UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Anthropology of Europe

2526-2-F0101R080

Course title

Anthropology of Europe / Cultures and societies of Europe

Topics and course structure

The “Cultures and Societies of Europe” course offers an overview of the field of study of anthropology and ethnology of Europe, with a focus on its “urban issue”.

Starting from an interdisciplinary and critical analysis of the concept of Europe, its history and its evolution, the lessons will first deal with some fundamental thematic issues, such as honor in **Mediterranean societies**, **multiculturalism** and **European identity**, and then focus on specific contemporary cases of “Europeanization” relating to the strategies implemented by the European Union in orienting urban policies and the “**regeneration**” of the cities.

The course will combine lectures, laboratory activities and fieldwork in order to approach not only the intellectual operations and knowledge produced in the historical development of the field of study, but also some research practices that characterize it.

Objectives

Through a constant and participatory attendance at the lessons, the course intends to promote the following learning objectives, in terms of:

Knowledges:

- Identifying the main anthropological and ethnographic perspectives relating to the field of study of European anthropology and European ethnology;
- Critically understanding the historical, political and social process of identity construction of the European Union.
- Analyzing in a comparative and multi-scalar perspective the processes related to some European urban policies, starting from their local dimensions that can be grasped through ethnography.

Ability to apply knowledge:

- Applying the deconstructive gaze of anthropology to European urban contexts, understood as political-social arenas produced by local, supra-local and transnational practices and representations.
- Articulate the dialogue between scientific literature and research with specific references to the European area.

Independence of judgement:

- Understanding the complexity of cultural processes, accepting and valuing different points of view and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices.
- Assessing the consequences of one's actions and decisions, adopting a reflective and responsible attitude.

Communication skills:

- Express ideas, knowledge and arguments clearly.
- Write texts and reports.
- Formulate well-founded judgements, integrating information from different and reliable sources.

Learning skills:

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

Methodologies

The lectures (about 30 hours) will be complemented by **workshops** (about 26 hours) and other methods such as: active learning, interactive lecturing, debates, group exercises, fieldwork.

The course will be taught in Italian. Lessons will be face-to-face.

Attending students will be required to constantly and actively participate in the lessons.

Online and offline teaching materials

The course involves the use of academic texts, lesson forms, videos, Moodle platform.

Other teaching materials will eventually be selected according to the personal and professional interests of the students.

Programme and references

The course will be divided into three sections. The first (eight lessons) will consist of an introduction to the field of study and its “cardinal points” (main schools and paradigms of European anthropology, research fields, contemporary developments).

The second (five workshops) will focus – also thanks to some fieldwork activities – on the anthropological study of urban and “regeneration” policies observable in the Milan area, understood as an emblematic field of analysis of the process of construction (and simultaneous deconstruction) of the identity of the European Union.

The third and last section (last four lessons), planned as a series of seminars, will include the intervention of guest speakers who will present urban ethnographies useful for structuring potential comparisons with what is analyzed in the second section.

Between the first and the second section, students will be asked to organize short presentations on topics of their specific interest concerning the course. Further information about this part will be provided during the first lessons.

The program may undergo slight changes based on the needs expressed by the students attending.

The course includes the study of the texts indicated below:

Section 1:
Kockel, U.C., Máiréad, N., and Frykman, J. (eds.) (2012), A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe, Blackwell Publishing, Malden (Capitoli 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 13).
Banfield, E.C. (2010), Le basi morali di una società arretrata, Il Mulino, Bologna.
Scarduelli P. (2013), L’Europa disunita. Etnografia di un continente, Archetipo, Bologna (Introduction and chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Section 2:
Grassi, P. (2022), Barrio San Siro. Interpretare la violenza a Milano, Franco Angeli, Milano.

