UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Cultural Anthropology - A-L

2425-2-E1901R142-AL

Course title

Cultural Anthropology

Topics and course structure

The course is an introduction to cultural anthropology that today is a critical knowledge aimed at understanding and analyzing cultural diversity and the processes of identities construction in the contemporary world.

Anthropology, born from the meeting with other visions of life and human being i, is an important tool for understanding how cultural diversity is constructed and what are the languages, practices and tools that establish this diversity.
"Culture" is a notion that common sense often invests with stereotypes or reduces to simple culturalism. During the course, special attention will be devoted to ethnographic method as anthropological instrument apt to understand cultural alterity.

Objectives

The course aims to provide students with solid knowledge in cultural anthropology, presenting some notion of discipline such as society, ethnicity, religion, rite, power, gender, etc. The course also intends to present some crucial steps of the history of anthropology and the methodological issues of its approach such as field research, the "immersion" in another world of life, decentralization of the perspective etc. In this sense, the discipline reveals its educational dimension exploring the phenomena of acculturation and the encounter with the "other", but also in the clash and friction or in the fascination that diversity can arouse.

The lessons and the readings provide the students with the tools necessary for the understanding of the dynamics of identity and cultural differences. The goal is to develop an attitude to comparison and critical approach to multiplicity and cultural realities. The students will gain useful knowledge for critical reflection on the complexity of the contemporary world.

Methodologies

The course consists of:
(a) Two two-hour classroom lectures in erogative mode. First lesson, the lecturer presents the structure and content of the programme, examination and assessment methods. Last lesson, she highlights the main topics covered during the course and provides further information on the final examination.
b) Twenty-two two-hour lectures in mixed classroom mode. These lectures are structured to provide a diverse learning experience. In the first part, the lecturer delivers a frontal lecture (erogative mode). In the second part in interactive mode, students actively participate in proposed activities, such as discussion of video material projected during the lecture, discussion of specific topics and exercises related to the lecture topic.
c) Four lessons for the preparation of an "ethnographic observation" exercise that will be carried out during the course
**Attendace and active participation are recommended.

The exam can be performed in English by foreign/Erasmus students.**

Online and offline teaching materials

other materials (video and articles) will loaded on the elearning page

Programme and references

1 - Fabietti U. 2023, Elementi di antropologia culturale, Mondadori
to be done:
Parte prima, tutto
Parte seconda, capitoli 1
Parte quarta, capitoli 2 e 3
Parte quinta, tutto
Parte sesta, capitoli 1 e 3
Parte settima, tutto
Parte nona, tutto
Particolare attenzione va posta alle schede contenute nel libro

2 - King C., 2020 La riscoperta dell’umanità. Come un gruppo di antropologi ribelli reinventò le idee di razza, sesso e genere nel XX secolo, Einaudi

3 – one book among the following:

a) Brivio, A., Mattalucci, C. 2022, La materia per pensare la morte, edizioni Libreria Cortina

b) Bourgois P., Shonberg J., 2019, Reietti e fuorilegge. Antropologia della violenza nella metropoli americana,

Derive e approdi

c) Ciabarri L., 2020, L'imbroglio mediterraneo. Le migrazioni via mare e le politiche della frontiera, Edizioni Cortina

d) Emanuela Borgnino, Ecologie native, Milano, elèuthera, 2022.

e) Giuffre M., Turci M., 2021, Traiettorie dello spazio. Luoghi, frizioni, relazioni, Meltemi

f) Biffi D., 2025, “Auto-etnografia dell'accoglienza. Lavorare nei servizi per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati”, Edizioni junior

g) Brivio A., 2023, Serpenti, sirene e sacerdotesse. Antropologia dei mondi acquatici in Africa occidentale, Viella editore

h) hooks b., 2020, Insegnare a trasgredire. L'educazione come pratica della libertà, Meltemi editore

i) R. Zecca Castell, Mastico y trago. Donne, famiglia e amore in un batey domenicano, Firenze, Editpress, 2023

for those who will carry out the ethnographic observation: the book will be replaced by the ethnographic observation and the reading of an article recommended by the teachers according to the chosen topic

4 - one book among following:

Jeffrey Eugenides, Middlesex , 2002

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Americanah, 2013

Amitav Ghosh, La maledizione della noce moscata. Parabole per un pianeta in crisi, 2022.

Edward Wilson-Lee, Una storia d'acqua. Dove si narra di un omicidio, di un poema epico e di due visioni contrapposte della storia globale. Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2023.

Assessment methods

ORAL EXAMINATION
The exam consistes of two parts, both oral. The first one concernes the Manual. Passing this first step is essential to access to the second part of the exam, during which the program will be discussed

Evaluation criteria
The teacher will test the notions acquired and the capacity of a critical understanding of the program. The student will have to reach at least 18/30 in the first part in order to pass to the secon part exam.

NB Students with DSA who intend to use compensatory tools are requested to send at least ten days before the exam their P.Uo.I.

Office hours

appointment by mail

Programme validity

Two academic yers. This means that this programme is valid from the summer session (June, July, and September) of 2025 until the winter session (January and February) of 2027.

Programme 2022-2023 is valid until February 2025.

Programme 2023-2024 is valid until February 2026.

Course tutors and assistants

Chiara Calzana

Paola Saderi

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | GENDER EQUALITY | CLIMATE ACTION