UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

# Antropologia Politica

**2324-2-F0101R003**

## Course title

Political Anthropology

## Topics and course structure

"Invisible" Powers
The course introduces to anthropological perspectives on the 'invisible': witchcraft, the occult and conspiracy theories evoke a set of hidden forces whose meaning changes historically and geographically. For political anthropology, the 'invisible' has both constructive and destructive uses. It builds power, as much as it becomes a mobilisation tool for the oppressed. Above all, it expresses people's reasonable concern that the exercise of power may engender new inequalities or unsettle accepted social arrangements. Through the analysis of concrete case studies, we will learn to take 'the invisible' seriously. History orientate its comprehension and helps uncover the interlacement of the political imagination with "social relations, political tensions, cultural disquietude, and moral uneasiness" (Fassin 2021, p. 128). Being a second year course, political anthropology builds on the knowledge students acquired during the first year through other fundamental courses.

An on-line seminar italian will introduce to the developments of political anthropology and to a selection of key-concepts.

## Objectives

Thanks to the constant and participatory attendance to classes, the course promotes the knowledge and understanding of power as a historical process, and of the perspectives developed by political anthropology to analyse it critically, with a focus on the debates promoted by intellectuals from the Global South. The course

strengthens the transversal under-standing of politics in regards with different dimensions of human experience, and in the perspective of both dominant and subaltern groups. It also enhances students' capacity to develop their own point on view on the knowledge acquired in class and thanks to individual study.

Communication skills, learning abilities and the capacity of autonomous thought will be increased through discussions of theoretical and practical issues.

## Methodologies

The course applies different methodologies: lectures, class discussions on selected articles, slides, audio-visual materials provided by the professor or autonomously proposed by the students; participation of researchers that present their work in progress.

## Online and offline teaching materials

Attending classes is a dynamic experience. The course will develop thanks to the collaboration between professor and students in the reading and analysis of the texts selected for discussion as much as through proposals of integration. The course moodle platform is a point of reference for both attending and not-attending students.

## Programme and references

Classes are in italian. If you understand and speak it fluently, consult the program in the Italian section of this syllabus; if not, consult the section below for not-italian speaking students.

THIS PROGRAM IS MEANT ONLY FOR STUDENTS WHO DO NOT SPEAK ITALIAN (*solo per studenti che non parlano l'italiano*)
1- John Gledhill- Power and Its Disguises: Anthropological Perspectives on Politics, London 2000
2- J. Goody, The Theft of History (2006)
3- Two books in the following list

A. Mbembe, On the Postcolony (2001)
P. Geschiere, Witchcraft, intimacy, and trust: Africa in comparison (2013).
J. Comaroff, Jean, J. L. Comaroff, Theory from the South: Or, how Euro-America is evolving toward Africa (2015).
N. R. Hunt, A Nervous State: Violence, Remedy, and Reverie in Colonial Congo (2016)

## Assessment methods

Oral exam:
The evaluation will be based on the understanding of the reading materials; the presentation of contents in a clear and synthetic way; the ability to critically analyse and re-elaborate, making connections between assigned texts. Students may start the exam by proposing a theme that they consider transversal to what learnt in classes and by individual study.

## Office hours

E-mail appointment

## Programme validity

Two years

## Course tutors and assistants

Raul Zecca Castel

Gabriele Masi

## Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES