

**Scuola Superiore
Meridionale**

**Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico
II**

**PhD course in Law and Organizational Studies for People with
Disability a.y. 2021/22**

Communication and organization: digital media, sound, disability (part 1)

Domenico Napolitano

Course description

This course is the first of a two-parts investigation on the role of communication in organizing, with special regard for its declination in digital media, sound and disability. Those three aspects are in fact interrelated: while communication is constitutive of organizations, media technologies are nowadays the main way in which communication is enacted and sound is a crucial part of it; the communicational aspect of organization is also central for disability, since it is through communication aids that disabled people can gain agency, accessibility and inclusion within organizations. In example, augmentative and alternative communication technologies (AAC) based on sound and voice processing can allow broader accessibility and greater inclusion for disabled people with voice or hearing-related impairments, as well as sensor-motor impairments.

In the last decades, scholars have focused the attention on socio-material practices of organizing, in which humans are not anymore the main social actor, while agency is shared in communicative assemblages made of both humans and nonhumans. In this framework, media are being thought of less as conduits or channels connecting one agent with another, and more as structuring conditions configuring the very possibility of agency. Relationships between media and organization can be read in a double sense: on one side media are imagined, designed, operated and transformed in the social context of organizations; on the other, are media themselves, with their nonhuman agencies, that have an organizing power.

In this perspective, communication is not understood merely as the vehicle for the expression of pre-existing 'realities'; rather, it is the means by which organizations are established, composed, designed, and sustained. Consequently, organizations can no longer be seen as objects, entities, or

'social facts' inside of which communication occurs. Organizations are portrayed, instead, as ongoing and precarious accomplishments realized, experienced, and identified primarily – if not exclusively – *in* communication processes. Such processes, which are traditionally related to speech, discourse and writing, are becoming ever more affected by media technologies, network systems and their specific epistemologies.

Among these, sound and sound technologies play an important role, although their importance is being reevaluated only very recently. Sound, in fact, is both a medium of communication and a nonhuman organizing force which affects our way to experience and know the world. This consideration becomes crucial when dealing with the issue of disability and of the way sound technologies affect and potentially enhance the social and communicative agency of disabled people.

This series of classes will engage with several perspectives, from communication theory to media studies, sound studies and disability studies, highlighting intersections among disciplinary fields and their consequences for issues organization theory and organizational inclusion.

Aims

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- understand the importance of communication in organizing and organizational studies;
- master the main concepts of communication theory and media studies;
- recognize the importance of sound and acoustic communication in organization, and the theoretical and practical issues they raise;
- understand the main issues raised by disability studies and their importance for organization studies;
- recognize the role of sound and communication technologies in organizational inclusion of disabled people.

Learning methods

- Students will be required to read the mandatory texts related to each class, as listed in the detailed program below.
- Classes will be based on discussions between the professor and the students regarding the main issues emerging from the background readings. Additionally, students will be expected to engage critically with the texts, identifying the main strengths and weaknesses of the assigned readings.
- All students are expected to actively participate in the debate, providing comments and raising questions on the issues discussed in class.

- Doctoral students will have to prepare a final presentation which has to examine in depth one of the aspects touched upon in the class. The work will be presented during the final class.

Course material

The course material will consist of book chapters and journal articles. In addition to the required readings listed for each lecture, further readings will be suggested during the classes covering specific topics in greater detail. Some of the mandatory texts will be available for consultation in the University Library. Students who may have problems with materials retrieval can contact the teacher at the following email: domenico.napolitano-ssm@unina.it

Exam & Evaluation

Doctoral students will be evaluated based on their constructive participation in class and the final presentation. In-class participation accounts for 60% of the evaluation.

Final presentation

Students will have to prepare a presentation which examines in depth one of the aspects touched upon in the class, at their choice. The presentation can be delivered in any format (power point, artwork, sound work, project work, multimedia work, scientific paper, and so on), and will have to be discussed with the class during the final lesson.

Detailed program

Class 1 4/04/2022 11:00-13:00	Communication theory: main principles and concepts
Mandatory readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peters, J.D. (1999), <i>Speaking into the air: A History of the Idea of Communication</i>, Chicago: Chicago University Press (Chapter 1, <i>Dissemination and dialogue</i>) – Italian edition <i>Parlare al vento. Storia dell'idea di comunicazione</i>, Roma: Meltemi (Capitolo 1, <i>Disseminazione e Dialogo</i>).
Optional readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habermas, J. (1981), <i>Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and Rationalization of society</i>, any available English edition (Chapter 3) – Italian edition <i>Teoria dell'agire comunicativo. Volume 1:</i>

	<i>Razionalità nell'azione e razionalizzazione sociale</i> , Bologna: Il Mulino (Capitolo 3, <i>Prima considerazione intermedia: agire sociale, attività finalizzata e comunicazione</i>).
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Class 2 11/04/2022 11:00-13:00	Communication and disability
Mandatory readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinchevski, Amit, John Durham Peters (2015), "Autism and new media: disability between technology and society", <i>New Media & Society</i>, DOI: 10.1177/1461444815594441 • Shew, Ashley "Let Covid-19 Expand Awareness of Disability Tech," <i>Nature</i> 581 (7 May 2020): 9: https://media.nature.com/original/magazine-assets/d41586-020-01312-w/d41586-020-01312-w.pdf
Optional readings	

