

Permanent Seminar - *Educational and Sociocultural Transformations and Potentials linked to Digital Transition*



From Cybernetics to AI: Mediation and the Anthropology of the Contemporary

Seminar conducted by Dr. Philipp Budka of the University of Vienna, in conversation with Dr. Paolo Grassi and doctoral students in *Cultural and Social Anthropology* involved in the Project of Excellence.

The lecture will revisit a reflection begun in 2011 on how anthropology can study rapidly changing technological worlds without fragmenting into new subfields. In this regard, the author proposes his own definition of contemporary anthropology, understood as an approach capable of analysing emerging socio-technical formations, while remaining anchored to ethnography and focusing on the concept of mediation.

To situate this perspective historically, the lecture will draw on the dialogue between anthropology and cybernetics and the contributions of scholars such as Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, who conceived of communication and knowledge as relational processes and technologies as active mediators of social life. These ideas will be developed through an ethnographic case study based on longitudinal research with First Nations communities in north-western Ontario, focusing on the MyKnet.org platform, which was active between the 1990s and 2019.



June 16, 2026

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.



University of Milano-Bicocca

Building U6 Agorà – Massa room
Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo, Milan



Also online

