



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Geography (blended)

2627-2-F0102R019

Course title

Geographies of the Sea. Places, Power and Imaginaries

Topics and course structure

'The sea is ever-present in our lives and yet remains one of the least understood and most difficult spaces to depict' (Casati, 2022). This blended learning course aims to develop students' knowledge and understanding of territorial practices applied to marine spaces. Starting from the sea, an essential element for life on the planet and at the same time one of the most complex spaces to interpret, some key concepts of contemporary geography will be addressed, such as space, place, territory, environment, landscape, heritage, gender, biodiversity, highlighting the intrinsically interdisciplinary nature of geography. In line with the spatial turn that has affected the social sciences and cultural studies, the course explores the sea as a social, cultural, and political construction, challenging its representation as a mere natural background. Through the analysis of case studies and diverse materials, students will be invited to reflect on the relations between human communities and marine environments, on the forms of orientation and disorientation that characterize the experience of the sea, on gender dimensions, and on the relations between the human and the non-human. Particular attention will be dedicated to marine biodiversity, ocean literacy, ocean citizenship, climate change, and the vulnerabilities of coastal and island communities, with specific reference to the Maldives. The sea will also be analyzed as a natural and cultural heritage, a space of imagination and memory, but also as a place crossed by conflicts and global governance practices

Objectives

In line with the educational objectives of the Degree Programme, the course aims primarily to introduce students to

the theoretical and methodological foundations of human geography, with particular reference to the geographies of the sea and the relationships between societies and marine environments.

The course provides students with the conceptual tools to analyse the socio-spatial, cultural and environmental processes that characterize marine and coastal environments, recognising the role of imaginaries, heritage and cultural representations. It also aims to foster independent judgement and the ability to critically interpret the complexity of marine geographical processes by embracing different perspectives, overcoming stereotypes and assessing the consequences of human actions on marine ecosystems from the perspective of environmental responsibility.

The course also seeks to strengthen students' communication skills by encouraging the clear presentation of ideas, knowledge and scientific arguments, integrating information from diverse and reliable sources. Finally, it aims to develop independent learning and research skills that will also be valuable in the preparation of the final dissertation.

Methodologies

The course is taught in Italian and delivered through a blended-learning format, consisting of 33 hours of classroom teaching, including lectures and seminars, and 22 hours of asynchronous online learning and interactive activities delivered through the University e-learning platform.

Online activities include the analysis of scientific articles, audiovisual materials and case studies, as well as guided discussions through forums, chats and web conferences. These activities are designed to promote active learning, collaborative work and the development of critical thinking and communication skills. develop communication, presentation and critical discussion skills.

Online and offline teaching materials

The complete bibliography will be made available before the beginning of the course.

Programme and references

Texts:

Casati, R. Oceano. Una navigazione filosofica. Turin: Einaudi, 2022.

Squarcina, E. Mare, terra e marinai. Una breve riflessione. Milan: Unicopli, 2026.

Additional readings and scientific articles will be communicated at the beginning of the course. Audiovisual materials and online resources will be made available through the University e-learning platform.

Attending students are required to participate in classroom and online activities, prepare a final PowerPoint presentation and write a short paper on a topic agreed with the lecturer within the field of the geographies of the sea.

Incoming Erasmus students may agree on an alternative bibliography in English with the lecturer and may also take the examination in English.

Assessment methods

For all students, the final exam will consist of an oral interview aimed at verifying the knowledge acquired through critical study of the texts included in the exam syllabus and the work carried out in class.

The choice of the oral interview as the examination method is consistent with the objectives of the course, as it allows, through a dialogic communicative situation, interaction with the student in order to assess their critical understanding of the course topics, their pedagogical analysis skills, and their ability to connect theory and practice.

There are two examination options:

For attending students, participation in synchronous and blended learning activities is required; in addition, the preparation and presentation of a PowerPoint and a short paper on the geography of the sea.

For non-attending students, the final exam consists of an oral interview.

The oral interview is intended to verify knowledge of the materials listed in the bibliography, in order to acquire competencies on the topics covered by the instructor through lectures and classroom discussions, which can also be consulted through the PDF lecture slides uploaded to the website.

The assessment will be graded on a scale out of thirty, according to the following evaluation criteria:

Failing grade (insufficient):

The student:

does not identify the characteristics of the concepts and is unable to formulate a coherent explanation;

is not able to apply the concepts to different territorial realities;

provides only a basic argument, and does not use disciplinary language correctly;

cannot imagine didactic applications of the concepts and struggles to connect different experiences in a coherent framework.

18–24:

The student:

only partially identifies the characteristics of the concepts and sometimes cannot formulate a coherent explanation;

is only partially able to apply the concepts to different territorial realities;

develops an imprecise argument, and does not always use disciplinary language correctly;

applies the concepts to didactic activities imprecisely, and has some difficulties connecting different experiences in a coherent framework.

25–30:

The student:

identifies the characteristics of the concepts and is able to formulate a coherent explanation;

is able to apply the concepts to different territorial realities;

develops precise arguments, and uses disciplinary language correctly;

is able to apply the concepts to didactic activities and connects different experiences in a coherent framework.

Incoming Erasmus students will be provided with alternative reading material in English (or another language) and will have the opportunity to take the exam in a language other than Italian.

Students with specific learning disabilities (DSA) who wish to make use of compensatory tools are kindly requested to send their P.Uo.I. at least ten days before the exam.

Office hours

From Monday to Friday, by appointment by e-mail

marcella.schmidt@unimib.it

Programme validity

Programs are valid two academic years

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | CLIMATE ACTION | LIFE BELOW WATER | PEACE,
JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
