



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Coastal and Marine Botany

2122-2-F7502Q017

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#### Aims

##### Knowledge and understanding:

- Knowledge of the diversity of species and structures of coastal vegetation and marine algae and plants.
- Understanding the role of coastal vegetation and marine algae and plants in their own ecosystems.

##### Applying Knowledge and understanding:

- Acquiring skills in identifying coastal plants and marine algae and seagrasses
- Providing basic concepts about the applications of marine algae and plants

##### Making judgements:

- Favours group sessions, debate and discussions (for instance after watching videos or reading scientific articles)

##### Communication and learning skills:

- Conducting interactive lessons with a learner-centred approach: students will present thematic seminars

#### Contents

This subject will focus on algae and plants of both marine submerged and emerged environments and particularly

on marine microalgae, macroalgae and seagrasses and on terrestrial plants belonging to coastal vegetation, with a special emphasis on those typical of Mediterranean and tropical regions. In the introductory part of the course attention will be paid in analysing the main evolutionary stages which have led to the actual biodiversity of marine algae and plants and in deepening the knowledge on the major taxonomic groups of algae and plants that can be found in Mediterranean and tropical marine and coastal environments. The following lessons will focus on the systematics of marine algae and seagrasses; a taxonomic classification will be conducted in an evolutionary key, based on the different kinds of photosynthetic pigments. Furthermore, the main morphological, biological and ecological features will also be described for the most important groups, as well as their environmental importance. The second part of the course, instead, will focus on coastal vegetation of Mediterranean and tropical regions. Initially, a general characterization will be conducted, considering the main taxonomic groups of coastal plants, prior to describe in detail the vegetation of the most particular habitats (cliffs, estuaries, mangrove forests, etc.).

The third part of the course will be dedicated to analyse the main environmental and human problems related to marine algae, such as biological invasions and harmful algal blooms. Finally, the last lessons will be organized as workshops, during which small groups of students will be asked to deep in their knowledge on the main uses of marine algae and plants and to share them with their mates.

## **Detailed program**

### **INTRODUCTION TO COSTAL AND MARINE BOTANY**

- Plant evolution and biodiversity (from Cyanobacteria to Angiosperms).
- Main taxonomic groups of algae and plants living in coastal and marine environments.

### **SYSTEMATICS OF MARINE ALGAE AND PLANTS IN TERMS OF EVOLUTION**

- Microalgae: Chrysophyceae, Dinoflagellata, Bacillariophyceae, Chlorophyceae, Pelagophyceae.
- Macroalgae: Rhodophyta, Ulvophyceae, Phaeophyceae.
- Tracheophyta.

### **COASTAL VEGETATION AND FLORA**

- Salt and brackish marshes.
- Sand dunes.
- Mangrove swamps and forests.
- Coastal cliffs.

### **PROBLEMS RELATED TO MARINE ALGAE AND PLANTS (Main topics)**

- Alien species and biological invasions.
- Harmful algal blooms.
- Toxic algae.

## **USES OF MARINE PLANTS (Students' workshops)**

- Bio-indicators.
- Phytoremediation.
- Biofuel.
- Fertilizers.
- Food/pharmacy.

## **Prerequisites**

None

## **Teaching form**

- Lessons: 5 credits
- Tutorials: 1 credit

## **Textbook and teaching resource**

### **- Slides**

### **- Textbooks and References:**

"Marine Botany", by Dawes C.J., John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

"Diatoms: Biology and Morphology of the Genera", by Round et al., Cambridge

"Marine Benthic Dinoflagellates: Unveiling Their Worldwide Biodiversity", by Horiguchi et al., Schweizerbart

"Chrysophyte algae: ecology, phylogeny and development", by Sandgren et al., Cambridge "An Introduction to Phytoplankton: Diversity and Ecology", by Pal & Choudhury, Springer "Seaweed Ecology and Physiology", by Hurd et al., Cambridge "Global Seagrass Research Methods", by Short & Coles, Elsevier

"Alge e Fanerogame del Mediterraneo", by Rodríguez-Prieto et al., Il Castello (edizione italiana); "Algaebase", Guiry & Guiry, [www.algaebase.org](http://www.algaebase.org)

"Mangrove Ecosystems: A Global Biogeographic Perspective. Structure, Function and Ecosystem Services.", by Rivera-Monroy V.H., Springer

"Coastal dunes, ecology and conservation" by Martínez M.L and Psuty N.P., Springer

## **Semester**

First semester

## **Assessment method**

The examination could be oral or written. Normally, it is oral and includes a presentation of a scientific article. During the lockdown/COVID period it will be oral at distance (online).

During the exam the candidate must demonstrate his ability to address and critically discuss the topics.

The examination consists of three parts:

- A) 2 open questions of which 1 on coastal vegetation and 1 on seaweed / seagrasses.
- B) 3 closed questions (test-like) for which students will have to choose the right answer out of three options
- C) a PowerPoint presentation of a scientific article (to be agreed with the teacher)

**Mark range:** 18-30/30

## **Office hours**

Monday 14.00-15.00 (to be requested by email)

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