UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Cultures and Societies of The Islamic World

2122-2-F0101R071

Course title

Cultures and societies of North Africa

Topics and course structure

The main goal of the course is to develop an eclectic and interdisciplinary approach to the way of viewing the contemporary world through the study of the Islamic world, with some historical and ethnographic insights related to the North African region. The level of microanalysis will be placed in relation to processes of transnational relevance. A mirror of unpredictable and complicated political and social transformations, North Africa will be a case study of anthropological reflection in order to grasp and understand fragments of a contemporary condition that is neither Eastern nor Western, but integrally human.

Students' reflection will be oriented to understand the makeup and evolution of the concept of "North Africa", based in particular on a knowledge of the history of the countries of the area and of Islamic thought that informs a large part of the cultures and societies of this part of the world, looking in particular at the relationship between this area and the "western" world.

Objectives

Educational goals

Knowledge and understanding
Students will acquire historical and ethnographic knowledge of the societies of the Islamic world, and especially of North Africa, in a comparative perspective. They will learn to critically address the study of complex phenomena such as war, religious fundamentalism and the spread of human rights on a planetary scale. They will acquire

specific concepts related to the areas studied and will learn to place them within wider historical and geographical processes.

Application of knowledge and understanding
At the end of the course students will have learnt to problematize the categories and concepts used to describe the North African context. They will have acquired a capacity for a synchronic and diachronic comparison that will allow them to connect the acquired knowledge to issues of broader interest for the social and human sciences.

Communication skills
Through the discussion of the topics and texts selected in classes, the course also aims to a) encourage students to publicly debate, in an aware and well informed way; b) present their ideas in a clear and convincing manner; c) place themselves in relation to others in a dialogic and open dynamic; d) improve exposition skills.

Methodologies

"Frontal" classes; collective discussions based on the readings; vision and analysis of images and videos; individual exercises of exposition of selected themes.

Online and offline teaching materials

Readings and other materials presented and discussed in class will be made available online.

Programme and references for attending students

- Carole Hillenbrand,*Islam. Una nuova introduzione storica*, Einaudi 2016 [pp. 403] - or the original English version: Carole Hillenbrand,*Islam. A New Historical Introduction*, Thames & Hudson 2015

- A book chosen among the following three titles:

Caterina Roggero, *Storia del Nord Africa indipendente. Tra imperialismi, nazionalismi e autoritarismi,* Bompiani 2019 [pp. 478]

Jane E. Goodman, *Berber Culture on the World Stage: from village to video*, Indiana UP 2005 [pp 238]

Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, *The Berber identity movement and the challenge to North African states*, Univ. of Texas Press 2011 [pp 292]

- Teaching document written by the teacher on the history and culture of North Africa, plus other materials shown during the classes and subsequently uploaded in the Internet

- A chosen topic, agreed with the teacher, possibly to be introduced in the classroom during the course for the benefit of the other students. Anyone who does not make such exposition in the classroom will add the topic agreed upon to the programme of the exam.

Programme and references for non-attending students

4 books:

1) Carole Hillenbrand,*Islam. Una nuova introduzione storica*, Einaudi 2016 [pp. 403] - or the original English version: Carole Hillenbrand,*Islam. A New Historical Introduction*, Thames & Hudson 2015

2) A book chosen among the following three titles:

Caterina Roggero, *Storia del Nord Africa indipendente. Tra imperialismi, nazionalismi e autoritarismi,* Bompiani 2019 [pp. 478]

Jane E. Goodman, *Berber Culture on the World Stage: from village to video*, Indiana UP 2005 [pp 238]

Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, *The Berber identity movement and the challenge to North African states*, Univ. of Texas Press 2011 [pp 292]

3) Teaching document written by the teacher on the history and culture of North Africa, plus other materials shown during the classes and subsequently uploaded in the Internet

4) Vermondo Brugnatelli, *Libia inedita. Paralipomeni della tirannomiomachia*, ed. L'asino d'Oro 2012 [pp. 170], or alternatively another reading, agreed with the teacher on other topics related to the course.

In special cases, non-attending students may agree with the teacher alternative programs, concerning topics of particular interest also for personal research or work experiences.

Assessment methods

- Oral examination

During the exam the degree of knowledge of the subject will be assessed, with particular regard not only to the acquisition of notions but also to the ability to place them within wider historical, geographical and anthropological processes.

Office hours

By appointment, set up personally in the classroom or by e-mail to the teacher's address vermondo.brugnatelli@unimib.it

Programme validity

The programs are valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Caterina Roggero, Ph.D., Postdoctoral Research Fellow