UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# COURSE SYLLABUS

# Anthropology of Religions

**2425-1-F0101R004**

## Course title

**Anthropology of religions**

## Topics and course structure

The course aims to provide theoretical and methodological knowledge regarding the anthropology of religions.

More specifically, the course aims to:

outline the theoretical panorama of anthropological studies on religions and relate them to the epistemological and socio-historical context
deep the religious life via the study of everyday practices
focus on the material aspects of religion (body, objects, fetishes, images, etc.), and takes into consideration religious representations and practices in relation to the social contexts of reference. According to current perspective the course aims to show how each religion needs material elements to refer to in order to affirm its own "truth".

## Objectives

Through this teaching, with constant and participative attendance of lessons, we intend to promote the following learning, in terms of:
**Knowledge and understanding**
Students will acquire specific competences on the meanings and the roles of religious concepts and practices in different socian and historical context. The focus will be on the materiality of religions

**Ability to relate differentiated knowledge and models.**
Students will learn to manage the different knowledge and models about religions and its related concepts and connect them to the other fields of the anthropological discipline
**Ability to apply knowledge and models**
Students will learn to apply knowledge and models learned during the course to the analysis of contemporary societies and will develop an intellectual stance to understand the multiplicity of religious realities.

## Methodologies

The course consists of:
(a) erogative mode: two three-hour classroom lectures. First lecture: the lecturer presents the structure and content of the programme, examination and assessment methods; last lecture, she highlights the main topics covered during the course and provides further information on the final examination. A streaming link is provided to allow non-attending students to participate in these two lectures.
b)Thirteen three-hour lectures in mixed classroom mode. These lectures are structured to provide a diverse learning experience. In the first part, the lecturer gives a frontal lecture (erogative mode). In the second part, students actively participate in interactive activities, such as discussion of texts (included in the examination programme) and exercises related to the lecture topic.
c) Three three-hour lectures during which a number of investigative experiences are planned based on the observation of real data, on the basis of which specific theoretical reflections can be organised. It is proposed to develop small research projects aimed at acquiring specific field skills in the magical-religious field.

## Online and offline teaching materials

Additional teaching materials to the scheduled texts (background articles, documents, films) will be made available on the course page.

## Programme and references

1) a collection of essays selected during the course

2) U. Fabietti, Materia sacra. Corpi, oggetti, immagini, feticci nella pratica religiosa, Raffaello Cortina ed, 2014 (capitoli 1, 4, 5, 6, 9)

3) One book among the following:
A. Brivio, Serpenti, sirene e sacerdotesse. Antropologia dei mondi acquatici in Africa occidentale, Viella editore, 2023
A. Brivio, C.Mattalucci, (a cura di), La materia per pensare la morte, Raffaello Cortina editore, 2022

4) One book among the following:
R.Strongman, Divinità queer. Candomblé, Santería e Vodou: transcorporeità nelle religioni dell’atlantico nero, Mimesis, 2023
O. Costantini, La nostra identità è Gesù Cristo. Pentecostalismo e nazionalismo tra gli eritrei e gli etiopici a Roma, 2019
M. Sahlins, La nuova scienza dell'universo incantato. Un'antropologia dell'umanità (q

uasi tutta), Raffaello Cortina editore, 2023
M.Bloch, Da preda a cacciatore, Raffaello Cortina editore, 2005

5) One book among the following:
S.De Matteis, Gli sciamani non ci salveranno, edizioni Elèuthera, 2023
S.Consigliere, Materialismo magico. Magia e rivoluzione, Derive Approdi, 2023
C.Gallini, Dono e Malocchio, 1973
E.de Martino, La terra del rimorso, 1961

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

Final exam for attending students

Oral examination

The final exam consists of an interview in which the student critically discusses the questions posed by the teacher, trying to put the theme in relation to the texts discussed in the classroom (attendant studens) and to the readings indicated in the program. The appropriateness of the lexicon used is of considerable importance.

## Office hours

Email appointment

## Programme validity

Two academic years. This year's programme can therefore be carried over to the winter session in February 2026

## Course tutors and assistants

Luis Gregorio Abad Espinoza
Valentina Vergottini

## Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | GENDER EQUALITY | CLIMATE ACTION