Section 3:
A book to be chosen from the following list:
Cacciotti, C., (2024), Qui è tutto abitato. L'occupazione romana di Santa Croce/Spin Time Labs come esperienza abitativa liminale, Ombre corte, Verona
C?ag?lar, A., Glick Schiller, N. (2018), Migrants & City-making: Dispossession, Displacement, and Urban Regeneration, Duke University Press, Durham and London.
Capello, C., Semi, G. (2018), Torino. Un profilo etnografico, Meltemi, Sesto San Giovanni.
Dines, N. (2012), Tuff City: Urban Change and Contested Space in Central Naples, Berghahn Books, New York.
Fava, F. (2008), Lo Zen di Palermo. Antropologia dell’esclusione, Franco Angeli, Milano.
Grassi, P, Pozzi, G., Verdolini, V. (2025), Milano fantasma. Etnografie di una città e delle sue infestazioni, Ombre corte, Bologna.
Hekki, M. (2002), Europa. Storia di un’idea e di un’identità, il Mulino, Bologna.
Marasco, M. (2021), Spacciati, rabbiosi, coatti. Periferia romana e costruzione del panico morale, Ombre corte, Verona.
Scandurra, G. (2017), Bologna che cambia. Quattro studi etnografici su una città, Junior, Bergamo.

Part of the bibliography can be modified and integrated according to the individual and professional interests of the students.

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

Attending students
The exam consists of an oral discussion aimed at assessing the knowledge acquired through the study of the texts included in the exam programme and the work carried out in class.

Non-attending students
Non-attending students must submit (via email), at least ten days before the exam date, a reading note (i.e. a critical reflection) of approximately 6 pages on a text of their choice (Section 3).

The choice of an oral interview as the examination method is consistent with the objectives of the course, as it allows for interaction with the student in a communicative dialogue situation in order to assess their critical understanding of the course topics and their ability to connect theory and practice.

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

Level 1. **Low** (0-17/30): Not sufficient Knowledge and Understanding: The student demonstrates limited and fragmented knowledge of the texts and topics covered, with misunderstandings of the texts provided. Ability to apply knowledge: unable to verify general considerations on the authors/topics examined in the texts; able to summarise the contents of the texts presented only to a very limited extent, unable to contextualise and compare them. Autonomy of judgement: lacks critical thinking and autonomy of judgement; relies exclusively on information provided by the teacher or the critical bibliography. Communication Skills: has a halting, approximate, stereotyped oral expression; shows poor mastery of the specific language of the discipline. Learning Skills: has a limited ability to rework knowledge and relate it to their own experience; shows little awareness of the usefulness of the discipline.

Level 2. **Average 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, inaccuracies on specific but non-essential aspects, or some misunderstandings in the analysis of the texts. Ability to Apply Knowledge: is able, albeit with some difficulty, to verify in the texts the general considerations on the authors/topics examined, when prompted by teachers; is able to summarise the texts presented in a reasonable manner, interpret them, contextualise them and compare them correctly. Autonomy of Judgement: shows partial autonomy in formulating critical evaluations, often limited to repeating the judgements of others. Communication skills: expresses themselves clearly and with sufficient precision, with a reasonable command of the specific language of the discipline. Is aware of the need to use different linguistic registers depending on the communicative situation. Learning skills: has a reasonable ability to rework knowledge and link it to their own experience; has partial awareness of the usefulness of the subject.

High Level (25-30/30): **Distinguished** - Excellent Knowledge and Understanding: The student demonstrates in-depth and solid knowledge of the texts and topics covered; understands and analyses the texts presented without hesitation. Ability to apply knowledge: is able to identify general considerations on the authors/topics examined in the texts with confidence and effective personal observations; with adequate argumentative skills, is able to analyse, summarise, interpret, contextualise and compare the texts presented, also making use of interdisciplinary links. Autonomy of Judgement: demonstrates excellent critical skills, autonomy of judgement and originality in the analysis and interpretation of texts. Communication Skills: expresses themselves clearly, rigorously, fluently and appropriately. Is fully aware of the need to use different linguistic registers depending on the communicative situation. Learning skills: demonstrates excellent/very good independent learning skills, is able to effectively rework knowledge and link it to their own experience; is fully aware of the usefulness of the discipline.

PS: Students with PUOI (special educational needs) must email the document before the exam.

Office hours

By appointment, to be agreed via e-mail: paolo.grassi@unimib.it

Programme validity

The programmes are valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS