



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Intercultural Relations

2627-1-F4902N009

Learning objectives

The course aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Knowledge and Understanding

Students will acquire the theoretical and analytical tools necessary to understand the growing cultural complexity of contemporary societies, with particular attention to the ways in which this complexity is expressed through communicative processes—both face-to-face and mediated—human mobility, and tourism practices. They will also acquire the knowledge required to critically analyse the processes through which cultural differences, identities, and otherness are socially constructed.

2. Ability to Apply Knowledge and Understanding

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- critically interpret practices, policies, and strategies aimed at promoting and enhancing cultural diversity;
- analyse the processes through which otherness is constructed and represented in tourism destinations;
- design initiatives, services, and communication strategies that promote forms of tourism attentive to cultural diversity, inclusion, and social sustainability.

3. Independent Judgment

Students will develop the ability to formulate independent and well-reasoned judgements on key issues concerning cultural diversity, tourism, citizenship, inclusion, and the representation of otherness. They will also be able to critically assess the cultural, social, and ethical implications of policies and strategies aimed at promoting cultural diversity.

4. Communication Skills

Students will be able to:

- effectively present, including through visual communication tools, the main theoretical contributions and case studies discussed during the course;
- actively participate in seminar discussions, supporting their arguments with intellectual rigour and a critical perspective;
- develop and communicate project proposals aimed at promoting cultural diversity in tourism contexts, using appropriate language and effective communication strategies.

5. Learning Skills

Drawing on the theoretical knowledge and analytical tools acquired during the course, students will be able to independently deepen their understanding of the topics covered and apply them in professional contexts characterised by a high degree of cultural complexity, with particular reference to the planning, management, and promotion of tourism services, destinations, and experiences.

Contents

The course explores the following topics in depth:

- Culture, identity, ethnicity, and multiculturalism in contemporary societies.
- Intercultural communication and the social construction of otherness.
- Migration, citizenship, and urban transformations.
- Intercultural relations in tourism practices.
- The consumption of difference, ethnic neighbourhoods, and the tourism imaginary.
- Feminist, postcolonial, and queer perspectives on cultural difference.
- Contemporary forms of racism.

Detailed program

Contemporary societies are characterised by increasing cultural complexity resulting from processes of globalization, human mobility, and the intensification of communication. Tourism represents one of the principal contexts in which individuals from different cultural backgrounds interact on a daily basis, negotiating identities, forms of belonging, and cultural differences. The course provides students with the theoretical and methodological tools needed to critically analyse these processes, with particular attention to the social construction of cultural difference and its implications in tourism contexts.

The first part of the course explores the concepts of culture, identity, ethnicity, and ethnicisation, examining Gerd Baumann's contribution to the Multicultural Riddle, the relationship between the nation-state and processes of ethnicisation, and recent developments in the study of everyday multiculturalism.

The second part examines intercultural relations as communicative processes, focusing on the role of linguistic and socio-cognitive competences, processes of boundary making, the social construction of otherness, and the figure of the stranger as a paradigmatic social category of contemporary societies.

The third part addresses the relationship between migration, citizenship, and urban transformations. Particular attention is devoted to the ways in which migration reshapes contemporary cities, the role of diversity policies, and the forms of coexistence that characterise multicultural urban contexts.

The fourth part focuses on intercultural relations in tourism practices. It critically examines ethical, responsible, and sustainable tourism, as well as the role of tourism in constructing and representing cultural difference.

The fifth part explores the consumption of difference, the commodification of cultural identities, the construction of ethnic neighbourhoods, and the role of the tourism imaginary in the symbolic and economic valorisation of cultural diversity.

Finally, the course examines contemporary forms of racism, drawing on feminist, postcolonial, and queer perspectives to critically analyse the processes through which cultural differences are produced, represented, negotiated, and contested in contemporary societies.

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of the sociology of cultural and communication processes.

Teaching methods

The course is taught in Italian.

Lectures (DE): 18 class hours.

Interactive teaching (DI): 38 class hours (including the presentation and discussion of texts, group exercises, and the design and implementation of a research project on topics covered in the course).

Assessment methods

Students may choose between:

A research paper on a topic related to the course programme, to be agreed upon with the teacher.

An oral examination.

Assessment criteria (applicable both to the research paper and to the oral examination):

Appropriate and accurate use of sociological terminology.

Ability to identify, organize, and present topics clearly and precisely.

Ability to make connections among the various topics.

Ability to contextualize data analysis within relevant theoretical frameworks.

Completeness of the exposition.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

For those students choosing the research paper option, the reference texts will be presented in the first lecture of the course and, where possible, made available in pdf format.

Reference texts to prepare for the oral examination:

Aime M., Papotti D., 2012, *L'altro e l'altrove. Antropologia, Geografia e turismo*, Torino: Einaudi.

Colombo E., 2020, *Sociologia delle relazioni interculturali*, Roma: Carocci.

Giaccardi C., 2012, *La comunicazione interculturale nell'era digitale*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

D'Eramo M., 2017, *Il selfie del mondo. Indagine sull'età del turismo*, Milano, Feltrinelli

Reference texts for Erasmus students:

Baumann G., 1999, *The Multicultural Riddle. Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities*, London, Routledge.

Wise A., Velayutham S. (eds.), 2009, *Everyday Multiculturalism*, Palgrave, Macmillan.

Neuliep J.W., 2014, *Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach Sixth (Edition)*, Sage.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
