**Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology**

## Prof. Laura Volpi

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING CONTENT***

The course aims to provide students with a solid general knowledge of the main concepts, theoretical frameworks, and methodological tools of Cultural Anthropology, and to enable them to use anthropological thinking as a critical contribution to their studies, research, and future professional activities.

More specifically, the course aims are:

1. A general knowledge of the historical development of the discipline and of the fundamental problems it has dealt with and which are proposed today for reflection.
2. Understand the anthropological lexicon and the critical approach of the discipline when it comes to reading the cultural constructs, both of our own and of other societies.
3. Acquire a basic knowledge of anthropological research methodology and, through the analysis of specific ethnographic cases, get an insight into some basic issues: the dichotomy nature/culture, comparison, the ethnographic method, the critique of the concepts of “race” and “ethnicity” and the value of cultural differences.

At the end of the course, students will be able to (according to the Dublin Descriptors):

1. Know the fundamental phases of the history of cultural anthropology, understanding the main issues and the results achieved.
2. Know and understand the anthropological lexicon and the research method used by the discipline.
3. Apply anthropological knowledge to the analysis of social issues and issues relating to their professional profile.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will offer a general part relating to the history and development of the ethno-anthropological discipline, from its origins to today's theoretical formulations. Specifically, the fundamental themes of the discipline and contemporary debates will be analysed. The second part of the course will address the anthropological debate concerning the indigenous issue, paying particular attention to the policies of recognition, the dynamics implemented at national and international level, the struggles for indigenous rights, the territorial question and the enhancement of local knowledge and epistemologies.

The topics covered during the course will be the following:

1. Birth and development of cultural anthropology as an academic discipline.
2. History of the discipline and main anthropological schools (evolutionism, functionalism, structuralism, interpretivism).
3. Introduction to the main research themes and methodologies of cultural anthropology (culture, comparison, ethnographic method, cosmologies, rituals, identity, kinship and descent, reciprocity, the issues of mobility and globalisation).
4. Introduction to the contemporary debate on the indigenous question and the treatment of specific ethnographic cases.

***READING LIST***

1. S. Allovio, L. Ciabarri, G. Mangiameli (edited by), *Antropologia culturale. I temi fondamentali,* Raffaello Cortina, Milan, 2018.

Excluding the following optional chapters:

- The cultural dimension

- The practice schemes

- Donating, exchanging, preserving: how societies are created

- Ethnicity and ethnic minorities

- History of sugar

- The new Thurii

1. A. Casella Paltrinieri, *L’esperienza umana. Introduzione alla antropologia culturale*, CISU, Rome 2017.
2. L. Volpi, *La selva instabile. Indigeni e genetisti nell'Amazzonia Peruviana* (provisional title), Raffaello Cortina, Milan, 2023.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The lectures will be supplemented with supporting material (slides and audiovisual and iconographic documents), which will be uploaded on Blackboard. The course will also include meetings with experts on themes related to the programme topics.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final exam will be oral. In the exam assessment, the final mark will be based on the following elements: knowledge of the main historical stages of the discipline and the results achieved, understanding of the fundamental issues dealt with and the anthropological method; competence in the use of the anthropological lexicon and its critical tools.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Since this is an introductory course, there are no content-related prerequisites.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at <http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG> or on the Faculty notice board.