UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Fundamentals of Anthropology of Kinship and Gender

2627-1-F0102R003

Course title

Anthropology of kinship and gender

Topics and course structure

This course covers the major theoretical advances in kinship and gender anthropology and explores the influence of feminist anthropology on the study of kinship and gender. Key concepts introduced include "descent," "marriage," "domestic group/cycle," "sex/gender," "family," "relatedness," and "care." The course analyzes current debates on reproduction, adoption, kinning, alternative intimacies, family morphologies and dynamics.

Objectives

With regular class attendance, this course aims to promote the following learning outcomes.

1. Knowledge and Understanding:
   a. Acquiring solid knowledge in the field of the anthropology of kinship and gender.
   b. Identifying theoretical and methodological specificities of the anthropology of kinship and gender, and its connections with other disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields.
   c. Understanding the relevance of kinship and gender in different social and cultural contexts.

2. Ability to apply knowledge and understanding:
   a. Articulating the dialogue between scientific literature on kinship and gender and ethnographic research in an innovative way.
   b. Effectively appling the acquired skills to concrete problems, situations, and contexts.

c. Transmitting open-mindedness toward different articulations of kinship and gender to promote intercultural comparison and dialogue.

3. Independent judgement:
   a. Understanding the complexity of kinship and gender relations; accepting and valuing different points of view; and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices.
   b. Assessing the consequences of one's actions and decisions in light of one's positionality; adopting a reflective and responsible attitude in interpersonal and professional relations.

4. Communication skills:
   a. Expressing ideas, knowledge and arguments clearly.
   b. Formulating well-founded judgements by integrating information from reliable and diverse sources.

5. Learning skills:
   a. Developing and refining one's own learning methods by independently identifying and constructing objects and topics of study.

Methodologies

The course is structured as follows:
a) During the first lecture, the instructor will present the program's structure and content, as well as the exam and assessment methods. During the last lecture, the instructor will highlight the main topics covered and provide further information on the final exam. A live video link will be available for non-attending students to follow these lectures.
b) Sixteen mixed method lessons. These lessons are designed to provide a well-rounded learning experience. In the first part (erogative mode), a lecture is given by the instructor. In the second part (interactive mode), students actively participate in various activities, such as discussing texts and/or exercising on topics related to the lesson.
c) A recorded lecture on the text by Margaret Mead included in the exam bibliography.

Lectures will be in Italian. For Erasmus students, teaching materials can be made available entirely in English. If they wish, students can be examined in English.

Online and offline teaching materials

At the end of each section/topic, the instructor will upload the lecture slides to the e-learning platform. For some topics, links to optional audiovisual materials will be provided for further study.
The instructor will provide materials to support non-traditional students in their study and exam preparation, including lecture slides, recordings of the first and last lectures, and the recorded lecture on Margaret Mead.

Programme and references

The exam program and bibliography require students to study the content of the lectures and the texts listed below.

1. L. Stone, D. E. King, Kinship and Gender. An Introduction, Routledge, 2019.
2. M. Mead, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies, HarperCollins, 2001 (original edition 1935).

3. A. Gribaldo e V. Ribeiro Corossacz, Antropologia e Femminismo. Storia etnografia, concetti, Roma, Carocci.
4. A text of your choice from:

