

SYLLABUS

Course description

The course belongs to the class “caratterizzante” (alternativa) in the MA in Eco-Social Design (LM-12). This course is a compulsory optional subject in the area “Observe, analyse & apply”.

Course title	Cultural Anthropology Area: Observe, analyse & apply
Course code	96114
Scientific sector	M-DEA/01 – Scienze umane, sociali, psicologiche ed economiche
Degree	Master in Eco-Social Design (LM-12)
Semester	II
Year	1st and 2nd
Credits	6
Modular	No
Lecturer	Prof. Elisabeth Tauber Office 3.15 Faculty of Education https://www.unibz.it/it/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/10555-elisabeth-tauber
Scientific sector of the lecturer	M-DEA/01
Teaching language	English
Teaching assistant (if any)	-
Office hours	Wednesday 3pm to 5 pm
Teaching language	English
Total lecturing hours	30
Total hours of self-study and/or other individual educational activities	about 120
Attendance	not compulsory but highly recommended
Prerequisites	-
Course page	

Course description

This lecture offers an introduction to anthropological theory and method and shows its relevance for a range of questions with regard to chains of relations of capitalism, neoliberalism, relations of humans with each other as well as with non-human living beings. Anthropology is the discipline par excellence that addresses the question of relational systems. This allows us to also look at contexts of structural exploitation, ecological destruction and social exclusion. The study and analysis of these very diverse contexts worldwide is ensured through ethnographic research. In the lecture, we will critically examine the above-mentioned phenomena relevant to ecological and social design. Starting from the methodological discussion on the ethnographic method, we will address issues related to multispecies ethnography, relations between humans and non-humans, loss of biodiversity and its cultural perception, cultural plurality and diversity in dealing with these issues, basing our discussion on core concepts of anthropological thinking such as cultural relativism and global comparison. The course provides students with analytical tools and concepts for ethnographic exploration of the perspective on the world of other people, as well as an approach to methodologies for elaborating the perspective of non-human subjects.

Educational objectives

The course aim is to integrate anthropological perspectives into perception and analysis of cultural artistic expressions. Additionally, the course will prepare students for a critical engagement with scientific texts and help them develop appropriate academic writing skills. The critical reflection on concepts such as human relationship with nature (ecology), the question of 'transformation' and power will lead to new understanding of bottom up approaches and grounded empirics.

Students will be able to:

- collaborate with experts and other designers to develop and implement an integrated project;
- propose and develop projects which will contribute to local development while considering the global context, starting from a "glocal" vision, which "focuses on the global and planetary dimension and the local one at the same time" (from the Dizionario Treccani);
- take into account the environmental, social and economic impacts occurring within the tension between global and local dimensions;
- take into account the socio-economic aspects that characterize a territory, a community and a group of people;
- integrate socio-economic aspects and sustainability requirements in project design while considering the tension, which occurs between the local and the global dimensions;
- develop an individual way of thinking, leading to critical judgements and self-assessments;
- balance more intuitive ways of working with more analytical ones;
- balance both emotions and functions in design and communication;
- communicate, multilingually in a convincing way, through a variety of modalities (written, oral, visual);
- design by taking into account the needs and desires of a given territory, of a situation/set of circumstances, of a specific group of people, thanks to the ability of observing, listening, interacting and mediating amongst various stakeholders involved in the project;
- talk to experts about the project;
- read experts' articles, studies and reports related to one's own project issues and integrate those analysis with one's own project design;

- take into account the sustainability requirements of a product, a service, an application or an interactive system; integrate the sustainability requirements in the project and in one's own design;
- organize a research project while identifying relevant studies and researches, experts to collaborate with, methods and instruments to adopt;
- outline the cultural, social and economic territorial framework where the students will intervene;
- set up a field work or an inquiry in order to define the socioeconomic framework by exchanging ideas with researchers and experts they will collaborate with;
- understands specialist literature so as to integrate it within their own research project;

Knowledge will be acquired in the following fields:

- socio-cultural and linguistic relations of the populations and groups in the alpine territories, ways of dwelling together and the resulting conflicts, considering recent changes brought about by migration processes and the transformations of the labour market;

List of topics covered: Culture, cultural relativism, ethnography and ethnographic method,

Teaching format

Frontal lectures, seminar with presentations, discussion groups, community learning

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

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Knowledge of basic concepts in the anthropological study of culture.

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Acquisition of appropriate scientific languages for the description and analysis of social - cultural phenomena. Applying knowledge and understanding

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Ability to apply anthropological approaches and concepts to the analysis of concrete socio-cultural-ecological contexts

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Ability to apply anthropological approaches and concepts in engaging scientific and cultural products. Making judgements

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Development of critical and independent thinking regarding social-cultural dynamics in the relationship between people and design.

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Development of reflexive self-awareness in design settings. Communication skills

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Ability to recognize the fundamental elements of scientific writing.

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Ability to develop a correctly structured short paper.

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Ability to participate in scientifically grounded discussions and express an informed opinion.

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Ability to communicate with appropriate sensitivity in intercultural contexts.

Learning skills

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Ability to autonomously extend the knowledge acquired during the course in dealing with various types of cultural products (scientific, journalistic, film, music, literary).

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Ability to acquire new concepts and information consistent with the analysis of changing social-cultural dynamics.

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Ability of actively listening to local people and make use of local voices for design purposes

Assessment

Assessment is based on a presentation in class, written minutes on three main texts (see references) and on the oral exam. The final oral exam will be used to verify the capacity to apply anthropological concepts and instruments to the analysis of studies relevant to eco-social design.

Non - attending students are required to participate in the Teams course in order to be admitted to the final evaluation and will write a critical paper about an ethnographic film and a scientific paper based on the texts discussed during lecture.

Assessment language: English

Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks

Criteria for the evaluation of the final paper and exercises will consider the ability to accurately apply course concepts and methods, the attempt to express original opinions and analyses, and the logical structure of exposition and argumentation.

Required readings

Hastrup, Kirsten and Martin Skydstrup 2013 *The Social Life of Climate Change Models*. Routledge

Tsing, Anna. 2005 *Friction. An Ethnography of Global connection*. Princeton University Press

Tsing, Anna, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, Nils Bubandt (eds.) 2017 *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*. University of Minnesota Press.

Supplementary readings

Will be announced in class (on Teams).