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Sustainable cities and communities, Partnerships fot the goals, Peace, justice and strong institutions