UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Anthropology of Religions

2223-1-F0101R004

Course title

Anthropology of religions

Topics and course structure

The course analyses the main anthropological theories of religion, showing the relations with the epistemological and historical-social context within which these theories have been elaborated.

The anthropological study of religions attends to religious life via the study of everyday practices. Rather than understanding religion as a set of beliefs, anthropologists examine mental and practical behaviours and attitudes that can be defined as "religious". These everyday practices are constituted by many aspects of social life including performance, politics and power, gender and desire.

The course mainly focuses on the material aspects of religion (body, objects, images, etc.), and takes into consideration religious representations and practices in relation to the social contexts of reference. According to current perspective the course aims to show how each religion needs material elements to refer to in order to affirm its own "truth".

Objectives

Through this teaching, with constant and participative attendance of lessons, we intend to promote the following learning, in terms of:
Knowledge and understanding
Students will acquire specific competences on the meanings and the roles of religious concepts and practices in

different socian and historical context. The focus will be on the materiality of religions
Ability to relate differentiated knowledge and models.
Students will learn to manage the different knowledge and models about religions and its related concepts and connect them to the other fields of the anthropological discipline
Ability to apply knowledge and models
Students will learn to apply knowledge and models learned during the course to the analysis of contemporary societies and will develop an intellectual stance to understand the multiplicity of religious realities.

Methodologies

The course makes use of a variety of methodologies: lectures, class discussions on materials such as texts (including those scheduled for the examination), slides, audiovisual documents provided by the lecturer or autonomously proposed by the students; participation of researchers presenting current research.
Attending students could be involved in short ethnographic projects experiences in order to develop a theoretical discussion.

Online and offline teaching materials

Additional teaching materials to the scheduled texts (background articles, documents, films) will be made available on the course page.

Programme and references for attending students

The program is temporary and some texts may be modified.

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1. a collection of essays selected by the teacher

2. Fabietti U. Materia sacra. Corpi, oggetti, immagini, feticci nella pratica religiosa. Cortina, Milano 2014, pp. 283.

3. A. Brivio, Serpenti, sirene e sacerdotesse. Antropologia dei mondi acquatici in Africa occidentale, 2022, Roma Viella

Un libro a scelta tra:

B. Palumbo, Piegare i santi. Inchini rituai e pratiche mafiose, Marinetti, 2020.

O. Costantini La nostra identità è Gesù Cristo. Pentecostalismo e nazionalismo tra gli eritrei e gli etiopici a Roma, 2019

E. Fabiano, G. Mangiameli (a cura di) Dialoghi con i non umani, Mimesis 2019

van LoyenNapoli sepolta. Viaggio nei riti di fondazione di una città 2020

Programme and references for non-attending students

The program is temporary and some texts may be modified.

1. Bloch M., Da preda a cacciatore. La politica dell'esperienza religiosa, Cortina, Milano 2005

1.a) C. Geertz La religione come sistema culturale in Geertz, C. Interpretazione di culture, Il Mulino, Bologna 1998 (1967)

2. Fabietti U. Materia sacra. Corpi, oggetti, immagini, feticci nella pratica religiosa. Cortina, Milano 2014, pp. 283.

3. A. Brivio, Serpenti, sirene e sacerdotesse. Antropologia dei mondi acquatici in Africa occidentale, 2022, Roma Viella

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Assessment methods

Final exam for attending students

Oral examination

The final exam consists of an interview in which the student critically discusses the questions posed by the teacher, trying to put the theme in relation to the texts discussed in the classroom (attendant studens) and to the readings indicated in the program. The appropriateness of the lexicon used is of considerable importance.

Office hours

email appointment

Programme validity

Two academic years. This year's programme can therefore be carried over to the winter session in February 2025

Course tutors and assistants

Valentina Vergottini

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES