ENVIRONMENTAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

M-DEA/01 - 6 CFU - 2° semestre

Docente titolare dell'insegnamento
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Orario ricevimento: mercoledì 16:00 - 18:00

MODALITÀ DI SVOLGIMENTO DELL'INSEGNAMENTO

Classes will consist of seminars, field visits, discussions of the assigned reading material, guest lectures, and written assignments.

PREREQUISITI RICHIESTI

The following book is required as a preparatory reading to be done BEFORE the beginning of the course:

FREQUENZA LEZIONI

Attendance in all lessons is mandatory. A maximum of three classes can be missed, provided that student emailed me in advance. All deadlines must be met. Students who are unable to meet a deadline should notify me beforehand by e-mail with a legitimate reason. Doing the readings prior to class is mandatory. This course is designed in a seminar style and students are expected to do all the readings and raise relevant issues. Indeed, class time will be also devoted to discussing the issues raised in the readings. Students’ general attendance, consistence, punctuality, participation and overall contribution significantly shape their overall assessment and class participation grade. The use of mobile phones and smart phones is not allowed during class. The use of laptop computers for personal purposes (emailing, surfing, messaging etc.) is also not allowed.

CONTENUTI DEL CORSO

This course aims to provide students with critical anthropological understandings of environmental issues
in the Mediterranean. In particular, students will:

- Become familiar with key analytical concepts and theories related to the ideas of Mediterranean, Environment, Heritage;
- Have a more thorough understanding of various forms of heritigization (of environmental and cultural assets) in the Mediterranean region in historical and cross-cultural perspectives;
- Learn how to critically reflect on contemporary debates over sustainability, natural conservation, heritage construction;
- Acquire an informed reflection about the politics, modalities and moral aspects of environmentalism in the Mediterranean area;
- Be capable of critically engaging with representations of the environment and its heritigization in the press, popular culture and media;
- Reflect on the challenges of the anthropologists’ potential engagement in public discourse and transformative social practices.

**Specific contents**

This course will explore anthropological analyses of environmentalism and heritage conservation in the Mediterranean. It will offer a critical perspective of natural and cultural heritage interventions by focusing on key analytical concepts, theories and field visits. During our seminars we will study specific ethnographic cases and examine environmental problems as lived experience. We will also explore the historical and cultural contexts of nature/culture conservation activities in the Mediterranean through on-site ethnographical practices. The course is designed around a set of key questions and challenges in the anthropological study of environment and culture, and invite students to quickly move towards applying them to real-world cases. Environmental anthropology is the study of the relationships between human populations and environments. In this course we will pay particular attention to ways that human groups have adjusted to the environments in the Mediterranean, cultural and environmental changes (both natural and human-induced), and problems and controversies that stem out of these changes. We will also examine how industrialized environments that some populations have been restricted to limit their ability to live a healthy lifestyle, and explore strategies that may provide alternatives. We will always try to understand the cultural values that motivate people to behave as they do, variations that lead to competition for alternative behaviors, and conflicts that result from top-down processes of environmental exploitation and land grabbing. The course is also designed to take into consideration global environmental trends and heritage consumption strategies, and the ways they are negotiated and manipulated by different interest groups, such as environmental organizations, development agencies, policymakers and local people.

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**TESTI DI RIFERIMENTO**

**THE MEDITERRANEAN IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Since the Second World War, the Mediterranean has been one of the most controversial areas in anthropological imagination. This first seminars cycle aims to analyze the debate regarding notions of cultural unity traditionally associated with the Mediterranean and to deconstruct it, refreshing knowledge of the Mediterranean in contemporary anthropology.
Recommended readings:


**ENVIRONMENT IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Anthropology brings its core theoretical tenet that culture frames the way people perceive, understand, experience, and respond to key elements of the worlds which they live in. This seminars cycle describes anthropology’s distinctive perspective on the relationship between human societies and their environments, and its connection to contemporary environmental discourse.

