UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Anthropology of Media

2526-3-E2001R028

Course title

Mediascapes. Images, practices and cultural anthropology

Topics and course structure

The course analyses the relationships between culture and media in a number of domains including: cinema, photography, ethnographic film, TV programs, video art, internet and social media. The focus will be on (1) problems in representation of cultural diversity through media; (2) the development of media in Global North and Global South; (3) the social and cultural formations shaped by old and new media practices, with particular reference to orality, writing and images.
Particular attention will be paid to (1) the social and cultural dynamics of the representation of suffering; (2) the active use of small media within contexts of social insecurity; (3) cultural mediation enacted by media (used by both the anthropologist and his/her informants) during ethnographic research.

Objectives

Through this course, with regular and active participation in lectures, the following learning outcomes are intended to be achieved:

Knowledge and understanding:

- acquire solid and systematic knowledge in the field of media anthropology through a comparative analysis of contemporary societies and cultures.
- identify the theoretical and methodological specificities of media anthropology.

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding:

- articulate the dialogue between scientific literature and specific social and cultural contexts
- effectively apply the skills acquired to concrete problems, situations and contexts
- be able to convey the sense of open-mindedness and intercultural dialogue that are fundamental to demo-ethno-anthropological disciplines.

Independence of judgement:

- Understand the complexity of cultural processes and mediation practices by welcoming and valuing different points of view and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices.
- Evaluate the consequences of one's actions and decisions, adopting a reflective and responsible attitude in the use of media.

Communication skills:

- Express ideas, knowledge and arguments clearly, aware of the possibilities and limitations offered by different media.
- Formulate well-founded judgements, integrating information from different and reliable sources.

Learning skills:

- Develop and refine one's own learning methodologies, independently identifying and constructing objects and topics of study.

Methodologies

The course will be offered in Italian, combining traditional teaching methods (60% with 4 hours of remote teaching) with interactive ones (40% with 6 hours of remote teaching). In the first case, classroom lectures will be supplemented by discussions and debates on issues raised by the teacher both in person and remotely. In the second case, group work will be promoted to introduce students to ethnographic research with the aim of learning by doing, applying theory to real-life situations, so as to grasp the effectiveness of anthropological tools of investigation and interpretation, promoting learning in awareness of one's own limitations and possibilities as students in training.

Online and offline teaching materials

Slide and video projections and analysis of websites and social media in the classroom. Slides uploaded to the course's online pages

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.

Bargna I., 2014 "Filming Food Cultural Practices in Cameroon. An Artistic and Ethnographic Work", *Archivio di*

Etnografia, 1-2: 111-133

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

Mazzarella W., 2004,"Culture, Globalization, Mediation", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33: 345-367

Miller D. et al., *The Global Smartphone*, UCL Press, https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/171335 (open access)

Miller D., M. Madianou, 2012, "Polymedia: Towards a new theory of digital media in interpersonal communication", InInternational Journal of Cultural Studies 16(2)
169–187

Assessment methods

Oral exam: Interview on the exam texts covering the topics covered in class for attending students; for non-attending students, the interview will focus solely on the texts on the syllabus. Through open-ended questions, the lecturer will assess the students' knowledge and understanding of the course content, as indicated in the exam bibliography, their ability to identify the theoretical and methodological specificities of ethno-anthropological disciplines and their interdisciplinary connections, and their ability to effectively apply the skills acquired to concrete problems, situations and contexts. For attending students, with reference to what has been covered in class and developed in the group work introducing ethnographic research, the ability to apply knowledge and understanding to the case studies addressed will be assessed. Finally, students' independent judgement and communication skills in conveying open-mindedness and intercultural dialogue, which are fundamental to demo-ethno-anthropological disciplines, will be assessed.
There will be no ongoing assessment. The exam will be held in Italian; students who request it may take the exam in English or French.

Assessment will be based on the Dublin Descriptors. The level bands are as follows:

1.Low level (0–17/30): Not sufficient

Knowledge and understanding: The student demonstrates limited and fragmentary knowledge of the texts and topics covered, with misunderstandings of the proposed texts.
Ability to apply knowledge: unable to verify general considerations on poetics, style and reading effects of the examined authors; only partially able to summarise the contents of the presented texts, unable to contextualise or compare them.
Judgement: lacks critical capacity and autonomy in evaluation; depends solely on information provided by the lecturer or critical bibliography.
Communication skills: Oral expression is stunted, approximate and stereotyped; command of discipline-specific language is limited.
Learning ability: limited ability to rework knowledge and link it to one's own experience as a reader. Shows little awareness of the usefulness of literary reading as a means of displacing the self and opening up to simulations of realities and experiences other than one's own. This could lead to greater flexibility in different educational situations.

2. Medium level (18–24/30): sufficient – good.

Knowledge and understanding: The student demonstrates a general knowledge of the texts and topics covered, albeit with some gaps and imprecision regarding non-essential details, as well as some misunderstandings in the analysis of texts.
Ability to apply knowledge: The student can, albeit with some difficulty, verify general considerations on poetics,

style and reading effects in the examined authors' texts when prompted by the teacher. They can summarise the presented texts in a satisfactory manner and interpret, contextualise and compare them correctly. They can recognise different expressive registers in literary texts.
Autonomy of judgement: Shows partial autonomy in formulating critical assessments, which are often limited to reiterating others' judgements.
Communication skills: has clear and precise expression and a good grasp of the subject-specific language. Aware of the need to use different linguistic registers according to communicative situations.
Learning ability: Displays a reasonable ability to process knowledge and relate it to their own reading experience. Demonstrates a partial understanding of the value of literary reading as a means of self-reflection and an opportunity to engage with alternative realities and experiences, fostering greater adaptability in diverse educational contexts.

3. High level (25–30/30): Distinguished – Excellent

Knowledge and comprehension: The student demonstrates a thorough and solid understanding of the texts and topics covered, and can analyse the proposed texts with confidence.
Ability to apply knowledge: They can recognise, with confidence and effective personal observations, the general considerations on poetics, style and reading effects of the examined authors. They can analyse, synthesise, interpret, contextualise and compare the presented texts, making use of interdisciplinary links and providing adequate arguments. They can recognise the different expressive registers in literary texts and associate them with the situations that are the subject of literary representation.
Autonomy of judgement: demonstrates excellent critical ability and originality in the analysis and interpretation of texts.
Communication skills: expression is clear, rigorous, fluent and appropriate. They are fully aware of the need to use different language registers according to the situation.
They demonstrate excellent autonomous learning skills and can effectively rework knowledge, linking it to their own experience as a reader. They are fully aware of the usefulness of literary reading as a means of displacing the self and opening up to simulations of realities and experiences other than their own. This enables them to respond more articulately to different educational situations.

Note: Students with PUOI must email the document to the lecturers before the examination.

Office hours

By appointment.

Programme validity

Two years

Course tutors and assistants

Leone Michelini (assistant)

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION