UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Demography and Tourism

2526-1-F4902N001

Learning objectives

The learning objectives are as follows:

1. Knowledge and Understanding
   The course aims to provide students with a solid theoretical and empirical understanding of contemporary socio-demographic phenomena and their impact on tourism flows and practices. Special focus will be placed on demographic transitions, ageing, fertility, mortality, migration, and the socio-economic implications of these processes. Students will explore differences and similarities across countries with advanced economies and those with limited development, with particular attention to issues of urbanization, inequality, and climate change.
2. Applying Knowledge and Understanding
   Students will acquire the ability to apply analytical tools and concepts to assess demographic and social conditions across regions, linking these insights to tourism development potential. The course includes practical exercises that use statistical sources (ISTAT, Eurostat, World Bank, UNWTO, etc.) to support data-driven analysis, impact assessments, and policy design. Students will work on real-world case studies, gaining practical experience in thematic reporting and project development for sustainable tourism.
3. Making Judgements
   The course fosters independent and critical thinking by encouraging students to reflect on the connections between demographic trends, social change, and tourism policies. Through case studies, discussions, and group activities, students will learn to develop and defend informed opinions, evaluate alternative strategies, and make evidence-based decisions in complex and uncertain contexts.
4. Communication Skills
   Students will enhance their ability to communicate effectively both in writing and orally. Emphasis will be placed on the development of skills for producing analytical reports, infographics, and policy briefs, as well as delivering structured and coherent presentations. Active participation in discussions, workshops, and group work will support the development of argumentation and peer-to-peer learning.
5. Learning Skills
   The course encourages the development of autonomous and lifelong learning skills, enabling students to integrate theoretical knowledge with data analysis tools. Students will be guided in using academic and

institutional resources, navigating statistical databases, and designing their own paths of inquiry. They will be equipped to continue learning in both academic and professional settings, including internships, final dissertations, or further postgraduate studies.

Contents

Demographic conditions in the countries of the world
Health and living conditions in countries
Measures of development and inequality
Economic and social inequalities
Gender inequalities
The sustainable development goals
Tourism and the economic conditions of countries
Tourism flows and the sociodemographic conditions of countries
The economic consequences of tourism in poor countries

Detailed program

The course aims to achieve two main objectives, developed through an interdisciplinary approach that combines social sciences, demography, and tourism studies.
The first objective is to deepen students' understanding of the social and demographic dynamics that characterize populations in different geographical and socio-economic contexts. In particular, students will be provided with theoretical and practical tools to analyze, evaluate, and interpret the main manifestations and root causes of social and demographic inequalities in the contemporary world. This includes the study of patterns of population growth and decline, demographic transitions (fertility, mortality, migration), population ageing, age and gender composition, as well as the socio-economic implications of these phenomena.
Through comparative analysis of the socio-demographic conditions of economically advanced countries and those that are developing or under-resourced, the course will highlight both the similarities and the structural differences in historical and current processes that shape population dynamics. This comparative perspective will serve as the basis for understanding the diversity of development pathways and global demographic challenges, including their connections to urbanization, mobility, climate change, and inequality.
The second objective of the course builds on the premise that these socio-demographic dynamics directly and indirectly influence the intensity, direction, and quality of tourism flows. Therefore, the course will explore the relationships between a country’s economic, cultural, and social factors and its capacity to attract or generate tourism. Topics will include the characteristics of tourism demand and supply, the role of infrastructure, political and social stability, as well as the motivations driving cultural, nature-based, health, and social tourism.
Special emphasis will be placed on developing methodological skills related to the collection, analysis, and interpretation of statistical indicators at national and international levels. Students will become familiar with key sources of demographic, economic, and tourism data (e.g., ISTAT, UNWTO, Eurostat, World Bank), and will be guided in their critical use and application to concrete case studies. This component aims to strengthen students' ability to use data for producing thematic analyses, evaluation reports, and the design of informed and sustainable tourism policies.
The course adopts an active and practice-oriented teaching approach, with a constant focus on the empirical dimension of the topics addressed. Activities will include exercises, case study analyses, guided discussions, and data interpretation workshops, using up-to-date materials from national and international sources. This will enable students to develop communication skills, critical thinking, and a systemic understanding of the interactions between population and tourism in a globalized world.

Prerequisites

None

Teaching methods

The course is a combination of theoretical lectures and practical applications. Of the planned 49 hours, 40 will be delivered as (DE), and 9 as interactive teaching (DI).

Assessment methods

During the course, students are required to submit two short written assignments, take a written exam covering the topics discussed in class, and produce a final report. The final grade will be based on the average score obtained across the in-course assessments. These assessments are designed to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of the core concepts and content of the course, their ability to make connections between topics, and their capacity to critically and personally reflect on the issues addressed. The evaluation criteria are as follows: a) accuracy of responses; b) ability to analyze and apply concepts to research examples; c) clarity of expression; d) ability to integrate theoretical concepts with ethical principles discussed in class and in the assigned readings.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

For those who have the opportunity to attend lessons, materials are provided by the teacher.
Those who do not have the opportunity to attend lectures can take the exam by preparing the following texts:
M. Livi Bacci (2024) Storia minima della popolazione del mondo, Il Mulino
G. Micheli (2011) Demografie, Mc-Graw Hill, capitoli 1,4,5,6.
S. Salvini (2021) Globalizzazione: e la popolazione? Le relazioni fra demografia e mondo globalizzato, Firenze University Press

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | GENDER EQUALITY