- S. Grilli, Antropologia delle famiglie contemporanee, Carocci, 2025
- C. Mattalucci, S. Grilli (a cura di), Relazionalità contemporanee: tra normatività e trasgressioni. ANTROPOLOGIA, 12(2), 2024, https://www.ledijournals.com/ojs/index.php/antropologia/issue/view/173 (tutti gli articoli inclusi nello special focus).
- S. Tremayne, Inconceivable Iran. To Reproduce or Not to Reproduce?, Berghahn, 2022.
- R. Di Silvio, Parentele di confine. La pratica adottiva tra desiderio locale e mondo globale, Danyang M&J Publisging House 2021
- C. S. Guerzoni, Sistemi procreativi. Etnografia dell'omogenitorialità in Italia, Franco Angeli, 2020.
- R. Cromer, Conceiving Christian America: Embryo Adoption and Reproductive Politics, NYU Press, 2023.
- J. Carsten, H-C. Chiu, S. Magee, E. Papadaki, K. M. Reece, Marriage in Past, Present and Future Tense, UCL Press, 2021.
- A. L. Acquistapace, Tenetevi il matrimonio e dateci la dote. Il lavoro riproduttivo nelle relazioni di intimità, solidarietà e cura oltre la coppia nell'Italia urbana contemporanea, Mimesis 2022.
- L. Menin, Quest for Love in Central Morocco, Young Women and the Dynamics of Intimate Lives, Syracuse University Press, 2004.
- R. Zecca Castel, Mastico y trago. Donne, famiglia e amore in un batey dominicano, editpress, 2023.
- A. Clarke, D. Haraway, Making Kin not Population: Reconceiving Generations. Prickly Paradigm Press.

Assessment methods

The oral final exam is aimed at assessing the knowledge acquired through the critical study of the texts included in the exam reading list and participation in the proposed activities (for attending students only). There will be no tests during this course.

Assessment criteria:

The assessment will be based on the Dublin Descriptors: the level bands are as follows:

1. High Level (25-30/30): Distinguished - Excellent
   Knowledge and Understanding: The student demonstrates in-depth and solid knowledge of the texts and topics covered; understands and analyses the texts presented without hesitation.

Ability to apply knowledge: is able to identify general considerations on the authors/topics examined in the texts with confidence and effective personal observations; with adequate argumentative skills, is able to analyse, summarise, interpret, contextualise and compare the texts presented, also making use of interdisciplinary links.

Autonomy of Judgement: demonstrates excellent critical skills, autonomy of judgement and originality in the analysis and interpretation of texts.

Communication Skills: expresses themselves clearly, rigorously, fluently and appropriately. Is fully aware of the need to use different linguistic registers depending on the communicative situation.

Learning skills: demonstrates excellent/very good independent learning skills, is able to effectively rework knowledge and link it to their own experience; is fully aware of the usefulness of the discipline.

2. Average level (18-24/30): Sufficient - Good
   Knowledge and understanding: The student demonstrates a general understanding of the texts and topics covered. Although there are some minor inaccuracies or a few uncertainties regarding specific, non-

essential details, overall the student shows sufficient comprehension and a reasonable ability to analyse the texts.

Ability to apply knowledge: The student has some difficulty connecting general points to the examples provided in the texts. The summary of the content is sometimes not very effective, and the contextualization and comparison of authors and themes could be further developed.

Autonomy of judgement: The student demonstrates a fair degree of independence in forming critical assessments, although he or she sometimes tends to rely on the opinions of others.

Communication skills: expresses themselves clearly and with sufficient precision, with a reasonable command of the specific language of the discipline. Is aware of the need to use different linguistic registers depending on the communicative situation.

Learning skills: The student demonstrates a reasonable ability to apply knowledge and relate it to personal experience. An awareness of the subject's practical value is present, though it is still developing.

3. Basic Level (0–17/30): Still consolidating
   Knowledge and understanding: The student demonstrates only a partial understanding of the texts and topics covered. Their grasp of the content is sometimes uncertain and requires further exploration and greater precision in interpretation.

Ability to apply knowledge: The student finds it difficult to link general considerations to the examples in the texts and to summarise the content effectively. Contextualisation and comparison between authors and themes still need to be developed.

Autonomy of judgement: Critical thinking and independent evaluation need to be guided through more personal reflection and reworking.

Communication skills: Oral presentation is at times somewhat halting; it would be advisable to strengthen the use of subject-specific vocabulary and improve precision of expression.

Learning skills: The student still shows difficulty in personally reworking knowledge and linking it to broader experiences and themes. Greater awareness of the educational value of the subject is desirable.

NB: Students with PUOI (special educational needs) must email the document before the exam.

Office hours

By e-mail appointment.

Programme validity

This program is valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

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Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY