UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Anthropology of Aesthetics

2425-1-F0101R007

Course title

Art, heritage-making, and aesthetics of everyday life

Topics and course structure

The course examines the methods and issues of aesthetic anthropology and anthropology of art with particular reference to (1) the cultural dimension of sensory experience in traditional societies; the aestheticization of life related to creative and cultural economy in the contemporary societies; (2) the contemporary art world; interactions between ethnographic and artistic practices in public art projects (3) museums, collecting practices, and cultural heritage with particular reference to African material culture and arts; (4) Images of the pain of others, aesthetics of misery and war.

Attending students will have the opportunity to meet artists, curators and museums conservators.

Objectives

Knowledge and understanding: knowing the current topics and problems of anthropology of art and aesthetics.

Applied knowledge and understanding: seizing how aesthetic and sensory dimensions shape the different fields of the experience, and the different areas of the anthropological knowledge.

Ability to relate different knowledge and models: ability to relate knowledge referring to different cultural and temporal contexts; ability to compare theoretical paradigms, interpretative models, and ethnographic practices of the anthropology of art and aesthetics

Methodologies

Classical lectures and interactive learning in all classes with the use of powerpoint, problem solving, video and conversation with artists, curators, and museums conservators.

Online and offline teaching materials

Slides.

Programme and references

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.

Students will select one of the following three options:

1. Sensory Anthropology

Bargna I., 2014 "Filming Food Cultural Practices in Cameroon. An Artistic and Ethnographic Work", *Archivio di Etnografia*, 1-2, pp. 111-133 (http://www.anuac.it/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Archivio-di-Etnografia_1-2_2014_indiceabstracts.pdf)

Csordas T., 1993, “Somatic Modes of Attention”, in *Cultural Anthropology*, 8, 2: 135-156

Ingold T., “The Temporality of Landscape”, *World Archeology*, 25, 1993: 152-174 (https://quote.ucsd.edu/sed/files/2014/09/Ingold-Temporality-of-the-Landscape.pdf)

Pink S., 2014, *Doing Visual Ethnography*, Sage Publ, London, 164 pages

Ingold T, 2013, Making. Anthropology, Archeology, Art, and Architecture*, Routledge, London

2) Anthropology of Contemporary Art

Bargna I., 2012, “Between Hollywood and Bandjoun: art activism and anthropological ethnography into the mediascape *“, Journal des anthrop*ologues, 129-130: 101-130

Grimshaw A., Ravetz A., 2005, “The ethnographic turn and after: a critical approach towards the realignment of art and anthropology”, *Social Anthropology,* 23, 4: 418- 434

Plattner S., 1998, “A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Market for Contemporary Fine Art”, *American Anthropologist,* 100, 2: 482-493

Schneider A., Wright C., eds., 2020, *Anthropology and Art Practice*, Routledge, London, pp. 192

3. Museum Anthropology and Cultural Heritage

Coombies A., E. Phillips R. B., eds., 2020, *Museum Transformations: Decolonization and Democratization*, Wiley-Blackwell (Introduction, chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 22, 24)

Sansi R., a cura, 2020, *The Anthropologist as Curator*, Bloomsbury, pp. 256

4. Images of war and pain

Canals R., Visual Trust. Fake images in the Russia-Ukraine war, *Anthropology Today*, 38, 6, 2022: pp. 4-7

Mitchell W. J. T., *Cloning Terror. The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present*, University of Chicago Press, chapter 1 to 4

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Roei N., *Civic Aesthetics. Militarism, Israeli Art and visual Culture*, Bloomsbury, London, 2016, 225 pp.

Sontang S., *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Farrar, 2003, 131 pp.

Assessment methods

Oral exam: questions will assess students' critical knowledge of the texts and, for attending students only, the topics discussed in class; questions will also assess students' ability to establish connections between different theories, topics, and case studies. There are no midterm tests.
ERASMUS students are kindly requested to contact the teacher in order to prepare for the exam: they will be able to take the exam in Italian, English or French.

Office hours

By appointment.

Programme validity

Two years.

Course tutors and assistants

Dr. Leone Michelini

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION