



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Intercultural Communication in The Global Age

2122-2-F8802N026

Learning objectives

The course aims at providing the essential conceptual tools to analyze everyday experience in highly differentiated, interconnected and mediatized societies.

At the end of the course, students will be able to understand the relationship between cultural references and communication practices, to identify a variety of areas in which cultural differences emerge and reconfigure communication processes, to distinguish between different analytical dimensions that come into play when people with different linguistic competences as well as diverse cultural background interact. They will also greatly improve their intercultural communication competencies.

Contents

The course focuses on intercultural communication studies as a consolidated interdisciplinary perspective that is essential to account for the highly culturally complex communication processes – either face-to-face or mediated - that characterize contemporary societies.

Detailed program

Multiculturalism is now considered, both by those who rejoice and those who fear an ineluctable conflict between cultures, an incontrovertible fact. Words such as "culture", "identity" and "difference" constitute the basic vocabulary to describe the world in which we live. Consequently, intercultural communication has imposed itself - both theoretically and practically - as the privileged framework for analyzing the relationships between communication, culture, and difference in contemporary societies.

In the course, we will analyze the following issues: the growing cultural complexity of everyday experience; the "more or less" peaceful coexistence - of a variety of "grammars" that structure daily communication flows; the relentless reproduction of identity and cultural differences during the face-to-face and/or mediated daily interactions; the role that traditional media and digital interactive platforms play with respect to either the circulation/transformation/re-contextualization of identity models on a global scale and the construction of "shared common sense" by which we recognize ourselves as members of a community. These themes will be analyzed paying attention to recent developments in both *Postcolonial Studies* and *LGBT and Queer Studies*. We will also tackle some more specific issues such as: the relationship between cultural differences and communication practices; the role played by linguistic and socio-cognitive skills in situations of intercultural communication; the figure of the "stranger" as a paradigmatic element of contemporaneity; the media construction of cultural alterity; the processes of convergence and differentiation in contemporary media systems; the growing importance of diversity policies in recent urban transformations; the consumption of difference in a variety of tourism practices.

Prerequisites

Knowledge of the main theoretical and research perspectives in the field of sociology of culture and media studies. Knowledge and basic skills related to the use of both qualitative techniques for social research and discourse analysis.

Teaching methods

Lectures, project works, and presentations.

Assessment methods

Attending students: an individual research paper on a theme to be agreed with the teacher.

Non-attending students: oral examination.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The reference texts for both students and non-attendees will be presented during the first lesson and, where possible, will be made available in pdf format on the e-learning page of the course.

Reading list for Erasmus students:

Baumann G., 1999, "The Multicultural Riddle. Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities", London, Routledge (some chapters).

Wise A., Velayutham S. (eds.), 2009, "Everyday Multiculturalism", Palgrave, Macmillan, (some chapters).

Spencer-Oatey H., Franklin P., 2009, "Intercultural Interaction. A Multidisciplinary Approach to Intercultural

Communication", Palgrave Macmillan.
