UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Antropologia Culturale - M-Z

2627-2-E1902R014-MZ

Course title

Cultural Anthropology M-Z

Topics and course structure

The course is an introduction to cultural anthropology, a discipline that provides critical knowledge aimed at understanding and analysing cultural diversity and the processes of identity construction, differences and inequalities in the contemporary world.
The course aims to encourage students to deconstruct certain categories that permeate contemporary society, such as culture, religion, gender relations, kinship, ethnicity and race, etc., so that they can rethink them critically within educational contexts.
The course is divided into two parts.

1. In the first part of the course, students will acquire a solid basic knowledge of cultural anthropology through the presentation of some authors and fundamental passages in the history of the discipline. Particular attention will also be paid to the ethnographic method, the anthropological tool for understanding cultural otherness based on field research, understood as “immersion” in another world of life and another environment, on the decentralisation of the gaze, on disorientation and reflexivity.
2. In the second part of the course, some of the topics covered in the first part will be explored in greater depth, with a monographic approach, along with contemporary developments in the discipline.

Objectives

The course aims to provide students with a set of skills that will enable them to interpret educational contexts in an

informed manner, providing them with basic critical tools for understanding the social and cultural dynamics that characterise the contemporary world and exploring the potential and friction that encounters with “the other” can entail. The course also aims to enable students to become aware of the specificity of their own cultural background, thus enhancing the acquisition of anthropological reflective skills.
This course aims to support the following learning outcomes in particular:

Knowledge and understanding

– Develop a critical and articulated knowledge of the tools and reasoning of cultural anthropology;
– Acquire knowledge useful for critical reflection on the complexity of the contemporary world.

Applied knowledge and understanding
– Apply the knowledge acquired, developing an attitude of comparison and critical recognition of different cultural realities.
– Design and evaluate educational contexts and experiences from a critical perspective, capable of observing and understanding the complexity of the contexts of reference.

Autonomy of judgement
– Acquire and consolidate analytical and critical thinking skills, taking reflective ethical and epistemological positions characterised by professional responsibility.

Communication skills
– Develop the ability to communicate effectively in multicultural contexts.
– Know and use the specific languages and vocabulary of anthropology as tools
for training, relationships and communication in different contexts.

Learning skills
– Ability to rework and organise knowledge;
– Ability to identify methods and tools to support one's own and others' personal and professional growth.

Methodologies

The language of instruction is Italian.
As a general rule, all training activities included in the 56 hours are carried out in person.
The course is divided into:
a) Two two-hour classroom lessons. During the first lesson, the teacher will present the structure and content of the programme, as well as the examination and assessment methods. During the last lesson, the teacher will highlight the main topics covered during the course and provide further information on the final exam.
b) Twenty-four two-hour lessons in a mixed classroom setting. These lessons are structured to provide a diverse learning experience. In the first part, the teacher gives a lecture (Didattica Erogativa, DE). In the second part, in an interactive mode, students actively participate in proposed activities, such as discussing specific topics (Didattica Interattiva, DI). The order of these two teaching methods within a single lesson may not always follow this order: sometimes the first part of the lesson will be devoted to ID to stimulate discussion on certain categories of common sense, followed by an analysis of these same concepts from a cultural anthropology perspective (DE).
c) Two lessons to prepare for an “ethnographic observation” exercise that will be carried out during the course.

Attendance and active participation are recommended.

Online and offline teaching materials

Teaching materials for further study of the topics discussed in class will be made available on the course page.

Programme and references

The bibliography will be published by September 2026

Although this course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students, course material can also be available in English, and students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so.

Assessment methods

Type of exam
The exam is oral and divided into two parts, both oral.

The first part relates to the textbook section of the course (see Course topics and structure). Passing this test is essential in order to proceed to the second part of the exam (which takes place immediately after the first), during which the other texts on the syllabus will be discussed.

Assessment criteria
The lecturer will assess both the solidity of the skills acquired and the students' ability to read the texts critically. Students must achieve a pass mark in the first part of the exam (at least 18/30) in order to proceed to the second part.

The assessment will be graded out of 30, based on the following scale:
1. Unsatisfactory
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 betweentexts 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.

Office hours

By e-mail appointment.

Programme validity

The programmes run for **two academic years**. The 2026–2027 programme therefore runs from the summer session (June, July and September) of 2027 until the winter session (January and February) of 2029.

The previous year’s programme (2025–2026) may be extended until the winter session (January and February) of 2028.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES