



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Anthropology of Tourism

2425-1-F0101R069

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#### Course title

Anthropology of Tourism

#### Topics and course structure

Anthropology has struggled to recognise the scientific status of a subject that was long considered too frivolous and superficial, such as tourism, and has only turned to it with considerable delay compared to the other social sciences. One of the possible reasons for this delay can be recognised in the relationship of similarity and descent that links anthropology and tourism: The global spread of travel practises has increased the possibilities of encounters with the "other", made the presence of tourists ubiquitous in the fields of anthropologists, and led to the production of discourses rooted in immediate experience that question ethnographic authority itself. What is the difference between anthropological knowledge and touristic rhetoric? How does the experience of anthropologists differ from that of tourists? In the search for answers to these questions, anthropology has developed a critical reflection on the various forms of encounter with the Other and identified the privileged site of observation of tourist interaction in the binomial *host-guest*. The *host-guest* relationship is understood as a game that involves visitors and the visited in a continuous and mutual overcoming of identity boundaries, and as an encounter of ideas that is not free of mutual stereotypes and prejudices.

The course begins with an analysis of the binomial *host-guest* in its multiple declensions, which will be examined through some *case studies* from the anthropological literature on tourism in order to arrive at its deconstruction through a critical consideration and to question the associated rhetoric of hospitality. A critical examination of some key concepts in anthropological reflection on tourism will also be presented: Tourism as a social fact, defence strategies, authenticity, touristic typologies and motivations, the touristic imaginary, heritage. The course is an introduction to anthropology of tourism.

## Objectives

Through regular and participatory class attendance, this course pursues the following goals:

1. Knowledge and understanding: the course aims to provide students with an anthropological perspective on tourism and its methodological tools
2. Ability to develop a critical approach: through the proposed lectures and reading, students will be equipped with the disciplinary tools necessary for a critical understanding of the phenomenon of tourism;
3. Ability to apply knowledge and models: Students will acquire knowledge useful for critical reflection on the complexity of tourism and for developing an anthropologically informed understanding of the processes of identity and authenticity formation.

Independent judgement and communication skills are strengthened in the lectures and encourage students to formulate their own opinions and argue effectively. Learning skills are encouraged through active participation in class lectures and discussions.

## Methodologies

The lectures are delivered as follows:

Classical lectures:

- 14 lessons of 3 hours each in classroom (frontal and dialogue lecture with use of Power Point and viewing of audiovisual material).
- 2 lessons of 3 hours each in streaming to present the contents and topics of the course (first introductory lesson) and to formulate the conclusions (last lesson of the course)
- 1 lecture online of 3 hours with the aim of providing students, both frequent and non-frequent, with the analytical and methodological tools for a critical reading of texts through the practical example of reading an essay. Online learning also makes it possible to reach non-frequent students and provide them with the analytical and methodological tools for the critical reading of texts in the examination bibliography.

Interactive learning:

- 2 lessons of 3 hours each in attendance: presentation and collective discussion of the essays that form the handout, part of the exam bibliography. Presentation and active participation in the collective discussion will be assessed.

## Online and offline teaching materials

All teaching and learning materials are defined during the course and uploaded to the course website, which must be checked regularly by both participating and non-participating students.

## Programme and references

We will move on to analyse and then deconstruct the binomial *host-guest* and the rhetoric of hospitality it conveys, examining some key categories of anthropological reflection: Tourism as a social fact, defence strategies,

authenticity, tourist typologies and motivations, the tourist imaginary, heritage, illustrated by some ethnographic examples.

Particular attention will be paid to critically analysing the processes of identity representation, the invention and staging of authenticity and re-signification in the tourist encounter.

#### Reading list

1. Bruner, E. (2005), *Culture on Tour*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
2. Burns, P. (1999) *An introduction to tourism and anthropology*, Rutledge
3. Leite, Castañeda, Adams (2019), *The Ethnography of Tourism. Edward Bruner and Beyond*, Rowman and Littlefield or Vietti, F. (2024), *Unexpected encounters. Migrants and Tourists in the Mediterranean*, Berghahn

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**

Assessment criteria: Attendance in class and active participation in class discussions; knowledge of the texts listed in the reading list.

Final assessment: Oral discussion in which the student must be able to present and reproduce the content of the classroom teaching; understanding of the texts listed in the reading list; ability to connect the different aspects of the theories and ethnographic examples.

Non-participating students must be able to present and reproduce the content of the books and articles listed in the reading list; the ability to connect the various aspects of the theories and ethnographic examples will be assessed as well as the connections to other aspects of the undergraduate degree.

### **Office hours**

Appointment request by written email to the teacher

### **Programme validity**

The syllabus applies to the academic year of first enrolment and the following year (2 years in total).

### **Course tutors and assistants**

Dott.ssa Patrizia Pertuso

## Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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