



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Anthropology of Museums and Art - Applied Perspectives

2627-2-F0102R021

Course title

Anthropology of Museums and Art - Applied Perspectives

Topics and course structure

The course examines the theoretical, methodological, and thematic lines of museum anthropology and the anthropology of art, analyzing them in their applied dimension, with particular reference to: (1) the cultural dimension of aesthetic experience; (2) cultural economics, creativity, and the aestheticization of life in contemporary societies; (3) dynamics of the contemporary art world; interactions between anthropology and art in the ethnographic field, and in public and participatory art; (4) cultural practices of collecting, cultural heritage policies, and the role and function of museums. Attending students will have the opportunity to meet artists, curators, museum conservators, and professionals from the art world and creative industries with the aim of understanding professional environments and the applicability of anthropological competencies.

Objectives

Through regular and active attendance of this course, the following learning outcomes are intended to be promoted, in terms of:

Knowledge and understanding:

- Acquiring solid and systematic knowledge in the field of museum anthropology and the anthropology of art.
- Identifying the theoretical and methodological specificities of the discipline and its interdisciplinary connections.

- Understanding the specificities of each research field and object (the variation of methodologies in relation to different contexts) and their level of integration and interdependence within the complexity of social and cultural realities and the structure of the discipline.

Applying knowledge and understanding:

- Articulating the dialogue between scientific literature and research in an innovative way.
- Effectively applying the acquired skills to concrete problems, situations, and contexts, also with reference to the professional fields encountered during the course.
- Knowing how to convey the sense of open-mindedness and the capacity for intercultural dialogue that underpin the demo-ethno-anthropological disciplines.

Making judgements:

- Understanding the complexity of cultural processes, connections, and differences between the artistic, museum, and anthropological fields, while welcoming and valuing diverse viewpoints and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices.
- Evaluating the consequences of one's actions and decisions, adopting a reflective and responsible attitude.

Communication skills:

- Expressing ideas, knowledge, and arguments with clarity.
- Formulating well-founded judgements by integrating information from diverse and reliable sources.

Learning skills:

- Developing and refining one's own learning methodologies, independently identifying and constructing objects and topics of study, and hypothesizing potential applied contexts.

Methodologies

Alternation throughout all lectures between traditional teaching (70% frontal lectures, followed by questions and discussion) and interactive teaching (30% case study discussions, in-person and remote meetings with experts from the art and museum world).

Online and offline teaching materials

Lecture slides used by the teacher; videos and websites.

Programme and references

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.

Students will select one of the following three options:

1. Cultural dimension of aesthetic experience and cultural creativity"

Bargna I., 2014 "Filming Food Cultural Practices in Cameroon. An Artistic and Ethnographic Work", *Archivio di Etnografia*, 1-2, pp. 111-133 (http://www.anuac.it/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Archivio-di-Etnografia_1-2_2014_indiceabstracts.pdf)

Ingold T., "The Temporality of Landscape", *World Archeology*, 25, 1993: 152-174 (<https://quote.ucsd.edu/sed/files/2014/09/Ingold-Temporality-of-the-Landscape.pdf>)

Pink S., 2014, *Doing Visual Ethnography*, Sage Publ, London, 164 pages

Ingold T., 2013, *Making. Anthropology, Archeology, Art, and Architecture**, Routledge, London

2. Anthropology of Contemporary Art

Bargna I., 2012, "Between Hollywood and Bandjoun: art activism and anthropological ethnography into the mediascape ", *Journal des anthropologues*, 129-130: 101-130

Grimshaw A., Ravetz A., 2005, "The ethnographic turn and after: a critical approach towards the realignment of art and anthropology", *Social Anthropology*, 23, 4: 418- 434

Plattner S., 1998, "A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Market for Contemporary Fine Art", *American Anthropologist*, 100, 2: 482-493

Schneider A., Wright C., eds., 2020, *Anthropology and Art Practice*, Routledge, London, pp. 192

3. Museum Anthropology and Cultural Heritage

Coombs A., E. Phillips R. B., eds., 2020, *Museum Transformations: Decolonization and Democratization*, Wiley-Blackwell (Introduction, chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 22, 24)

Sansi R., a cura, 2020, *The Anthropologist as Curator*, Bloomsbury, pp. 256

Wali A., Collins R. K., 2023, "Decolonizing Museums:Toward a Paradigm Shift", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 52, pp. 329-345

Assessment methods

Oral exam: questions will assess students' critical knowledge of the texts and, for attending students only, the topics discussed in class; questions will also assess students' ability to establish connections between different theories, topics, and case studies. There are no midterm tests.

ERASMUS students are kindly requested to contact the teacher in order to prepare for the exam: they will be able to take the exam in Italian, English or French.

Office hours

By appointment.

Programme validity

Two years.

Course tutors and assistants

Dr. Marco Rossi

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION
