



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Family Counselling: Theory and Practice (blended)

2021-1-F8501R005

Course title

Families and institutional contexts: rights protection, participation and reflexivity

Topics and course structure

To this end, the course focuses on the development of **reflexive systemic competences** to be used in working with children, families and services, and asks for the students' constant personal engagement in individual and group exercises, in order to develop critical reflection and reflexivity about one's own cultural frameworks, presuppositions and prejudices, using creative writing,

autobiography, autoethnography, analogic and aesthetic languages, and critical dialogue.

In the emergency period of Covid-19, classes will be taught online with a mixed modality: asynchronous and synchronous, the latter – webinars - recorded and uploaded in the Moodle platform. Some planned events in presence, with limited numbers, during the semester, will be decided together by the teachers of the first year/first semester and discussed with the students.

Objectives

By constant participation to the course and its online activities, the following learning objectives are promoted:

Knowledge:

- main concepts of systems theory and their applications in education and counselling;
- learning from a systemic view: logical levels, transformation, structural coupling, collective mind;
- context analysis: the pedagogist's mandate, questions, tasks, postures and relationships towards individuals/families, professionals, institutions, the professional community and knowing;
- reflexive analysis, in theory and practice, of a case study (see project and essay for the exam).

Skills:

- reading a situation with systemic concepts and methods;
- asking questions to open possibilities (e.g. during an interview or session);

- designing an intervention using aesthetic and reflexive practices (spiral model);
- team working to make hypotheses, critical analyses, challenge each other's perspectives, and co-design (case studies).

Competences:

- acting responsively in relation to the others and the here-and-now context;
- emotional self-awareness and reflexive positioning toward experience;
- learning to learn (transformative learning);
- caring (responsibility): for one's own work and learning, for the context, for oneself, the other, and the world (self-other-eco-education);
- general competences (in language, writing, designing, ethical, relational, communicational).

Methodologies

The course applies a method for knowledge building based on students' experience and active exploration (learning by doing). Each topic is treated with video lectures, online activities, forums, and tasks to be delivered within established delays, webinars. The synchronic didactic (two 1,5 hrs weekly webinars) is interactive and dialogic. Forums, tasks and webinars are tracked. The final outcome of the teamwork (case study), that simulates real team functioning, will be presented during the third phase of the course to demonstrate the effective understanding and capacity of using the learned concepts.

To prepare the exam, each student will keep a learning journal, to be used in the final essay for the reflexive reconstruction of what has been learnt.

Online and offline teaching materials

Teaching materials are uploaded to the platform (video lectures, recorded webinars, readings, stories and film excerpts), some materials will be provided by the students themselves.

Programme and references for attending students

- A) **Introduction to the systemic approach**, exploration of topics and methods (12-23 October: videolectures, online individual and group activities, 2 weekly webinars)

B) **Reflexive competences: from practice to theory** (26 October - 27 November: videolectures, online individual and group activities, 2 weekly webinars)

C) **Team work on case studies** (30 November - 21 December: group works and presentations in webinars, with feed-back and tutoring. Closing of the course)

Programme and references for non-attending students

There is no difference in the program, bibliography or exam.

To be considered “attending”, students must complete at least the 75% of all activities, forums, and webinars (calculated automatically by the Moodle platform).

Those who are unable to keep this constant rhythm of work will be considered “non-attending”, but they can follow the course with their own rhythms and use forums to exchange ideas and questions, read the materials and follow the registered lectures (all webinars’ records will be uploaded one or two days after their happening). All the materials will be in the platform for at least one year.

Non attending students are self-directed learners; working alone, however, makes it harder to achieve the objectives of the course. Reading books is not enough.

Assessment methods

The exam is oral, and it is accessible after delivery of a reflexive essay.

What is a reflexive essay?

A text which answers the question “what and how did I learn?” using arguments and academic evidence; the personal experience of the course is revised with explicit reference to the learnt concepts and knowledge, skills and competences signaled in the syllabus.

The essay, uploaded in the platform Moodle repository by 10 days before the exam session, receives a qualitative commentary and an evaluation of “competent/not competent” based on the course objectives. A “not competent” mark does not prevent from sustaining the oral examination, which is a discussion of the learning outcomes documented by the reflexive essay, and, if texts are insufficiently used inside the essay, some questions to assess study.

Evaluation is communicated online the day before the oral session. If a student decides to re-edit or re-write his/her text, he/she should discuss it during the oral session with the examiner.

The oral exam is a thorough discussion about the achieved learning outcomes and flares of the reflexive essay. All texts must be brought to the exam session.

Evaluation criteria: correctness and accuracy of the essay; knowledge and correct use of theories, within the essay and during the interview; conceptual clarity and richness of quotations from the texts; basic skills and competences in reading experience with systemic, critical and reflexive lenses in the essay and oral discussion.

The format of this exam is based on a pedagogical model coherent with the course, it aims at favoring personal learning, bridging theory and praxis, experience and the studied concepts, pushing to develop critical and (self)reflexive thinking. Besides, learning

to write in a personal, grounded, and effective way is necessary for a professional in pedagogy.

Evaluation of the reflexive essay: it is an important educational moment, since it offers a realistic feedback about the achievement of the course objectives.

Further information on exams

Warning: the reflexive essay is an academic text (argumentative style, correctly quoted sources, correct and complete footnotes, bibliography).

Features: 8-10 numbered pages, WORD FORMAT, free readable font, size 12, interline 1 e 1/2, margins 2,5 on all sides. Cover and bibliography do not count.

Cover page must contain:

degree course and name of course, teacher, academic year, student's name and code, title, optional image, attending/non attending student.

The text can be enriched and personalized with images, graphics, poetic and literary inserts, etc. It must be accurate.

Where and when is it delivered:

The upload is within 10 days before the exam session. The repository in Moodle is visible from around 20 days before each session of exams.

WARNING: avoid e-mailing copies to the teacher.

Office hours

Prof. Formenti receives upon appointment, please write an e-mail.

Programme validity

Programmes' duration is 2 academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Tutors of the course: Silvia Luraschi, PhD, and Federica Vergani, both are social pedagogists and external collaborators of the Department.

Their role is to help with teaching and follow the online activities; other collaborators are involved in didactic activities and act as external members of exam commissions:

- Alessandra Rigamonti, PhD, social pedagogist, early career researcher for the ERCCI project
 - Andrea Prandin, social pedagogist, counsellor

 - Mara Pirotta, social pedagogist, traineeship tutor, workshop teacher
 - Silvia Pincirolì, social pedagogist, trainer Lab'O, workshop teacher
 - Sonia Mastroeni, social pedagogist, coordinator
 - Ilaria Denti, social pedagogist

 - Valentina Calciano, social pedagogist, coordinator of Lab'O
 - Andrea di Martino, school teacher, expert of myths
 - Maddalena Rossi, school teacher, trainer
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