



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Tourism and Social Theory

2627-1-E1503N056

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#### Learning objectives

The course examines tourism as a complex social phenomenon, highlighting its historical roots, its cultural, economic, and environmental implications, and the role it plays in the construction of identities, social relations, and global dynamics. The sociological approach is enriched by interdisciplinary perspectives (anthropology, geography, cultural studies, and gender studies).

- Understand tourism as a social and cultural practice.
- Analyze the transformations of tourism in relation to modernity, globalization, and sustainability.
- Become familiar with the main sociological theories and with both classical and contemporary contributions to the study of tourism.
- Develop critical skills for interpreting tourism-related policies, practices, and discourses.
- Apply sociological research methods and tools to the study of tourism.

#### Contents

Module I – Foundations and Theories

Module II – Practices, Cultures, and Identities

Module III – Tourism and Contemporary Society

Module IV – Case Studies and Research

Module V – Social Tourism

## **Detailed program**

### **Module I – Foundations and Theories**

Week 1. Introduction to the Sociology of Tourism

Definitions, key concepts, and the history of modern tourism.

Week 2. Classical Sociology and Tourism

Marx, Weber, Durkheim and leisure; Simmel and the urban experience.

Week 3. Tourism and Modernity

Tourism as a product of modernity and capitalism.

### **Module II – Practices, Cultures, and Identities**

Week 4. The Tourist Gaze

Representations, authenticity, and the consumption of places.

Week 5. Tourism, Culture, and Identity

Relations between tourists and host communities; local identities and globalization.

Week 6. Tourism, Media, and Imaginaries

Cinema, social media, and the symbolic construction of destinations.

### **Module III – Tourism and Contemporary Society**

Week 7. Tourism and Globalization

Mobility, migration, tourism, and cosmopolitanism.

Week 8. Sustainable Tourism and Social Responsibility

Ecotourism, environmental impact, and local communities.

Week 9. Tourism, Labor, and Inequalities

Seasonal work, precarity, and gender.

### **Module IV – Case Studies and Research**

Week 10. Urban Tourism and Regeneration

Gentrification, overtourism, and Airbnb.

Week 11. Tourism and Emergencies

Pandemics, climate crises, conflicts, and the resilience of the tourism sector.

Week 12. Final Presentations and Course Wrap-Up

Discussion of empirical research conducted by students.

### **Module V – Social Tourism**

Week 13. Origins and Concepts of Social Tourism

Week 14. Policies and Practices of Social Tourism

Case studies: summer camps, tourism cooperatives, and public initiatives. European and national policies for access to tourism (UNWTO, European Commission). Best practices in Italy and abroad.

## **Prerequisites**

none

## **Teaching methods**

The course consists of 56 hours, of which approximately 70% involves expository teaching (lectures using slides, audio, and video), and 30% involves interactive teaching (exercises, group work, presentation of case studies from which to develop individual and group assignments, prepared and discussed during the course).

A maximum of 30% of the lessons may be delivered remotely, combining both (70%) expository and (30%) interactive teaching methods

## **Assessment methods**

written with short essay questions + midterm group assignment

## **Textbooks and Reading Materials**

-Sociologia del turismo. Tra terra, acqua, aria e fuoco (2025)  
Fabio Corbisiero and Salvatore Monaco

-Pdf readings

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

NO POVERTY | GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION | DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH | REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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