Class 3 02/05/2022 11:00-13:00	Media, Technology, Organization
Mandatory readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander, Neta. "Our Bodies, Ourselves" <i>Real Life Magazine</i> (1 August 2019): https://reallifemag.com/our-bodies-ourselves/ • Fleet, Chancy. "Accessibility, Augmented" <i>Urban Omnibus</i> (6 Nov 2019): https://urbanomnibus.net/2019/11/accessibility-augmented/ • Deborah Righettoni, "Poteva andarmi peggio", https://www.valigiablu.it/campagna-stereotipi-disabilita/ • Deborah Righettoni, "Lavoro e disabilità: perché le parole della ministra mi preoccupano", https://www.valigiablu.it/lavoro-disabilita/

Optional readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brown, Lydia X.Z., Ridhi Shetty, and Michelle Robinson. <i>Algorithm-Driven Hiring Tools: Innovative Recruitment or Expedited Discrimination?</i> Washington, D.C.: Center for Technology & Democracy, 2020. https://cdt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Full-Text-Algorithm-driven-Hiring-Tools-Innovative-Recruitment-or-Expedited-Disability-Discrimination.pdf
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Class 4 09/05/2022 11:00-13:00	Disability studies and disability theory
Mandatory readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siebers, T. (2008), <i>Disability Theory</i>, University of Michigan Press (Chapter 1, <i>Introduction</i>).
Optional readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Williams, J., Mavin, S. (2012), "Disability as Constructed Difference: A Literature Review and Research Agenda for Management and Organization Studies", <i>International Journal of Management Reviews</i>, vol. 14, 159-179.

Class 5 16/05/2022 11:00-13:00	Sound as culture, imagination and knowledge: the perspective of sound studies
Mandatory readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sterne, J. (2012), "Sonic Imaginations", in J. Sterne (Ed.), <i>The Sound Studies Reader</i>, New York, Routledge. Friedner, M., Helmreich, S. (2016), "Sound Studies Meet Deaf Studies", in M. Bull, L. Back, <i>Auditory Culture Reader</i>, New York and London: Routledge.
Optional readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Di Scipio, A. (2012), "Sound object? Sound event! Ideologies of sound and the biopolitics of music", <i>Soundscape. Journal of acoustic ecology</i>, 13: 10-14 – Italian edition "Ascoltare l'evento del suono. Note per una biopolitica della musica", in A.I. Del Monaco (a cura di), <i>Musica & Architettura</i>, Roma, Edizioni Nuova Cultura.

Class 6 23/05/2022 11:00-13:00	Sound, organization and law
Mandatory readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coletta, G., Gabbi, F. (2013), 'Lo spazio del suono: sinestesie organizzative nelle politiche urbane sul rumore', <i>Studi Culturali</i>, 1, 89-106. • Erlmann, V. (2019), "The Sonic Object: Sound and Violence in the Legal Imagination", in M. Grimshaw-Aagaard, M. Walther-Hansen, M. Knakkegaard (eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Sound and Imagination</i>, Oxford University Press. • James Parker: https://vimeo.com/132396948
Optional readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Napolitano, D., Sicca, L.M. (2021), "Organizing in sound: Sound art and the organization of space", <i>Studi Organizzativi</i>, 2/2021, 93-120. • Kaulingfreks, R. (2010), "Managing Noise and Creating Silence", <i>Philosophy Today</i>, 54(1), 40-54.

Class 7 30/05/2022 15:00-17:00	Sound, media and disability, part 1: Impairment theory
Mandatory readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterne, J. (2021), <i>Diminished Faculties: A Political Phenomenology of Impairment</i>, Durham & London, Duke University Press (<i>Introduction and Impairment theory: a user's guide</i>).
Optional readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterne, J. (2021), <i>Diminished Faculties: A Political Phenomenology of Impairment</i>, Durham & London: Duke University Press (Chapter 2, <i>Meet the Dork-O-Phone</i>).

Class 8 06/06/2022 11:00-13:00	Sound, media and disability, part 2: voice
Mandatory readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterne, J. (2021), <i>Diminished Faculties: A Political Phenomenology of Impairment</i>, Durham & London: Duke University Press (Chapter 2, <i>Meet the Dork-O-Phone</i>).
Optional readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Napolitano, D. (2021), "Reuniting speech-impaired people with their voices. Sound technologies for disability and why they matter

	for organization studies”, <i>puntOorg International Journal</i> , doi: https://doi.org/10.19245/25.05.pij.OF.09.11.21.1 .
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Class 9 13/06/2022 11:00-13:00	Sound, media and disability, part 3: Communication aids
Mandatory readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alper, M. (2017), <i>Giving Voice: Mobile Communication, Disability, and Inequality</i>, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (Chapter 1, Introduction).
Optional readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mills, M. (2012), “Do signals have politics? Inscribing abilities in cochlear implants”, in T. Pinch, K. Bijsterveld (eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies</i>, New York: Oxford University Press.

Class 10 20/06/2022 11:00-13:00	Final presentation
	Each student will present his own personal research starting from Jonathan Sterne’s book. At 17:00 all students will have to attend the presentation of Jonathan Sterne, with discussants Mara Mills, Neta Alexander and David Friederich