



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Turismo Urbano

2627-2-E1503N014

Learning objectives

The main objective is to offer a general framework on the theme of urban tourism. The student will be able to analyze the tourism and leisure policies implemented by large cities (Italian, European, American and Asian metropolises), developing analytical skills and strategic vision in terms of attractiveness and local tourism development. Specifically, the course aims to:

- provide a theoretical framework of urban tourism processes, practices and policies (knowledge and understanding)
- provide tools to critically analyze urban tourism development strategies and case studies, applying conceptual and operational tools (ability to apply knowledge and understanding).
- stimulate a critical reading of urban attractiveness and its socio-economic and environmental implications (autonomy of judgment)
- stimulate the development of argumentation and presentation skills, both in written and oral form, on cases and themes of urban tourism (communication skills)
- promote a reflective and interdisciplinary attitude towards the dynamics of tourism in the urban environment (learning skills)

Contents

The course deals with the theme of city-based tourism by investigating its development over time, up to the new post-Fordist dimension that sees cities equip themselves and relaunch themselves to become attractive again in global competition. Cultural consumption, leisure and image are the background to the emergence of specific elements of attractiveness that will be analyzed in detail. These include: large museums, mega events, contemporary works by great architects and many other aspects that allow cities to maintain acquired positioning and reputation.

The course will also reflect on the shock experienced by urban tourism following the spread of the coronavirus, and

on the subsequent relaunch with the start of a positive season to the limit of overtourism. The side effects related to the uncontrolled growth of tourist flows will also be analyzed, including the phenomena of tourismification, the pressures on living and the identity of places, and the social and environmental tensions that derive from them.

Finally, attention will also be given to the relationship between urban tourism and climate change.

Detailed program

The course is structured into several components, combining theory, case analysis, and workshop-based activities, with the aim of providing a critical understanding of the opportunities and challenges of urban tourism.

1. **Theoretical introduction.** The main theories, policies, and practices of urban tourism are presented, with particular attention to development strategies, territorial marketing, and city branding, especially in the Italian context.
2. **Analysis of urban attraction factors,** namely the elements that define the competitive positioning of cities. These elements are presented in conceptual clusters in order to support a systemic interpretation:

- Infrastructure: smart city; starchitects
- Entertainment: festivals; mega-events; urban lighting
- Nature: green and blue city; waterfront
- Culture: heritage; museums; cinema

A further cross-cutting element concerns urban safety and security (geopolitical instability and conflicts; global health risks, including pandemics; climate and environmental risk). This topic is also addressed in light of recent crises affecting urban and tourism contexts.

3. **Theoretical insights.** Two cross-cutting theoretical focuses will accompany the development of the course, each introduced through a general framework and then explored in greater depth through a set of specific sub-themes, which will also form the basis for group work:

a) Overtourism and touristification: the socio-spatial impacts of tourism, urban rebalancing policies, and related phenomena, including short-term rental platforms, transformations of the commercial fabric, visitor-flow governance, digital narratives, and foodification.

b) Tourism and climate change: the reciprocal relationships between urban tourism and climate change, with an analysis of destination vulnerability, pressure on environmental resources, the carbon footprint of tourism, adaptation strategies, and climate narratives.

4. **Teaching workshop.** Group activities based on real or simulated cases, aimed at applying the knowledge acquired. The workshops may focus on the analysis of Italian or international cities, the design of sustainable city branding strategies, or solutions to issues such as overtourism and climate change. Each group's work is presented orally in class and discussed actively with the rest of the class, including through forms of peer evaluation and mutual recognition among groups.

Prerequisites

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Teaching methods

The course will be delivered in person and in Italian, approximately as follows:

50% through lecture-based teaching, including frontal lectures supported by slides, audio, and video materials; and 50% through interactive teaching, including exercises, subgroup work, and the presentation of case studies from which individual and subgroup assignments will be developed, prepared, and discussed during the course.

Some sessions in the introductory part of the course will adopt a flipped classroom format: students will be required to read materials indicated by the lecturer in advance, while classroom time will be devoted to discussion, clarification, and the application of concepts to concrete cases.

Up to 8 hours of synchronous or asynchronous remote activities may be included.

Assessment methods

Students have two options:

Actively participate in the classes by joining a working group assigned by the lecturer and developing a group project work. The project must first be presented orally in class by the group, with the support of slides, and then submitted as a final report in PDF format. Group members will receive a corresponding group mark, which will be the same for all members of the group.

The assessment of the group work will be communicated by the end of the course and will be based on the following criteria:

I. Oral presentation: clarity and effectiveness of presentation, respect of the allocated presentation time, ability to ask and answer questions, and active participation in the presentations of the other groups;

II. Written project: originality, style and accuracy, literature used, and quality of the conclusions.

A minor component of the project work assessment may also take into account the feedback provided by the other groups in the class during the in-class presentations, according to criteria communicated during the course.

Not participate in the in-class activities and instead take the final examination in the computer lab, receiving only an individual mark.

The examination will be written and organised as follows:

a. Closed-ended questions: 20 multiple-choice questions will be provided. Each correct answer is worth 1 point; incorrect answers receive 0 points, for a total of 20 points.

b. Open-ended questions: 2 open-ended questions, both of which must be answered in the form of a short essay. Each question is worth a maximum of 5 points, for a total of 10 points.

The final mark is obtained by adding the score achieved in the closed-ended questions to the score achieved in the open-ended questions. The duration of the examination is 90 minutes. The examination will cover the textbook and the course reader made available by the lecturer.

In both cases, students are expected to demonstrate that they have understood the course contents and are able to apply them to the current tourism context

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The study materials are:

1. Bernardi M., Marra E. (2022). TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS AND URBAN DISTINCTION: Elements of competition in the contemporary metropolis. Lectures, Milan
2. handout made available online by the teacher

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
