



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Reading Milan and Italian Cities: Place-making and cultural Resources

PROF. SILVIA MAZZUCOTELLI SALICE

Area of study:	Sociology, Psychology and Law
Area Code:	SO/CU300

Description

This course aims to provide students with an introduction to urban studies and explore the intricate connections and intersections between culture and the city. To explore these topics, this course will survey a body of literature on urban cultural studies. In addition to the theoretical content, the course will incorporate sessions of urban observation in the city of Milan. Field teaching is an integral part of studying the urban world as it provides students with an opportunity to comprehend real-world situations and supplement their knowledge gained from lectures. Moreover, it serves as a tangible opportunity to develop a new, socially and culturally sensitive professionalism, enabling students to analyze the forces driving physical, social, and economic changes in cities, as well as identify urban trends in people's lifestyles. Given that we primarily reside in urban areas, particular attention will be given to the lessons we can glean from our experiences in Milan. Milan continuously grapples with the challenge of utilizing cultural resources to reposition itself within a culturally and economically diverse landscape.

The learning objectives of the course can be summarised as follows:

- To introduce students to the field of urban cultural studies.
- Explore the theoretical underpinnings of the interactions between culture and the city.
- Examine historical and contemporary issues surrounding the urban post-industrial turn, including the rise of creative industries, the establishment of cultural districts, and the role of art and culture in place-making.
- Understand the key social transformations and processes taking place in post-industrial cities and the relevant actors;
- Use field teaching and urban observation sessions in Milan to gain practical insights into real urban situations.
- Recognise the importance of cultural resources in the repositioning and transformation of cities, focusing on the case of Milan.
- Get to know Milan better

Course contents

The course will delve into historical, theoretical, and practical aspects related to the following topics: 1) The urban post-industrial shift, which encompasses the emergence of creative industries, the establishment of cultural quarters, and the significant role of art and culture in shaping places; 2) Key social transformations and processes occurring in post-industrial cities, such as gentrification, creolization, festivalization, and ratification; 3) Urban cultures, including artistic subcultures, the creative class, cultural intermediaries, and hipsters; 4) Creative industries such as fashion, design, food, advertising, and more.



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Prerequisites

No prior exposure to urban studies, cultural studies, sociology, or anthropology is required. However, curiosity is a valuable and desired trait that can be considered a prerequisite for this course. While not a traditional academic prerequisite, curiosity plays a crucial role in fostering engagement, exploration, and a deep understanding of urban cultural phenomena. By cultivating and embracing curiosity, students are more likely to develop a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the context observed. It fuels their motivation, fosters a thirst for knowledge, and nurtures a continual desire for learning outside class. Furthermore, an appreciation for cultural differences will be beneficial when studying the interactions between culture and the city. An open-minded approach and respect for diverse cultures and perspectives are important for effective engagement.

Method of instruction

The method of instruction encompasses lectures, discussions and seminars, case studies, and fieldwork/site visits.

- Lectures introduce key concepts, theories, and historical perspectives.
- Discussions and seminars encourage active participation and critical analysis. These sessions facilitate deeper exploration, debate, and the development of nuanced perspectives through collaborative learning.
- Case studies provide practical illustrations of urban cultural dynamics.
- Fieldwork and site visits offer hands-on experiences in urban environments, enhancing understanding and direct engagement.

Course requirements

- **Regular Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all lectures, discussions, seminars, and fieldwork/site visits as scheduled. Regular attendance ensures maximum engagement with course materials and opportunities for active participation.
- **Readings and Assignments:** Students are required to complete assigned readings before each class session. This includes textbooks, scholarly articles, case studies, and other relevant materials.
- **Active Participation:** Active participation in class discussions, seminars, and group activities is essential. Students are encouraged to share their insights, ask questions, and engage in constructive dialogue to enhance the learning experience for themselves and their peers.
- **Fieldwork and Site Visits:** Students will participate in fieldwork and site visits as part of the course. These hands-on experiences provide valuable opportunities for direct engagement with urban environments and cultural phenomena. Students are expected to actively participate, complete assigned tasks, and document their observations and reflections.
- **Research and Writing Skills:** The course requires students to write a final paper analysing urban cultural phenomena. Strong research and writing skills are necessary to effectively communicate findings and insights in various assignments and projects.

