Scuola Superiore Meridionale

Law and Organizational Studies for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion

a.y. 2026/27

Accessibility

Domenico Napolitano

d.napolitano@ssmeridionale.it

Course description

This course is intended for PhD students and undergraduate students from any area of the Scuola Superiore Meridionale. The workload and final evaluation will take into account the students' varying levels of education and their stage of academic training.

The course explores the theme of accessibility through theoretical perspectives and case studies. It is organized into pairs of lessons: the morning session introduces a theoretical perspective, while the afternoon session addresses a case study related to that perspective.

The literature on accessibility highlights how barriers are one of the main causes of discrimination against people with disabilities, as they reflect a world designed without considering the needs of certain individuals, who are thus marginalized. In organizational studies, accessibility is defined as an aspect of designing tools, environments, and services in a way that removes barriers and ensures usability for people with disabilities (Doussard, 2024; Hamraie, 2017). The well-known Universal Design approach aims to embed accessibility principles everywhere so that the distinction between products/spaces/services for the general public and those for the niche market of disability becomes unnecessary. At the same time, more recent perspectives emphasize that accessibility should not be treated as a "special need" of people with disabilities, but rather as a need shared by all. Moving beyond views solely focused on regulatory compliance, authors associated with crip theory reframe accessibility as an open and intersectional process concerning the negotiation of social agency and the distribution of power (Papalia, 2019). As Tanya Titchkovsky emphasizes, "accessibility is a way people have of relating to the ways they are embodied as beings in particular places where they find themselves" (Titchkovsky, 2011: 3).

Aims

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

- understand the importance of accessibility in organizing and organizational studies;
- master the main concepts of access theory;
- recognize the different perspectives related to physical, sensory and cognitive access;
- understand the main issues raised by disability studies and their importance for organization studies.

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: d.napolitano@ssmeridionale.it

Exam & Evalutation

Doctoral students will be evaluated based on their constructive participation in class and the final presentation. The quality of in-class participation accounts for 60% of the evaluation.
Undergraduate students will agree their evaluation method with the teacher during the Course.

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 30/09/2027 11:00-13:00 Room 2	**The question of access**
Mandatory readings	• Titchkovsky, T. (2011), *The Question of Access*, University of Toronto Press.
Optional readings	• Ferri, D. (2025), Advancing an Embodied Understanding of Accessibility for Persons with Disability, *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 17(2). • Faranda, I. (2023), Mapping Access: A Tool for Social Change, *puntOorg International Journal*, 9(1).

Class 2 30/09/2027 15:00-17:00 Room 2	**The question of access: Case study 1**
Mandatory readings	• Titchkovsky, T. (2011), *The Question of Access*, University of Toronto Press.
Optional readings	• Ferri, D. (2025), Advancing an Embodied Understanding of Accessibility for Persons with Disability, *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 17(2). • Faranda, I. (2023), Mapping Access: A Tool for Social Change, *puntOorg International Journal*, 9(1).

Class 3 07/10/2027 11:00-13:00 Room 2	**Curating Access**
Mandatory readings	• Cachia, A. (2023), *Curating Access: Disability Art Activism and Creative Accommodation*, Routledge.
Optional readings	• Papalia, C. (2019), An accessibility manifesto for the arts, *Canadianart*, https://canadianart.ca/essays/access-revived/

Class 4 07/10/2027 15:00-17:00	**Curating Access: Case study 2**

Room 2	
Mandatory readings	• Cachia, A. (2023), *Curating Access: Disability Art Activism and Creative Accommodation*, Routledge.
Optional readings	• Papalia, C. (2019), An accessibility manifesto for the arts, *Canadianart*, https://canadianart.ca/essays/access-revived/

Class 5 14/10/2027 11:00-13:00 Room 2	**Building Access**
Mandatory readings	• Hamraie, A. (2017), *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability*, Unviersity of Minnesota Press.
Optional readings	• Doussard, C., Garbe, E., Morales, J., & Billion, J. (2024). Universal Design for the Workplace: Ethical Considerations Regarding the Inclusion of Workers with Disabilities. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1-12. DOI: 10.1007/s10551-023-05582-y • Alexander, N., Rangan, P., Titchkovsky, T. (2023), Theorizing a Future for Disability Media Studies: A Virtual Roundtable, *Spectator*, 43(2), 48-56.

Class 6 14/10/2027 15:00-17:00 Room 2	**Building Access: Case study 3**
Mandatory readings	• Hamraie, A. (2017), *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability*, Unviersity of Minnesota Press.
Optional readings	• Doussard, C., Garbe, E., Morales, J., & Billion, J. (2024). Universal Design for the Workplace: Ethical Considerations Regarding the Inclusion of Workers with Disabilities. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1-12. DOI: 10.1007/s10551-023-05582-y • Alexander, N., Rangan, P., Titchkovsky, T. (2023), Theorizing a Future for Disability Media Studies: A Virtual Roundtable, *Spectator*, 43(2), 48-56.

Class 7-8 21/10/2027 11:00-15:00 Room 2	**Students' works discussion – Q&A**

	Students will share their questions and doubts about their work in progress, present preliminary results and discuss with the class about the ongoing work.

Class 9-10 21/10/2027 11:00-15:00 Room 2	**Assessment**
	Each student 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.