Recommended readings:


**HERITAGE DYNAMICS IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Natural and cultural heritage are conceptual categories that carry enormous influence, and are invoked at the local and international levels to influence and provide political legitimacy to cultural and environmental policy. This seminars cycle aims at understanding how these concepts are conceived and deployed in critical heritage studies.

Recommended readings:
CONTESTED MEDITERRANEAN SPACES

By insisting on contentiousness and unstable characters of identities and politics that are continuously reproduced within and across the region, this seminars cycle provides an insightful framework for the understanding of the Mediterranean as a complicated whole, casting a critical eye on different ways in which the Mediterranean has been reconceived and performed.

Recommended readings:


VERIFICA DELL’APPRENDIMENTO

MODALITÀ DI VERIFICA DELL’APPRENDIMENTO

Course evaluation will be based on students’ participation (overall participation, facilitation, and 3 reader responses), field commentaries, and a final exam. Assessment will be based on the following requirements
Participation (20%)
The classes run seminar-style and students are expected to actively participate and demonstrate understanding of the readings. All students must complete the readings on time, and be prepared to discuss and/or present them in class, highlight passages for analysis, and raise questions for debate. Apart from the readings, in class we will discuss articles, blogs, videos and images. I will occasionally upload such material on Studium and students are expected to read/view it and be prepared to participate in a debate/discussion in class. Students are also encouraged to suggest such material themselves and bring it to class. Apart from general attendance and contribution, participation in class will be assessed by: a) group facilitation – in class presentations, and b) 3 reader responses for the entire course.

Group facilitation
At the beginning of the course, students will sign up to function as facilitators for the discussion on the readings of a particular seminar. They will be called on in the respective class to give a 15´ presentation. The other students will be invited to critique and add to the presentation. Depending on the size of the class, these may be group presentations. Please note that group presentations mean that the students of a group must work together; everybody must read the assigned readings; and the group must produce a common presentation. The presentations must address the following issues: What is the main argument and goal of the essay/chapter? What evidence is provided for the argument? Do you consider the text’s argument solid? Why or why not? What is the analytical prism through which the objective/ research question of the essay is addressed (key concepts, theories)? Try to relate the text to other readings/themes of our course. Try to end your presentation with a couple of open-ended questions for the class.

Reader responses
Reader responses consist of 4-5 paragraphs where students will describe their reaction to one or more of the readings of the respective week. These responses are NOT summaries of the articles, but require critical and analytical thinking. Responses will take no more than 30 minutes to write. Reader responses will not be graded but they will add to the overall evaluation of your course participation. You will be asked to write 3 reader responses for the entire course. Assessment will be based on the students’ ability to demonstrate analytical thinking and elaborate on the course’s readings.

Field commentaries (20%)
During the course we will participate in field visits and students will be asked to write commentaries on them. These commentaries must not be merely the summaries of the activities/visits, but critical ethnographical reflections. Students will be randomly invited to present their commentaries to the rest of the class during the course. The field commentaries must be submitted approximately one week after the respective visit.

Final Exam (60%)
The final exam is comprised of two tasks: a written report and an oral interview. The report is a 10-12 pages report, that should follow a structures provided by the teacher at the end of the course. In their report, students will draw upon the theoretical and ethnographic analyses that we discussed throughout
the seminars. Please note that in-depth analysis and critical thinking are expected rather than the superficial referencing of academic work. This report will consist of questions and the answers will take the form of an essay. The questions will pertain to the readings, field visits and class lectures covered in the course. Students will receive the grade for their written assignments, and feedback approximately 15 days after the deadlines. Individual oral examination sessions will be then arranged. Oral interviews are designed to evaluate each student’s maturity, in particular the ability to synthesize materials from the course, and his/her understanding of that scholarship. The final exam will be judged on the basis of pertinence and substantive quality, domination of the assigned material, critical insight and logical coherence.

N.B. Students are encouraged to contact me and discuss their ideas and the material they study during the semester. You can also consult me on additional bibliography related to your interests.