UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Area Studies: Middle East

2526-1-F0102R011

Course title

Middle *Easts*: petrocultures, moving environments and anthropology after Gaza

Topics and course structure

The trajectory of the course will face the multiplicity and complexity of the areal study of the Middle East, following the path of the researches of Ugo Fabietti that opened this field of studies in Italy in relation to international arena, departing from a deconstruction and the “invention” of the Middle East.
We will face a multiplicity of “Middle *Easts*”: the Mediterranean connections of this field of research highlighted by the fluxes of population, the heterogenous contemporary processes as modernization , the laboratory of *petrocultures*, and the intermingling between social and environmental dynamics ; in short, Middle Easts in the Anthropocene.
There will be two main axes: first, the relevance of the processes of mobility and migration from and within middle eastern areas in redefining the role of locality; secondly, the patterns of socialization of the environment, the role of climate and environmental changes and the historical entanglement between environmental and cultural dynamics.
The Palestinian case will be in focus, as a laboratory of techniques of governamentality of territory and populations, exported worldwide, side by side with patterns of resistance and search for autonomy.
The Palestinian focus is connected to public initiatives of the course with the "**Antropolog3 university network for Palestine,for a shared alphabet of the Palestinian genocide in Gaza: colonialism, militarization, and a "knowledge that doesn't march**." **

Objectives

Knowledge and understanding

Through active participation in presence, the course will enhance the capacity to connect historical categories of middle eastern studies as “ethnicity”, “kinship”, “honour”, “aridity”, “desert” with their contemporary articulation and in relation with the environmental changes and the patterns of resources management. This will be funded on the centrality of ethnographic analysis of case studies and the understanding of main theoretical changes.

Application of applied knowledge and understanding
The study of the multiple “laboratories of modernity” in the Middle East, from which derive part of the cultural and social fluxes in Italy and Europe, will allow to deconstruct cultural stereotypes that reproduce in contemporary crisis -humanitarian, economic, environmental- and to acquire critical knowledge of the main dynamicity of middle eastern contexts. The entanglement between migration and environmental dynamics will allow to acquire theoretical tools in understanding their intermingling and interdependence.

Autonomy of judgement
Understand the complexity of Middle Eastern cultural processes, accepting and valuing different points of view and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices typical of Orientalism, taking a reflective and responsible attitude towards the tools of the course.

Communication skills
Clearly express ideas, knowledge and arguments through the interpretation of crucial emic notions in the Middle East area and the link between migration and the environment.

Ability to learn
Develop and refine one's own learning methodologies, identifying and independently building, thanks to the collective space of the lectures, skills of confrontation and collaboration around often polarised issues.

Methodologies

Didactic methodology of classical lectures will be inevitably interactive and circular, focusing on the analysis of ethnographic cases, as a space of communication, of common reflexions e debate around texts and papers of the course. This will compose 44 hours.
Interactive learning will be composed of laboratory of analysis of audio-video productions, in specific Palestinian and Israeli films and documentaries on settlement occupation, borders and desires under occupation, for a total of 12 hours.

Language of the course is Italian.

Online and offline teaching materials

Power Points will be uploaded and eventual forum of discussion and coordination on specific issues of analysis.

Programme and references

Bibliography in English
-Dale F. Eickelman, **The Middle East**: An Anthropological Approach, 1989, last edition
-Lila Abu Lughoud, **Veiled Sentiments**, Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society, 2016, Uni California Press.
-**Two handouts collecting ethnographic essays**, to be downloaded starting from the end of October 2025 :

1-**Palestine Anthrop-oscene**
2-**Middle Easts in mouvement**

For a bibliography in Italian see the section "Programma e bibliografia".

Assessment methods

The exam consists of an oral exam in a dialogical setting on the trajectory of the texts, of the ethnographic cases and of theoretical and cultural analysis in relation to the didactic experiences of the course (for attended students). The capacity to connect the different theoretical and areal tools and the ability to make critical connections will be valorized

1. Low level (0-17/30): Not sufficient
   The student demonstrates limited and fragmentary knowledge of the texts and topics covered, with misunderstandings of the texts proposed.
2. Medium level (18-24/30): Sufficient - Good
   Knowledge and Understanding: The student shows a general knowledge of the texts and topics covered, although with gaps, imprecision on specific but not essential aspects, or some misunderstandings in the analysis of the texts.
3. High level (25-30/30): Distinguished - Excellent
   Knowledge and Comprehension: The student demonstrates thorough and solid knowledge of the texts and topics addressed; understands and analyses the proposed texts without uncertainty.
   NB: Students with PUOI must email the document to the lecturers before the examination.

Office hours

On mail appointment

Programme validity

Programs hold two academic years

Course tutors and assistants

Maria Elena Marabotto

Sustainable Development Goals

CLIMATE ACTION