UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Urban Tourism

2526-2-E1501N143

Learning objectives

The main objective is to offer a general framework on the theme of urban tourism. The student will be able to analyze the tourism and leisure policies implemented by large cities (Italian, European, American and Asian metropolises), developing analytical skills and strategic vision in terms of attractiveness and local tourism development. Specifically, the course aims to:

- provide a theoretical framework of urban tourism processes, practices and policies (knowledge and understanding)
- provide tools to critically analyze urban tourism development strategies and case studies, applying conceptual and operational tools (ability to apply knowledge and understanding).
- stimulate a critical reading of urban attractiveness and its socio-economic and environmental implications (autonomy of judgment)
- stimulate the development of argumentation and presentation skills, both in written and oral form, on cases and themes of urban tourism (communication skills)
- promote a reflective and interdisciplinary attitude towards the dynamics of tourism in the urban environment (learning skills)

Contents

The course deals with the theme of city-based tourism by investigating its development over time, up to the new post-Fordist dimension that sees cities equip themselves and relaunch themselves to become attractive again in global competition. Cultural consumption, leisure and image are the background to the emergence of specific elements of attractiveness that will be analyzed in detail. These include: large museums, mega events, contemporary works by great architects and many other aspects that allow cities to maintain acquired positioning and reputation.

The course will also reflect on the shock experienced by urban tourism following the spread of the coronavirus, and

on the subsequent relaunch with the start of a positive season to the limit of overtourism. The side effects related to the uncontrolled growth of tourist flows will also be analyzed, including the phenomena of tourismification, the pressures on living and the identity of places, and the social and environmental tensions that derive from them.

Finally, attention will also be given to the relationship between urban tourism and climate change.

Detailed program

TThe course is structured in multiple phases, combining theory, case study analysis, and practical workshops, with the aim of providing a critical understanding of both the opportunities and challenges of urban tourism.

Theoretical introduction. The course presents the main theories, policies, and practices of urban tourism, with a focus on development strategies, territorial marketing, and city branding, particularly in the Italian context.

Urban attraction elements. The second part of the course analyzes the key factors that shape the competitive positioning of cities. The so-called 10 urban attraction elements that will be examined are:

- Green city: the role of urban greenery in the quality of the tourist experience
- Archistar: attractiveness and iconicity of contemporary architecture
- Movie-induced tourism: the potential of film storytelling
- Waterfront: the rediscovery and regeneration of "blue" resources
- Great museums: cultural catalysts and economic engines
- Mega-events: impact, symbolic value and urban transformations
- Events recurrent cultural issues: continuity, identity and urban vitality
- Urban lightscape: nocturnal aesthetics and perception of spaces
- Smart and sharing city: innovation, accessibility and sustainable mobility
- Heritage tourism: the enhancement of tangible and intangible heritage

An eleventh cross-cutting element will also be addressed: urban safety (health, social, environmental), including insights from the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on urban attractiveness.

Theoretical insights. Two cross-cutting theoretical focuses will accompany the course:
a) Overtourism and touristification: socio-spatial impacts of tourism and urban rebalancing policies.
b) Tourism and climate change: the reciprocal relationship between urban tourism and climate change, with an analysis of strategies and sustainable policies.

Workshop activities. Group work on real or simulated cases to apply the knowledge acquired. Workshops may focus on the analysis of Italian or international cities, the design of sustainable city branding strategies, or solutions to issues such as overtourism and climate change.

Prerequisites

--

Teaching methods

The course will be teached in person and in Italian approximately
50% with didactic teaching (frontal lessons with use of slides, audio and video) e
50% with interactive teaching (exercises, subgroup work, presentation of case studies from which to develop individual and subgroup work, prepared and discussed during the course).
Up to 8 hours of synchronous or asynchronous remote activities can be provided

Assessment methods

Students* have two options

1. Actively participate in the course by enrolling in a **working group** assigned by the instructor and completing a group project. This project must first be presented orally in class (with slide support), and then submitted as a final written report in PDF format. All members of the group will receive the same group grade.
   The group project will be evaluated by the end of the course based on the following criteria:
   I. Oral presentation: clarity and effectiveness of delivery, adherence to time limits, ability to ask and answer questions;
   II. Written report: originality, style and accuracy, use of relevant literature, and quality of conclusions.

2. DO NOT participate in classroom activities but take part in the **final exam** in the **computer lab**, receiving only an individual grade.
   The written exam is structured as follows:
   a. Multiple-choice questions: 20 questions, each worth 1 point (no penalty for incorrect answers), for a total of 20 points;
   b. Open-ended questions: 2 short-essay questions, both of which must be answered. Each question is worth up to 5 points, for a total of 10 points.
   The final grade will be the sum of the scores from the multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The exam duration is 90 minutes. Content will be based on the course textbook and the course reader provided by the instructor.

In both cases, students are expected to demonstrate a solid understanding of the course content and the ability to apply it to current tourism contexts.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The study materials are:

1. Bernardi M., Marra E. (2022). TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS AND URBAN DISTINCTION: Elements of competition in the contemporary metropolis. Lectures, Milan

2. handout made available online by the teacher

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC

GROWTH | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION