



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Cultures and Societies of Africa

2324-2-F0101R025

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#### Course title

Cultures and Societies of Africa

#### Topics and course structure

The challenges of doing research in Africa and with the African diaspora

Between the 1930s and 1950s, Africa was an important laboratory for anthropological theory. After an introduction that deals with the challenges and the political factors that shaped the work of ethnographers in those years (and the ethical, practical and theoretical solutions they adopted), the course familiarizes the students with contemporary research on Africa. Thus, students will engage with the contents, the practice and the conditions of production of ethnographic knowledge on Africa and the African diaspora, and will learn to account for processes such economic transformations, the dynamic interconnection with other reas of the world, the relationship with the environment, mobility, socio-political change. Through guided ethnographic exercises, students will explore the pervasiveness and the cultural, religious, social, economic and political relevance of Africa and the African diaspora in contemporary world dynamics.

#### Objectives

The course will enhance the knowledge and understanding of key topics and authors in the field of African Studies, with a focus on interdisciplinary dynamics.

Through the active participation in classes, students will learn to built up a historical and anthropological perspective on contemporary Africa; they will learn to use the African experience as a general tool in the analysis of

similar phenomena in other parts of the world, and improve their ethnographic abilities.

Communication skills will be increased through problem solving strategies, and collective discussions about theoretical and practical issues, which demand the positioning of students. Learning skills are increased through active participation and discussion in the classroom.

## **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 than present their work in progress, ethnographic exercises in selected contexts. The use of English or Italian will shift according to the linguistic skills of the classroom.

## **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**

Students will prepare the exam on:

1. S. F. Moore, **Antropology and Africa** (1994)
2. A **selection of articles**, among those that will be discussed in the course, to be negotiated with the professors
3. An **ethnographic exercise** to be negotiated with the professors

**NOTE:** students that do not attend classes will have to contact the professors for support

## **Assessment methods**

**Oral interview:** through open questions that verifies the knowledge and understanding of the materials assigned; discussion of the materials used during classes and of the ethnographic exercise.

**Italian students carry out the exam in Italian, expect those who ask to do it in English.**

## **Office hours**

Contact us at our e-mail addresses and we will answer rapidly

## **Programme validity**

Two years

## **Course tutors and assistants**

Gabriele Masi

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

NO POVERTY | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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