It is important for students to review the specific course syllabus and requirements provided by the instructor for detailed information and any additional requirements specific to the course.

Credits

6 ECTS



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Grading

Students will be evaluated on: a) in-class participation; b) Fieldwork and Site Visits assignments; 3) and final paper.

a) **Attendance & in-class participation**

This course is expected to be highly interactive. Active participation in class discussions, seminars, and group activities will be assessed. Note that participation is not merely class attendance, although you must be in class in order to participate! It includes the frequency and quality of contributions, engagement with course materials, critical thinking, and respectful interaction with peers and the instructor.

I also recognize that emergencies, illness etc. may cause you to miss the occasional class. If you are unable to attend, it is your responsibility to obtain any notes from your colleagues and communicate with your team members for group assignments outside of class.

b) **Fieldwork and Site Visits Assignments**

Fieldwork and Site Visits in this course offer students invaluable first-hand experience and observation of urban cultural resources in action. These immersive experiences allow students to bridge theoretical knowledge with real-world application, fostering a deeper understanding of the dynamics and complexities of creative city development.

The field study assessment in this course provides students with the flexibility to choose assignments based on their personal interests and areas of focus. Out of the 6 proposed assignments, students will have the opportunity to select and complete 4 assignments that align with their learning goals and preferences.

This approach allows students to tailor their field study experience to their individual interests, enabling them to explore specific aspects of urban cultural studies that resonate with them the most. By giving students the autonomy to choose their assignments, the assessment promotes a sense of ownership and motivation, encouraging deeper engagement and commitment to the field study component of the course.

The proposed assignments will cover various topics related to urban cultural phenomena, providing students with a range of options to select from. These assignments may involve conducting interviews with local players, documenting street art, analyzing cultural events or festivals, investigating community engagement initiatives, exploring the impact of gentrification, or examining the role of public spaces in fostering cultural expression.

c) **Final Paper**

The final paper will require students to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts, theories, and empirical evidence related to urban cultural studies. It will take the form of a SHORT RESEARCH PAPER (15,000 characters including spaces which is approx. 6 pages) and it should showcase critical analysis, coherent argumentation, incorporation of relevant sources, and effective academic writing skills. The topic and specific requirements for the final paper will be provided by the instructor during the course.

The final grade for the course will be calculated based on following distribution:

Attendance & Class Participation	30% of final grade
Fieldwork & Site Visits Assignments	40% of final grade
Final Paper	30% of final grade



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Grading criteria and weightage for each component will be communicated clearly in the course. It is important for students to carefully review the grading criteria and expectations to ensure they meet the requirements for successful evaluation.

Course readings and materials

All readings, guided questions to aid readings and lecture slides will be available on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.unicatt.it>).

Instructor bio

Prof. Silvia Mazzucotelli Salice (Silvia Mazzucotelli Salice, PhD in Sociology and Methodology of the Social Research, is currently Associate Professor of Cultural Sociology at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences. Within the same university she is a representative of ModaCult-Center for the study of Fashion and Cultural Production and has a courtesy appointment in the Arts and Crafts Research Center. She is a member of the Editorial Board of *Sociologica* (University of Bologna), *Studi di Sociologia* (Vita&Pensiero). Her research interests include, among other things, cultural and creative industries, material culture, and cultural production in the fields of fashion, food, architecture, and art. Studies on the social construction of public space, on culture and regeneration processes guided by art and on the use of public art as a tool for urban regeneration represent a second focus of attention.

E-mail address

silvia.mazzucotelli@unicatt.it