UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

European Cultures and Societies

2425-2-F0101R070

Course title

Cultures and societies of Europe

Topics and course structure

The “Cultures and Societies of Europe” course offers an overview of the field of study of anthropology and ethnology of Europe, with a focus on its “urban question”.

Starting from an interdisciplinary and critical analysis of the concept of Europe, its history and its evolution, the lessons will first deal with some fundamental thematic issues, such as honor and Mediterranean societies, post-socialism, transnationalism and European identity, and then focus on specific contemporary cases of “Europeanization” relating to the strategies implemented by the European Union in orienting urban policies and the “regeneration” of the cities.

The course will combine lectures, laboratory activities and fieldwork in order to approach not only the intellectual operations and knowledge produced in the historical development of the field of study, but also some research practices that characterize it.

Objectives

Through a constant and participatory attendance at the lessons, the course intends to promote the following learning objectives, in terms of:

Knowledges:

- Understanding the main anthropological and ethnographic perspectives relating to the field of study of European anthropology and European ethnology;
- Critically interpreting the historical, political and social process of identity construction of the European Union.

Ability to connect different knowledges:

- Analyzing in a comparative and multi-scalar perspective the processes related to some European urban policies, starting from their local dimensions that can be grasped through ethnography.

Ability to apply knowledge:

- Applying the deconstructive gaze of anthropology to European urban contexts, understood as political-social arenas produced by local, supra-local and transnational practices and representations.

Methodologies

The lectures (about 30 hours) will be complemented by workshops (about 26 hours) and other methods such as: active learning, interactive lecturing, debates, group exercises, fieldwork.

Attending students will be required to constantly and actively participate in the lessons.

Online and offline teaching materials

The course involves the use of academic texts, lesson forms, videos, Moodle platform.

Other teaching materials will eventually be selected according to the personal and professional interests of the students.

Programme and references

The course will be divided into three sections. The first (eight lessons) will consist of an introduction to the field of study and its “cardinal points” (main schools and paradigms of European anthropology, research fields, contemporary developments).

The second (five workshops) will focus – also thanks to some fieldwork activities – on the anthropological study of urban and “regeneration” policies observable in the Milan area, understood as an emblematic field of analysis of the process of construction (and simultaneous deconstruction) of the identity of the European Union.

The third and last section (last four lessons), planned as a series of seminars, will include the intervention of guest speakers who will present urban ethnographies useful for structuring potential comparisons with what is analyzed in the second section.

Between the first and the second section, students will be asked to organize short presentations on topics of their specific interest concerning the course. Further information about this part will be provided during the first lessons.

The program may undergo slight changes based on the needs expressed by the students attending.

The course includes the study of the texts indicated below:

Section 1:
Kockel, U.C., Máiréad, N., and Frykman, J. (eds.) (2012), A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe, Blackwell Publishing, Malden (Capitoli 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13; un capitolo a scelta della parte III; un capitolo a scelta della parte IV).
Scarduelli P. (2013), L'Europa disunita. Etnografia di un continente, Archetipo, Bologna.

Section 2:
Grassi, P. (2022), Barrio San Siro. Interpretare la violenza a Milano, Franco Angeli, Milano.

Section 3:
A book to be chosen from the following list:
Benasso, S., Benvenga, L. (2024), Trap! Suoni, segni e soggettività nella scena italiana, Novalogos, Anzio-Lavinio (RM).
C?ag?lar, A., Glick Schiller, N. (2018), Migrants & City-making: Dispossession, Displacement, and Urban Regeneration, Duke University Press, Durham and London.
Dines, N. (2012), Tuff City: Urban Change and Contested Space in Central Naples, Berghahn Books, New York.
Fava, F. (2008), Lo Zen di Palermo. Antropologia dell'esclusione, Franco Angeli, Milano.
D'Orsi, L., Rimoldi, L. (a cura di) (in corso di stampa), Etnografie delle smart city. Abitare, relazionarsi e protestare nelle città intelligenti italiane, ledizioni, Milano.
Hekki, M. (2002), Europa. Storia di un'idea e di un'identità, il Mulino, Bologna.
Marasco, M. (2021), Spacciati, rabbiosi, coatti. Periferia romana e costruzione del panico morale, Ombre corte, Verona.
Saitta, P. (2023), Violenta speranza. Trap e riproduzione del panico morale in Italia, Ombre corte, Verona.
Scandurra, G. (2017), Bologna che cambia. Quattro studi etnografici su una città, Junior, Bergamo.
Scarpelli, F. (2021), Centro storico, senso dei luoghi, gentrification. Antropologia dei rioni di Roma, Cisu, Roma.

Part of the bibliography can be modified and integrated according to the individual and professional interests of the students.

Although this course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students, course material can also be available in English, and students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so.

Assessment methods

Attending students
Attending students will be evaluated on the basis of the group presentation made at the end of the first section and on the basis of a diary (of maximum 6 pages) written during the second section.

Starting from these papers, the ability to create connections and critically analyze the contents of the course and the texts will be assessed during the oral exam.

Non-attending students
Non-attending students must send by email – at least ten days before the exam date – a reading note (i.e. a critical reflection) of approximately 6 pages on the optional book (Section 3). The exam consists of an oral discussion aimed at verifying the knowledge acquired through the study of the texts included in the exam program.

Office hours

By appointment, to be agreed via e-mail: paolo.grassi@unimib.it

Programme validity

The programmes are valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS