UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Scrittura

2627-2-F0102R027-LAB04

Course title

Writing

Topics and course structure

Although ethnography does not entirely coincide with the production of written texts, the latter still constitute its primary products today. Experiencing and critically analyzing writing practices means engaging with the core of anthropological research, bringing to light its 'constructive' character, alongside its artificial and, at the same time, 'poietic', that is, substantially creative, nature. This course, which is strictly workshop-based, will focus on this apparent oxymoron, demonstrating on the contrary its interpretive potential, which is applicable well beyond the specific discipline of anthropology.

Through practical exercises and learning activities, students will be called upon, first and foremost, to consider ethnographic writing reflexively, retracing their own intellectual path and professional biography to open up spaces for collective discussion. Grounded in this positioning, the course will examine the various phases of anthropological research and their connected writing practices, both during data collection and data re-elaboration (including bibliographic documentation, fieldnotes writing, interview and focus group transcriptions, and the composition of ethnographies), focusing in particular on the structure and forms of scientific texts.

In parallel, through group discussions of selected academic articles and the analysis of other media (blogs, websites, publishing platforms), the course will explore the theoretical debate surrounding ethnographic writing and, more broadly, the production, dissemination, and communication of anthropological knowledge. Concurrently, the course recognizes that academic writing today also encompasses project design and science communication activities, and thus aims to provide fundamental tools for these types of written outputs.

The allocation of credits is conditional upon active attendance of at least 75% of the workshop sessions. The approval of university credits (CFU) is contingent upon active attendance of at least 75% of the 40 scheduled

laboratory hours. Students who are unable to meet this requirement to acquire the 4 CFUs through active participation (or through other channels provided by the degree program) must contact the course professor and the Laboratory Assistant Professor (to be determined) BEFORE THE START of the laboratory to report their specific situation. Alternative methods for obtaining the 4 CFUs for exempted students will be explained in detail during the first laboratory session (for more information: https://elearning.unimib.it/course/view.php?id=62736&lang=en).

Objectives

Through constant and active participation in this workshop, the course aims to foster the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding:
Understanding the forms, characteristics, and political and cultural meanings of ethnographic texts;
Exploring the academic debate surrounding ethnographic writing and, more broadly, the production, dissemination, and communication of anthropological knowledge.

Applying knowledge and understanding:
Producing, re-elaborating, and organizing ethnographic material;
Experiencing models of scientific and academic writing.

Designing and developing a research proposal (e.g., for a PhD).

Making judgements:
Understanding the complexity of cultural processes, accepting and valuing different points of view, and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices;
Evaluating the consequences of one's own actions and decisions, adopting a reflective and responsible attitude.

Communication skills:
Clearly expressing ideas, knowledge, and arguments;
Formulating well-founded judgements, integrating information from diverse and reliable sources.

Learning skills:
Creating a space for reflection throughout the students' educational and professional paths, linking personal experiences and acquired knowledge through writing.
Developing and refining one's own learning methodologies, independently identifying and constructing objects and themes of study.

Methodologies

This workshop-based course consists of approximately 30 hours of interactive teaching and approximately 10 hours of traditional lecturing (delivered in Italian). Conditions will therefore be fostered to create an environment where students feel free to express themselves without fear of judgement.
Classes will privilege participatory teaching methodologies such as: active learning, interactive lecturing, plenary discussions, individual and group exercises, and portfolios (work dossiers).

Interactive Activity Integration: As an additional interactive activity, the possibility of organizing a dedicated blog will be discussed, where students will write short texts concerning both their ethnographic field research and hot topics of current interest. No remote teaching hours are scheduled (with the exception of the first session which, as stated

above, will be live-streamed to allow those who requested an exemption, within the timeframe and procedures established by the Degree Programme, to learn about the activities required to obtain the 4 CFUs).

Online and offline teaching materials

The workshop involves the use of academic texts, lecture handouts, videos, and an e-learning platform. Individualized teaching materials may be selected based on the personal and professional interests of the students.

Syllabus and Bibliography:
The programme consists of ten sessions, titled as follows:

1. Writing about oneself and others. Introduction to the workshop and initial orientation exercises
2. Making and unmaking ethnography. Fieldnotes
3. Creating spaces for listening. Interviews in anthropology
4. What now? Data analysis
5. Writing an academic article
6. When the going gets tough. The degree thesis
7. The research proposal (objectives, expected results, actions, and timeline)
8. The research proposal (methodology, outputs and deliverables, ethical issues)
9. Other writings, others' writings. Ethnography outside academia
10. A review of the workshop and the path completed.

Programme and references

The programme may undergo modifications based on the needs expressed by attending students.
Below are several reading suggestions, listed in alphabetical order, which will be the subject of debate during the sessions:

- Aull Davies C. (2008). Reflexive Ethnography. A Guide to Researching Selves and Others. Routledge: London and New York. Chapter 1: 'Reflexivity and ethnographic research'.
- Clifford J. (1990). 'Notes on (Field)notes'. In: Sanjek R. (ed.), Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Clifford J., Marcus G.E. (1986). Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. Berkeley: University of California Press (Italian trans., 1997, Scrivere le culture. Poetiche e politiche dell'etnografia. Roma: Meltemi). Introduction: 'Partial truths'.
- DeWalt K.M., DeWalt B.R. (2011). Participant Observation. A Guide for Fieldworkers. Plymouth: AltaMira Press. Chapter 8: 'Informal interviewing in participant observation'.
- Eco, U. (2017). Come si fa una tesi di laurea. Milano: La nave di Teseo.
- Grassi, P. (2019). 'Note al margine. Scrittura e riscrittura tra campi periferici ed etnografie'. Tracce Urbane. Rivista Italiana Transdisciplinare Di Studi Urbani, 3(5).
- Malighetti R. (2002). 'La cospirazione del silenzio'. In: Fabietti U., Malighetti R., Matera V., Dal tribale al globale. Introduzione all'antropologia. Milano: Mondadori.
- Matera V. (2015). La scrittura etnografica. Esperienza e rappresentazione nella produzione di conoscenze antropologiche. Milano: Elèuthera.
- Ronzon F. (2008). Sul Campo. Breve guida alla ricerca etnografica. Roma: Meltemi. Capitolo 4: 'L'analisi dei dati'.
- Wulff H. (ed.) (2016). The Anthropologist as Writer. Genres and Contexts in the Twenty-First Century. New York and Oxford: Berghahn. Chapter 3: 'O Anthropology, Where Art Thou? An Auto-Ethnography of Proposals'.

Part of the bibliography may be customized and supplemented according to the individual and professional interests of the students.

Assessment methods

The allocation of credits is conditional upon active attendance of the workshop sessions and participation in the proposed activities. At the end of the workshop, students will also be required to submit a dossier (a written essay) or the contents of a blog updated during the workshop. The format will be chosen together with the students. In any case, a final 5-page reflective paper will be required at the end of the workshop.

Office hours

By appointment, to be agreed upon via email: marta.scaglioni@unimib.it.

Programme validity

The syllabi are valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH