UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Research Methods in Social and Cultural Anthropology

2425-1-F0101R001

Course title

Theories and practices of the ethno-anthropological research

Topics and course structure

The course aims to problematize the conditions of fieldwork, analyzing the concrete research activities, the theoretical elaborations and the textual restitutions. It critically discusses the ethnographic practice in the context of the profound changes in the conditions, functions and aims of the research in the contemporary world. Comparing the classic monographs with the most recent productions, it combines the analysis of the epistemological and theoretical foundations of the different methods with the examination of the work in the field and the application of disciplinary knowledge.

Objectives

The course promotes the dialogue between the theoretical reflection and the ethnographic research in an autonomous and creative way. It develops the ability to choose between different methodologies required by the application of the disciplinary knowledge. It provides a solid and systematic knowledge in the field of the anthropological sciences, identifying its methodological specificities, interdisciplinary connections and applications. Starting from the analysis of different ethnographic cases, it exercises the transversal and comparative anthropological perspective on the critical analysis of the contemporary societies. The active participation of the student is strongly encouraged.

Methodologies

The course uses diversified methodologies: lectures; class discussions; the use of slides, audiovisual documents provided by the teacher or by the students; participation of researchers presenting their works.

Online and offline teaching materials

Materials used in lectures (slides, videos, etc.) will be made available to students on the e-learning page.

Programme and references

The course critically reflects on the relationship between epistemological foundations, theoretical perspectives and methodological applications in order to analyze the different methods used by anthropology. It contrasts the modern conception of science with the contemporary scientific acquisitions and focuses on the concrete conditions of the research activities, on the microprocesses of everyday life, on the asymmetry of the ethnographic encounter, on the translations across cultural and linguistic boundaries, on ethical problems and on the social role of the anthropologist. It articulates, both from a historical and from theoretical point of view, the main methodological problems with the epistemological and ethical options: from the choice of the field and of the object of the research, to the development of the project; from the elaboration of an ethnographic authority, to the relations with interlocutors; from the production of data (observation questionnaires, interviews, life stories, etc.) to their organization; from the different ethnographic writings (notes, notes, diaries, final text) to the theoretical elaboration and the return of the results of the research to the various interlocutors, internal or external to the academic world.

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

Oral exam. The exam aims at verifying the knowledge acquired through the critical study of the texts. It will asses the acquisition of the specific disciplinary language and the ability to articulate and discuss the topics of the course

Office hours

Before classes by appointment.

Programme validity

Two academic years

Course tutors and assistants

Dott. Daniele Buonomo
Dott.ssa Annalisa Molgora
Dott.ssa Patrizia Pertuso

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION