UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Anthropology of The Contemporary

2122-3-E2001R027

Course title

“The times they are changin’”: crisis, future and cultural imagination

Topics and course structure

Understanding cultural diversity and similitude in the contemporary context refers to some main aspects: the acceleration of globalization process, of shrinkage of space dimensions, the intensification of cultural encounters in the same localities, the ideas and practices of multiculturalism on the new global ecumene, the shrinking on the present dimension, aspects that anthropology has always been studying departing from local contexts and from the perspectives of social actors through ethnographic analysis

The introductory part of the course will offer the tools to read some main aspects of the traffic of cultures of present time, where cultures stands as contemporaneous, i.e. in the same common time: for many decades,

and today in common sense, le *gran partage* between We and the Other has been based on dichotomies as modernity/tradition, developed/underdeveloped, thus on temporal hierarchical scales, where the Other have been classified as antique or out of or frozen in time, thus non contemporary to us. Reading cultures today means understanding the distances and contiguities between us and them at the same *time*. Attention will be thus devoted to dynamic of cultural syncretism, hybridization, taking as standpoint the fact that any culture, as dynamic symbolic system is already multicultural.

In the monographic part of the course two main questions will be deal of contemporaneity of cultures:

1-Our times characterized by multiple modernities, by sense of crisis, by identity closures and spreading of borders, and by the tragic increase of pattern of inequalities, at home and abroad:

2-Our times are also characterized by another main dynamic of change: “the changing weather” linked to climate changes, which refers not to chronological time, but to meteorological time, which has a severe impact on cultures and societies, also "here at home".

Some main aspects will be dealt with: the patterns of socialization of “nature” (a concept in crisis in our modernity) in different cultures today, the social “water worlds” as main sentinel of global and local climate changes (the system of cooperation of common pool resources, the loosing of local economic autonomy, patterns of sustainability and of environmental relatedness) and the cultural responses and strategies in facing an issue that is shared by all in atmospheric overheating due to carbon fossil emission, all under the same sense of crisis and weather dynamic. Issues of environment and of climate change are in fact very much cultural issues linked to cultural imagination, of cultural and social invention and not just technical or engineering sectors.

Objectives

Lectures will be based on active participation and on a common space of communication on the issues of the course, with constant participation of students, and it will promote the understanding of following tools on the traffic of cultures.

Knowledge and comprehension: students will learn in reading the patterns of communication and of reproduction of cultures in change, taking distance from culturalist models more and more widespread that isolate cultural identity and change.

Capability in applying knowledge and comprehension: students will learn in understanding global cultural dynamic (migrations, work, environment) departing on the shape they take place on the local contexts and from the perspectives of local social actors, through the study of ethnographic case studies and by acquiring awareness of the diverse cultural models and of the ethnocentric patterns at stake in their perspectives.

Objectives of the course are not merely the capability in autonomous judgement and reflection, but learning through mis/understandings,as the capability in learning in group and cooperation through interaction of the learning experience and as collective space of communication.

Methodologies

Lectures will be held in class, and occasionally in open-air at the Parco Nord, in the open space of Teatrino.

Seen the focus of the course, representations of the environment in the climate crisis, this space will be part of the content of the lecture process.

Every main issue of the program will be introduced by a shared analysis of musical texts of popular culture, as a common work on collective imagination around the main thematics of the course.

Online and offline teaching materials

Some PP slides will be charged online, with some lecture material.

For incoming Erasmus students and English speaking student, being the course held in Italian, a specific program

can be envisioned.

As didactic material Power Points and part of the program will be downloadable from the e-learning page of the course

Programme and references for attending students

1-Van Aken, .M., 2020, Campati per aria, eleuthera, Milano.

2-Dispensa "ConTEMPOraneo", disponibile dopo l'avvio del corso sulla pagina online

3-Aime, Favole, Remotti, Il mondo che avrete. Virus, Antropocene, Rivoluzione, 2020, Utet

Programme and references for non-attending students

1-Van Aken, .M., 2020, Campati per aria, eleuthera, Milano.

2-Dispensa "ConTEMPOraneo", disponibile dopo l'avvio del corso sulla pagina online

3-Aime, Favole, Remotti, Il mondo che avrete. Virus, Antropocene, Rivoluzione, 2020, Utet

4-Ghosh, A., 2017, La grande cecità, Neri Pozza

Assessment methods

The exams consist in an oral dialogue through questions to verify the acquisition of knowledge and tools of the course in antrhopology of contemporary cultural dynamics. The exam stands as a final dialogue after the space of communication of the course.

Office hours

mail appointment

Programme validity

two years

Course tutors and assistants