UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Systems of Thought and History of Mentalities

2627-1-F0102R007

Course title

Ernesto De Martino's *La fine del mondo*

Topics and course structure

Ernesto De Martino did not live long enough to fully develop his research on “cultural apocalypses,” that is, on experiences in which individuals or entire civilizations perceive the threat of “no longer being able to exist in any possible cultural world.”

However, an initial systematization of the preparatory material (drafts, outlines, reading notes) for the book that De Martino was not givent the time to write was published, edited by Clara Gallini, in 1977 under the title *La fine del mondo. Contributi all’analisi delle apocalissi culturali* (The End of the World: Contributions to the Analysis of Cultural Apocalypses).
And today we have a second version, featuring a different selection and a new organization of the material, edited by Giordana Charuty, Daniel Fabre, and Marcello Massenzio.

This year’s course aims, quite simply, to offer a reading path through this incredibly rich material—which includes the analysis of psychotic delusions, mystical experiences, apocalyptic rituals of populations studied by anthropology, and collective anxieties—paying special attention to the author’s engagement—on an equal footing—with European philosophy and, in particular, with Heidegger’s thought.

As for the content and method of the lectures, it is not required—nor is it necessary—to have previously studied philosophy.

Objectives

1. Knowledge and understanding
   Acquire knowledge of the models of self-understanding of the human being - understood both as a singularity and in relation to different social formations - developed within the Western philosophical tradition, with particular reference to the ontological, ethical, political, religious and cultural variables in general that structure the fields of experience and sediment in collective mentalities;
   Ability to put into relation different paradigms, grasping the recurring tension between historical and transcendental approaches;

2. Applied knowledge and understanding
   articulate the dialogue between philosophical approaches and anthropological research in an innovative way
   Ability to apply knowledge and models, contributing to the development of critical skills for interpreting cultural contexts, and to the autonomy of judgment with respect to the theoretical tools and research protocols deployed.

3. Independence of judgement
   UNDERSTAND the complexity of cultural processes, welcoming and valuing different points of view and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices.
   EVALUATE the consequences of one's actions and decisions, adopting a reflective and responsible attitude.

4. Communication skills
   EXPRESS ideas, knowledge and arguments clearly.
   FORMULATE well-founded judgements, integrating information from different and reliable sources.

5. Learning skills
   DEVELOP and refine one's own learning methods, independently identifying and constructing objects and topics of study.

Methodologies

The course makes use of a variety of methodologies: lectures, class discussions on materials such as texts, slides, audiovisual documents provided by the lecturer; other scholars may be invited to present their research in areas of interest to the course.

All lectures are intended to promote student participation. However, as a general rule, 38 hours of the course will be devoted to classical lectures (DE), while 18 will be devoted to predominantly interactive teaching.

Lectures will all be delivered in Italian and through in-person classes.

Online and offline teaching materials

Additional teaching materials (background articles, documents, films) will be made available on the course elearning page.

Programme and references

E. De Martino, *La fine del mondo,* a cura di G. Charuty, D. Fabre e M. Massenzio, Einaudi, Torino 2019. (NB: please do not use previous editions).

Further texts will be added when class starts (March 2027) and, where feasible, they will be made available on the course's e-learning page.

Assessment methods

Type of exam: Oral Exam
The choice of an oral exam is consistent with the objectives of the course, as it allows, in a dialogic situation, to assess students' knowledge of the texts and their ability to develop a reflective, analytical, and critical argumentation around the core concepts highlighted in the texts.

Assesment Criteria:
Each student will be asked questions on the core topics of the course.

Assessment will be graded on a scale of 30, based on the following criteria:

1. Unsatisfactory

Insufficient preparation on the main topics covered in the course program and bibliography;
Very limited and poorly independent ability to argue, analyze, and critically elaborate;
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 aspects, uncertain or incomplete on various topics covered in the course program and bibliography;
Ability to argue, analyze, and critically elaborate is at times limited and not very independent;
Difficulty in identifying relevant connections between
texts and course topics;
Presentation skills and specific vocabulary of the discipline are only partially correct.
3. Fair (24-27)

Adequate preparation on the main topics covered in the course program and bibliography, but lacking depth and/or incomplete on some more specific topics;
Ability to argue, analyze, and critically evaluate present, but not always accurate and independent;
Fair ability to identify relevant connections between the texts and topics covered in the course;
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 syllabus and bibliography;
Ability to argue, analyze, 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 vocabulary specific to the discipline.

NB: Students with learning disabilities who intend to use compensatory tools are requested to send their P.Uo.I. at least ten days before the exam.

Office hours

By appointment, writing to: giorgio.bertolotti@unimib.it

Programme validity

Programs are valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION