UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Cultural Anthropology

2526-1-E2002R002

Course title

Cultural anthropology

Topics and course structure

This course is an introduction to cultural anthropology. Born as the study of "exotic" societies in a colonial setting, anthropology has progressively taken the form of **a critical study of social and cultural realities. The discipline questions the processes of construction of identity and social difference in the contemporary world**.

This course is an introduction to cultural anthropology. Originating as the study of "exotic" societies in a colonial setting, anthropology has gradually taken the form of a critical study of social and cultural realities. The discipline scrutinizes the processes of constructing identity and social difference in the contemporary world**.

The aim of the course is to familiarize students with the basic categories of cultural anthropology. Particular attention will be paid to the **methodological principles of ethnography**, which will be explored through an approach to the main theoretical currents and the main thematic areas of the discipline.

Through some ethnographic texts and documentary films, the course introduces students to the main areas of investigation in cultural anthropology: social organization, gender and sexuality, power, violence, resources and exchange. During class, some of the founding figures of the discipline will be introduced.
Students will approach the methods of ethnographic research, whose main objective is to document discourses and practices (but also emotions, sensations, etc.) appropriate to a given socio-cultural context, to capture the point of view of the actors and to identify the forces that act on their existences.

Objectives

Through regular and participatory class attendance, this course features the following targets:

Knowledge and understanding: The course aims to provide students with a solid grounding in cultural anthropology by introducing some constituent concepts of the discipline such as culture, cultural relativism, ethnicity, body, power, gender, etc. The course also aims to introduce the main theoretical paradigms and methodological features of anthropology, such as fieldwork, decentralization of the gaze, data collection and their restitution.

Ability to connect different models and ideas: Through class and suggested readings, students will be given the tools to understand the processes of constructing identities and differences and develop an attitude of comparison with other cultural realities.

Ability to apply knowledge and models: Students acquire knowledge useful for critical reflection on the complexity of the contemporary world. Familiarity with the methodological principles of ethnography will also enable them to develop observation and interpretation skills for everyday life contexts.
During the lessons, independent judgment and communication skills are strengthened by encouraging students to formulate their own opinions and present them effectively. Learning skills are enhanced through active class participation and classroom discussion.

Methodologies

Classical lectures : lectures with use of Power Point will cover the main topics, followed by in-classroom debates. Case-studies drawn from the history of the discipline are side-by side with those illustrated in the reading list. Audio-visual materials will be shared during the course.
The lessons will be in Italian.

In the event of public transport strikes or other unforeseen problems, there is the possibility of holding a maximum of two lessons by distance learning (synchronous mode, at a time and date agreed and communicated in class and on the e-learning page of the course).

Online and offline teaching materials

All teaching and learning materials will be specified during the course and uploaded to the course page, which both attending and nonattending students are reuqired to control regularly.

Programme and references

1. Schultz E. A, Lavenda R., 2013, Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective on the Human Condition, 0xford University Press

2. King C., 2020, The Reinvention of Humanity: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Remade Race, Sex and Gender, Vintage.

3. Bourgois, P., 2003, In search of respect: Selling crack in El Barrio. Cambridge University Press.

Assessment methods

Type of exam: **oral exam**: discussion and questions on the topics covered in class and on the exam texts.

There are no intermediate tests during the course.

Grading criteria: course attendance and active participation to in-classroom debates; knowledge of the texts mentioned in the Reading List.
Final evalutation:
attending students oral interview where the student will be require to be able to present and resume the contents of the lessons in classroom; the comprehension of the texts detailed in the Reading List; the ability to connect the different aspects of the theories and ethnographic examples.
non-attending students will be required to be able to present and resume the contents answer on the comprehension of the books and articles detailed in the Reading List; the ability to connect the different aspects of the theories and ethnographic examples will be evaluated as well as the conncetions to other aspects of the bachelor's degree..

Office hours

Appointment requested via written email to the teachers.

Programme validity

Syllabus is to be held as good for the academic year of the first inscription and the following year (2 years in all).

Course tutors and assistants

Patrizia Pertuso

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | LIFE ON LAND | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS