## **Cultural Anthropology**

## Prof. Laura Volpi

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

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 students to apply the anthropological perspective as critical thinking on their studies, research and their future professional activities.

Specifically, the course aims to enable students to:

1. Have a general knowledge of the historical development of the discipline and of the key issues it addresses and presently offers for reflection.
2. Understand the anthropological lexicon and the critical approach which the discipline uses for interpreting cultural constructs, both of our society and of other societies.
3. Acquire a basic knowledge of anthropological research methodology and to study in depth some basic issues by analysing some specific ethnographic cases: the dichotomy nature/culture, the comparison, the ethnographic method, the criticism to the concept of ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ and the value of cultural differences.

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

1. Know the anthropological lexicon, the research methods used in Anthropology, interpretative concepts.
2. Know the main historical phases of cultural anthropology, understanding its main themes and obtained results.
3. Apply anthropological knowledge in the analysis of social issues and with regard to their professional profile.
4. Understand anthropology’s specific contribution to the analysis of environmental issues and of health protection.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will offer a general part on the history and development of the ethno-anthropological discipline, from its origins to current theoretical formulations. The course will specifically cover the discipline’s fundamental themes and current debate, particularly highly innovative arguments. The second part of the course will address the anthropological debate concerning the indigenous question, 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 knowledge and local epistemologies.

The course will cover the following topics:

1. The origins of the anthropological discipline, from the pioneers to academic organisation.
2. The main anthropological schools (evolutionism, functionalism, cultural relativism, structuralism, interpretitivism, critical anthropology).
3. Introduction to the main research topics and the methodologies of cultural anthropology (culture, comparison, ethnographic method, cosmologies, rituals, identity, kinship and descent, reciprocity, the issues of mobility and globalization.
4. Introduction to the contemporary debate on the indigenous question and treatment of specific ethnographic cases.

***READING LIST***

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

Except the following chapters that are optional:

-La dimensione culturale

-Gli schemi della pratica

-Donare, scambiare, custodire: come si creano le società

-L’etnia e le minoranze etniche

-Storia dello zucchero

-La nuova Turii

2. A. Casella Paltrinieri, *L’esperienza umana. Introduzione alla antropologia culturale,* CISU, Rome 2017.

3. L. Volpi, *La selva instabile. Indigeni e genetisti nell'Amazzonia Peruviana* (temporary title), Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2023.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The lectures will be complemented by supporting material (slides and audio-visual and iconographic documents) which will be uploaded on Blackboard. There will also be meetings with experts and guest speakers on topics related to the course content.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will have to take a final oral exam. The final mark will depend on: knowledge of the discipline’s main historical phases and of its achieved results, understanding of key issues covered during the course and of anthropological methods; proficiency in the use of the anthropological lexicon and its critical tools; knowledge of environmental and health issues from an anthropological perspective; ability to apply anthropological knowledge to one’s cultural and professional training.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching and assessment will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

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.