UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# COURSE SYLLABUS

# Laboratory 5 - Understanding and Responding to Overtourism

**2526-2-F4901N095**

## Learning objectives

By the end of the lab, students will be able to:

**Knowledge and Understanding**
Demonstrate an understanding of the different interpretations of the concept of overtourism in academic discourse, its framing in public debate, possible indicators, and policy responses.

**Applied Knowledge and Understanding**
Apply critical tools to analyse tourism-related urban issues in a specific case study, policy responses, and assess their potential impacts on different actors.

**Independent Judgement**
Develop the ability to critically evaluate mainstream narratives, identify structural causes of overtourism, and reflect on the role of different actors in contributing to it and to the responses addressing it.

**Communication Skills**
Effectively convey critical perspectives on tourism and urban dynamics, both orally and in writing.

**Learning Skills**
Strengthen the ability to independently research, synthesise information, and engage critically with interdisciplinary sources and case studies.

## Contents

In recent years, the term overtourism has appeared with increasing frequency in both media and political agendas, describing scenarios in which the impacts of tourism exceed the physical, ecological, social, economic,

psychological, and political local capacity thresholds.

This laboratory aims to unpack the evolving literature on overtourism by:
• Providing theoretical frameworks for understanding the phenomenon
• Offering tools for empirical analysis
• Reviewing proposed policy responses

The laboratory adopts a case-study approach focused on the city of Como, where students will collectively analyse overtourism through four complementary dimensions:
• Narratives and public discourse
• Indicators and measurement of tourism pressure
• Direct observations through fieldwork
• Governance and policy responses

Through lectures, group work, and a field trip, students will produce a collective case-study report analysing the dynamics of overtourism in the selected area.

## Detailed program

**Session 1 – Framing Overtourism: Narratives and Public Discourse**
This session introduces the concept of overtourism and explores its emergence in academic and the mainstream discourse.
After a theoretical introduction, students will be introduced to the collective research design of the laboratory case study. Through a group exercise, students will analyse media and institutional narratives related to overtourism identifying key actors, conflicts, and dominant discourses.

**Session 2 – Indicators and Measuring Tourism Pressure**
This session examines how overtourism is measured, contrasting quantitative and qualitative indicators and discussing the limits of different measurement approaches.
Students will explore potential indicators for monitoring tourism pressure in the selected case-study, including tourism flows, urban and economic pressures, and social or environmental signals. The session will also be dedicated to preparing collaboratively the fieldwork activity.

**Session 3 – Field Trip: Direct Observations in Como**
This session consists of a field trip to the city of Como, where students will conduct direct observations of tourism pressure in the area, working in groups focusing on different categories of actors.

**Session 4 – Governance and Policy Responses**
This session focuses on institutional and policy responses to overtourism.
After a theoretical introduction on tourism governance and policy instruments, students will analyse selected policy measures implemented at the municipal, regional, and national levels.Lastly, Through group discussions and a collective workshop, students will connect insights from the different sessions in order to develop a coherent interpretation of the case study.

## Prerequisites

No prerequisites are required for entry.

## Teaching methods

The laboratory consists of four sessions of six hours each (24 hours total).

Each session includes:

• Lecture-based teaching introducing key theoretical concepts and analytical tools
• Group work activities aimed at developing a collective case-study analysis
• Field-based learning

Students will work in groups to investigate different dimensions of overtourism and different categories of actors involved in tourism dynamics. The laboratory culminates in the production of a collective case-study report integrating the different analytical components developed throughout the sessions.

## Assessment methods

Content: 3 CFU

Student eligibility at the end of the laboratory will be assessed based on:

1. Active participation in the laboratory. Students must attend at least 20 out of 24 total hours.
2. Active participation in group activities and the collective case-study project.

If the student is deemed eligible, 3 CFU credits will be awarded.

## Textbooks and Reading Materials

Literature recommendations will be provided to students during each session.

## Sustainable Development Goals

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | CLIMATE ACTION