UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Cultural Anthropology

2526-1-E3902N003

Learning objectives

The course aims to a) provide the basic theoretical and methodological tools of anthropological reflection and ethnographic research for professions in social services

- Knowledge and understanding (D1):
  Participants will acquire
  a) knowledge of the main concepts of social and cultural anthropology from a historical perspective and in relation to contemporary debate,
  b) the ability to understand the diversity of cultural phenomena, and
  c) the ability to critically navigate the complexity of contemporary multicultural societies.

- Applied knowledge and understanding (D2)
  At the end of the course, students will also have acquired a basic ability to observe cultural phenomena from an ethnographic perspective, starting from the details of everyday life and moving towards the broader global contexts in which they are embedded.

- Independent judgment (D3)
  The course develops the ability to formulate independent assessments of cultural change processes, avoiding value judgments applied to cultural diversity.

- Communication skills (D4)
  Exposure, argumentation, and use of anthropological language skills will be enhanced through student involvement in discussions on specific ethnographic cases.

- Learning skills (D5)
  The course provides the basis for developing learning skills starting from the analysis of cultural phenomena from both a theoretical and ethnographic point of view.

Contents

Theoretical and methodological issues of Anthropology and Ethnography starting from the origins to current debates regarding the dynamics of culture in current societies. Introduction to the ethnographic approach to understand cultural variation.

Detailed program

1. What is cultural anthropology; 2. The concept of culture; 3. Ethnocentrism and relativism; 4. Ethnography; 5. Economic systems; 6. Reproduction, kinship and family life; 7. Culture and power relations; 8. Communication; 9. Religion; 10. Illness, desease, malaise, cure; 11. How we understand societies through culture (myths, rituals, leisure, artistic expressions) ; 12. How anthropology interprets globalization: mobility, migrants, foreigners, travellers, tourists, local identities; culture and development.

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of social theory and good knowledge of the English language

Teaching methods

The course consists of 63 hours, approximately 80% of which is taught through lectures (using slides) and 20% through interactive teaching methods (viewing and discussion of audiovisual material, presentation and discussion of case studies).

Assessment methods

The exam will be written and will consist of answering a series of open-ended questions based on the texts and teaching materials used during the lessons. The questions will be formulated in such a way as to assess the anthropological knowledge acquired and the ability to use anthropological language. The exam will be computerized, so it must be taken in one of the laboratories.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

- Barbara Miller (2025), Antropologia Culturale. Terza edizione italiana a cura di Alessandra Broccolini. Pearson, Milano. ISBN 9788891936172 – ISBN Digitale: 9788891936189 or
- Barbara Miller (2017), Cultural Anthropology in a globalizing world, 4th edition, Pearson Education inc. (erasmus students)

- Matteo Aria e Adriano Favole (2015) L'arte della condivisione. Per una ecologia dei beni comuni. UTET, Torino,

pp. 24-33.

- Matteo Aria (2016) I doni di Mauss, CISU, Roma, Capitolo 5. pp. 111-127.

- ONE of the following ethnographies :

(a) Capello Carlo (2020) Ai margini del lavoro. Un’antropologia della disoccupazione a Torino. Ombre Corte, Verona.

(b) Pozzi Giacomo (2020) Fuori casa: antropologia degli sfratti a Milano. Ledizioni, Milano.

(c) Scaglioni Marta e Diodati Francesco (a cura di) (2021) Antropologia dell'invecchiamento e della cura. Ledizioni, Milano.

(d) Vietti Francesco (2019) Il paese delle badanti. Meltemi, Milano.

(e) Vinai Manuela (2020) I giocatori. Etnografia nelle sale slot della provincia italiana. Meltemi, Milano.

(f) Rimoldi Luca e Pozzi Giacomo (a cura di) (2022) Pensare un’antropologia del welfare. Etnografie dello stato sociale in Italia. Meltemi, Milano. (Capitoli: 1,3,4,5,6,8,9).

(g) Gallotti Cecilia e Tarabusi Federica (a cura di) (2024) Antropologia e servizi: intersezioni etnografiche fra ricerca e applicazione. Ledizioni, Milano. (Capitoli: 1,3,5,6,7,8,12,13)

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS