UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Fundamentals of Anthropology of Kinship and Gender

2526-1-F0102R003

Course title

Anthropology of kinship and gender

Topics and course structure

This course covers the major theoretical advances in kinship and gender anthropology and explores the influence of feminist anthropology on the study of kinship and gender. Key concepts introduced include "descent," "marriage," "domestic group/cycle," "sex/gender," "family," "relatedness," and "care." The course analyzes current debates on reproduction, adoption, kinning, alternative intimacies, family morphologies and dynamics.

Objectives

With regular class attendance, this course aims to promote the following learning outcomes.

1. Knowledge and Understanding:
   a. Acquiring solid knowledge in the field of the anthropology of kinship and gender.
   b. Identifying theoretical and methodological specificities of the anthropology of kinship and gender, and its connections with other disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields.
   c. Understanding the relevance of kinship and gender in different social and cultural contexts.

2. Ability to apply knowledge and understanding:
   a. Articulating the dialogue between scientific literature on kinship and gender and ethnographic research in an innovative way.
   b. Effectively appling the acquired skills to concrete problems, situations, and contexts.

c. Transmitting open-mindedness toward different articulations of kinship and gender to promote intercultural comparison and dialogue.

3. Independent judgement:
   a. Understanding the complexity of kinship and gender relations; accepting and valuing different points of view; and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices.
   b. Assessing the consequences of one's actions and decisions in light of one's positionality; adopting a reflective and responsible attitude in interpersonal and professional relations.

4. Communication skills:
   a. Expressing ideas, knowledge and arguments clearly.
   b. Formulating well-founded judgements by integrating information from reliable and diverse sources.

5. Learning skills:
   a. Developing and refining one's own learning methods by independently identifying and constructing objects and topics of study.

Methodologies

The course is structured as follows:
a) During the first lecture, the instructor will present the program's structure and content, as well as the exam and assessment methods. During the last lecture, the instructor will highlight the main topics covered and provide further information on the final exam. A live video link will be available for non-attending students to follow these lectures.
b) Sixteen mixed method lessons. These lessons are designed to provide a well-rounded learning experience. In the first part (erogative mode), a lecture is given by the instructor. In the second part (interactive mode), students actively participate in various activities, such as discussing texts and/or exercising on topics related to the lesson.
c) A recorded lecture on the text by Margaret Mead included in the exam bibliography.

Lectures will be in Italian. For Erasmus students, teaching materials can be made available entirely in English. If they wish, students can be examined in English.

Online and offline teaching materials

At the end of each section/topic, the instructor will upload the lecture slides to the e-learning platform. For some topics, links to optional audiovisual materials will be provided for further study.

At the beginning of the course, a collection of essays will be uploaded to the platform (see bibliography, point 3).

The instructor will provide materials to support non-traditional students in their study and exam preparation, including lecture slides, recordings of the first and last lectures, and the recorded lecture on Margaret Mead.

Programme and references

The exam program and bibliography require students to study the content of the lectures and the texts listed below.

1. L. Stone, D. E. King, Kinship and Gender. An Introduction, Routledge, 2019.
2. M. Mead, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies, HarperCollins, 2001 (original edition 1935).
3. A collection of essays.
4. A text of your choice from:

- C. Mattalucci, S. Grilli (a cura di), Relazionalità contemporanee: tra normatività e trasgressioni. ANTROPOLOGIA, 12(2), 2024, https://www.ledijournals.com/ojs/index.php/antropologia/issue/view/173 (tutti gli articoli inclusi nello special focus).
- S. Tremayne, Inconceivable Iran. To Reproduce or Not to Reproduce?, Berghahn, 2022.
- R. Di Silvio, Parentele di confine. La pratica adottiva tra desiderio locale e mondo globale, Danyang M&J Publisging House 2021
- C. S. Guerzoni, Sistemi procreativi. Etnografia dell'omogenitorialità in Italia, Franco Angeli, 2020.
- J. Carsten, H-C. Chiu, S. Magee, E. Papadaki, K. M. Reece, Marriage in Past, Present and Future Tense, UCL Press, 2021.
- A. L. Acquistapace, Tenetevi il matrimonio e dateci la dote. Il lavoro riproduttivo nelle relazioni di intimità, solidarietà e cura oltre la coppia nell'Italia urbana contemporanea, Mimesis 2022.
- L. Menin, Quest for Love in Central Morocco, Young Women and the Dynamics of Intimate Lives, Syracuse University Press, 2004.
- R. Zecca Castel, Mastico y trago. Donne, famiglia e amore in un batey dominicano, editpress, 2023.
- E. Rafferty, Families We Need: Disability, Abandonment, and Foster Care Resistance in Contemporary China, Rutgers Univ Pr, 2022.
- A. Clarke, D. Haraway, Making Kin not Population: Reconceiving Generations. Prickly Paradigm Press.

Assessment methods

The oral final exam is aimed at assessing the knowledge acquired through the critical study of the texts included in the exam reading list and participation in the proposed activities (for attending students only). There will be no tests during this course.
The assessment will be based on the Dublin descriptors. The level bands are listed below.

Assessment criteria:

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.

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.

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

Office hours

By e-mail appointment.

Programme validity

This program is valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

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Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY