UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Intercultural Relations

2425-1-F4901N104

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide the analytical and methodological tools to understand and analyse the growing cultural complexity of contemporary societies, focusing on how this complexity manifests itself in the communicative processes - face-to-face and mediated - that characterise everyday experience and are intertwined with certain forms of human mobility.
In relation to these themes, students will learn to design and conduct empirical qualitative research using everyday multiculturalism as an epistemological framework.

Contents

The following themes will be explored in the course:

1. The increasing cultural differentiation and complexity of contemporary society.
2. The role played by international migration in these transformations.
3. The stranger as a key figure of contemporaneity.
4. Feminist, postcolonial and queer perspectives on otherness.
5. Forms of consumption of difference and their relation to tourism practices.
6. Intercultural communication.
7. The socio-political construction of otherness.
8. Racism.

Detailed program

Multiculturalism is now regarded as an undeniable fact by both those who rejoice in it and those who fear an

inevitable clash of cultures. Words such as 'culture', 'identity' and 'difference' form the basic vocabulary for describing the world in which we live.
In the course we will analyse the following issues: the growing cultural complexity of everyday experience; the "more or less" peaceful coexistence - of a variety of "grammars" that structure daily communication flows; the relentless reproduction of identity and cultural difference in face-to-face and/or mediated interactions; the role that traditional media and digital interactive platforms play in either the circulation/transformation/re-contextualisation of identity models on a global scale, as well as the construction of a "shared common sense" and the constant boundary work through which we recognise ourselves as members of different 'communities'.. These issues will be analysed with attention to recent developments in international migration studies, postcolonial studies and LGBT and queer studies.
We will also address some more specific issues such as: the relationship between cultural difference and communication practices; the role of linguistic and socio-cognitive skills in situations of intercultural communication; the figure of the "stranger" as a paradigmatic element of contemporaneity; the media construction of cultural alterity; processes of convergence and differentiation in contemporary media systems; the growing importance of diversity policies in recent urban transformations; the consumption of difference in a variety of tourism practices.
Finally, we will look at the processes of political and media construction of cultural otherness, the growing importance of migration in public debate and political agendas at the global level, and the old and new forms in which racism manifests itself today.

Prerequisites

Knowledge of the main theoretical and research perspectives in the field of sociology of culture and media studies.
Knowledge and basic skills related to the use of both qualitative techniques for social research and discourse analysis.

Teaching methods

Approximately 25% of lectures.
Approximately 75% of interactive teaching: presentation and discussion of texts, group exercises, design and realisation of a research project on the course topics.

Assessment methods

Students can choose between:

1. A research paper on a topic related to the course programme and to be agreed with the teacher.
2. An oral examination.

Assessment criteria (for both the research paper and the oral examination):

- Correct and relevant use of sociological language.
- Ability to identify, organise and explain arguments accurately.
- Ability to make connections between different topics.
- Ability to combine data analysis with theoretical references.
- Completeness of presentation.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

For those students choosing the research paper option, the reference texts will be presented in the first lecture of the course and, where possible, made available in pdf format.

Reference texts to prepare for the oral examination:

Studenti/esse from Analisi dei Processi Sociali MA Course:
Colombo E. 2020, *Sociologia delle relazioni interculturali*, Roma: Carocci.
Giaccardi C., 2012, *La comunicazione interculturale nell'era digitale*, Bologna: Il Mulino.
Quassoli F., 2021, *Clandestino. Il governo delle migrazioni nell'Italia contemporanea*, Milano: Meltemi.
Zoletto D., 2010,* Il gioco duro dell'integrazione*. Milano: Cortina.

Studenti/esse from Turismo, Territorio e Sviluppo Locale MA Course:
Aime M., PapottiD. 2012 *L'altro e l'altrove*. *Antropologia, Geografia e turismo*, Torino: Einaudi.
Colombo E. 2020, *Sociologia delle relazioni interculturali*, Roma: Carocci.
Giaccardi C., 2012,* La comunicazione interculturale nell'era digitale*, Bologna: Il Mulino.
Quassoli F., 2021, *Clandestino. Il governo delle migrazioni nell'Italia contemporanea*, Milano: Meltemi.

Reference texts for Erasmus students:
Baumann G., 1999, "The Multicultural Riddle. Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities", London, Routledge (some chapters).
Wise A., Velayutham S. (eds.), 2009, "Everyday Multiculturalism", Palgrave, Macmillan, (some chapters).
Spencer-Oatey H., Franklin P., 2009, "Intercultural Interaction. A Multidisciplinary Approach to Intercultural Communication", Palgrave Macmillan.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS