UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## Area Studies: Sub-Saharan Africa

**2526-1-F0102R009**

### Course title

Anthropology of Subsaharan Africa

### Topics and course structure

In dialogue with the history of the African continent, the course aims to provide an overview of the fundamental stages of anthropology in Africa and to provide students with instruments to understand some of the main issues currently affecting the continent.

More specifically, the course aims to:
-Provide an overview of the history of the continent in order to familiarise students with the challenges and political constraints faced by anthropologists working in Africa.
-Familiarise students with contemporary research on Africa: the content, practice and conditions of producing ethnographic knowledge about Africa and African diasporas.

The second part of the course will focus on women in the African context. It will start with the historical forms of dependence and emancipation (with a focus on colianl period), moving on to contemporary dynamics of marginalisation, autonomy and emancipation through ethnographic cases that reflect broader processes such as economic transformations, dynamic interconnection with other areas of the world, the relationship with the environment, religions, mobility and socio-political changes.

### Objectives

The course will enhance the knowledge and understanding of key topics and authors in the field of African Studies,

with a focus on interdisciplinary dynamics.

Through the active partecipation in classes, students will learn to built up a historical and anthropological perspective on contemporary Africa; they will learn to use the African experience as a general tool in the analysis of similar phenomena in other parts of the world, and improve their ethnographic abilities.
In particular, we aim to PROMOTE the following learning outcomes, in terms of:

**Knowledge and understanding**
Students will acquire knowledge of key topics and authors in the field of African studies, with particular attention to interdisciplinary dynamics.

**Ability to apply knowledge and understanding**
The aim is to acquire a historically and anthropologically situated perspective on contemporary Africa and to apply the knowledge and models examined in the sub-Saharan context to gain a general understanding of the same phenomena in other areas of the world, while also developing ethnographic skills.

**Autonomy of judgement:**
In terms of autonomy of judgement and strengthening communication skills, students will be encouraged to formulate their own ideas independently and express them appropriately. Active participation in lectures, which is required of attending students, will stimulate the ability to develop independent judgement through the presentation and discussion of materials provided or indicated during the course, including bibliographic research in preparation for the final exam.

**Communication skills:**
Express ideas, knowledge and arguments clearly.
Write texts and reports, using different forms of expression (audio, video, digital, artistic).
Formulate well-founded judgements, integrating information from different and reliable sources.

**Learning skills:**
Develop and refine one's own learning methods, identifying and constructing independently objects and topics of study.

## Methodologies

The course applies different methodologies: lectures, class discussions on selected articles, slides, audio-visual materials provided by the professor or autonomously proposed by the students, participation of researchers than present their work in progress, ethnographic exercises in selected contexts. The use of English or Italian will shift according to the linguistic skills of the classroom.

## Online and offline teaching materials

Attending classes is a dynamic experience. The course will develop thanks to the collaboration between professor and students in the reading and analysis of the texts selected for discussion as much as through proposals of integration. The course moodle platform is a point of reference for both attending and not-attending students.

## Programme and references

## Assessment methods

**Type of test**
Oral exam
**Assessment criteria**
The choice of an oral interview is consistent with the objectives of the course, as it allows, in a dialogue situation, to assess knowledge of the texts and the ability to develop a reflective, analytical and critical argument around the core concepts highlighted in the texts covered in the programme.
**The final assessment will depend on:**
-Regular and active participation in classroom discussions and exercises.
-Oral interview on the topics covered in class and on the exam texts. The assessment will focus on the understanding of the texts, the clear and concise presentation of the contents, the ability to critically analyse and rework the material by drawing connections between the assigned texts.
Students who are unable to attend classes and carry out the activities proposed during the course will be assessed solely on the oral exam.
There are no intermediate tests.

The assessment will be graded out of 30, based on the following scale:

1. Unsatisfactory (0-17)
   Insufficient preparation on the main topics covered in the course programme and bibliography;
   Very limited and poorly developed ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate;
   Insufficient ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between the texts and the course topics;
   Incorrect presentation skills and specific vocabulary of the discipline.
2. Sufficient - More than sufficient (18-23)
   General preparation and, in some respects, uncertain or incomplete on various topics covered in the course programme and bibliography;
   Ability to argue, analyse and critically elaborate is at times limited and not very independent;
   Difficulty in identifying relevant links between texts and course topics;
   Presentation skills and subject-specific vocabulary are only partially correct.
3. Fair (24-27)
   Adequate preparation on the main topics covered in the course programme and bibliography, but lacking depth and/or incomplete on some more specific topics;
   Ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate present, but not always accurate and independent;
   Fair ability to identify relevant links between the texts and the course topics;
   Presentation skills and specific vocabulary of the discipline are mostly correct.
4. Good - Excellent (28-30/30L)
   Comprehensive and in-depth preparation on the topics covered in the course programme and bibliography;
   Ability to argue, analyse and critically elaborate in an articulate and independent manner;
   Good/excellent ability to identify relevant connections between the texts and the course topics;
   Good/excellent presentation skills and mastery of the specific vocabulary of the discipline.
   **NB: students with SLDs who intend to use compensatory tools are requested to send their P.Uo.I at least ten days before the exam.**
   **The exam can be performed in English by foreign/Erasmus students.**

## Office hours

Contact us at our e-mail adresses and we will answer rapidly

## Programme validity

Two years

## Course tutors and assistants

## Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES