UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Ethnography and Discourse Analysis

2526-1-F8804N010

Learning objectives

As a preliminary definition, ethnography can be defined as a method, style, and practice of research based on the *being there* - the direct presence of the researcher in the field and within the field where the social phenomena under study occur. The primary objective of the course is to promote theoretical and practical knowledge, as well as a pragmatic understanding of this method, style, and research practice.

The following are the educational objectives formulated on the basis of the five “Dublin Descriptors”:

Practical knowledge of ethnography and understanding of theory and discourse analysis in conjunction with field research methods.
Ability to apply ethnographic method and discourse analysis to important issues related to social relations and interactions in different institutional, organisational and everyday life contexts.
Ability to critically integrate complex information and knowledge related to ethnographic research concepts and methods, and to form independent judgements about field research operations and decisions.
Ability to communicate clearly and effectively research findings and the content of empirical or theoretical essays acquired during individual and group exercises.
Ability to independently learn and deepen the specialised sociological literature acquired through individual and group work and exercises in the course of lectures.

Contents

Fieldwork analysis of interactions and discursive practices in specific places and groups; theory and analysis of the discourse processes in urban, economic, cultural and institutional fields.

Detailed program

The course is divided into two parts. The first introduces the theory and practice of ethnographic research, through the illustration of the principal perspective of analysis, discussion of various research objects, presentation of fieldwork studies, applicative exercises and analysis of the practices of description and writing in fieldwork reports. The second part is devoted to discourse analysis and to the relations among ethnography, public discourse and social representations with reference to the study of interactions, social organizations and institutions. Particular emphasis is given to sociolinguistics, cultural studies, rhetoric and argumentations in a post-structuralist perspective.

Prerequisites

A basic knowledge of sociological theory of interactions and methodology of social research, and fairly good skills in learning, writing and speaking.

Teaching methods

The course is 56 hours, consisting of 18 3-hour lectures and one 2-hour lecture. All lectures are conducted in presence.
Indicatively, 11 lectures are conducted in the didactic delivery mode (with the possibility of interactions) and 8 lectures are conducted in the interactive teaching mode (field exercises and readings; student presentations of classroom readings with collective discussion; exercises, presentations and discussions of research project drafts; subgroup work).

Assessment methods

Option 1). Students who actively participate in lectures and discussions and who carry out the assignments (A, B) may submit, for examination purposes, a written field research paper, the content of which must be agreed with the teacher in the classroom during the lectures. The assesment method consists of the evaluation of the paper, presented and discussed at the end of the lectures in the oral examination.

Option 2). For all other students, a critical review paper (paper) on the readings in the syllabus (“Reference Texts,” below) of approximately 25 editorial folders (each folder = 400 words) is required, following the directions posted on the course e-learning page (Section “Critical Review”). Papers will be discussed in the oral examination. This option is also valid for all students who have to take the exam from previous academic years.

Criteria for evaluation: clarity of exposition, argumentative ability, understanding of ethnographic theory and method and links to discourse analysis.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Sustainable Development Goals

REDUCED INEQUALITIES | LIFE ON LAND | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS