UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Family Pedagogy (blended)

2122-2-E1901R111

Course title

(De) constructing the family: Curious, creative, critical, and collaborative educators

Topics and course structure

How can we work with families in socioeducational agencies, schools and health agencies? Today, participation and personalization are frequently the core of intervention, but which positioning is required to achieve them? The purpose of education is to promote the rights and well-being of all the system's members: this requires curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, and the capacity to collaborate, the 4 Cs, or systemic reflexive competences, that help us to de-construct our fixed idea of "the family".
To learn how to work with families, we start from ourselves, from our inherited positions and prejudices, learning how to observe the relationships and interactions among people, using data and online information, knowing the scientific literature, using imagination and aesthetical languages and improving our capacity to learn from experience and from each other. So, our idea of a family will become deeper and wider, composing with other ideas.

If we understand that our way of seeing is limited by our cultural frameworks and we participate to the *multiverse*, we will be able to recognize the plurality (and maybe the beauty as well as shadows) of families, their communicative and educational styles, myths, scripts and values, and the bonds making the feeling of "Family Us".

- This requires a great personal engagement and the development of tools that enable us to reflect on our cultural frameworks, by using creative, autobiographic and autoethnographic writing, analogic and aesthetical languages and dialoguing with the Other.

Objectives

At the end of the course, the student should demonstrate the achievement of the following:

Knowledge (referred to the scientific sources):

- families as systems: context, scripts, family paradigms, myths, rituals, the family Us, etc.;

- the systemic approach to education: communication, interactions, learning, structural coupling, team as a collective mind, etc.;

- services and users' families: typologies, context of intervention, normative aspects, data sources, educators' tasks and practices related to caregivers and families;

- participatory approaches in working with families: Family Group Conference, Multifamily approach, P.I.P.P.I. and other methods/techniques for intervention;

- informal learning, parents in the web and social media as peer-to-peer places for learning.

Skills (knowing to do):

- finding/using online and textual information and different reliable and work-useful sources;

- analysing an observed family situation by using systemic concepts and methods;

- using aesthetic and reflexive languages to tell the family;

- team working to multiply stories, challenge linear ways of seeing and overcome binary thinking;

- develop arguments for taking one's own position in the context.

Competences (knowing to become, calibrating one's action in the contest):

- being able to act in curious, creative, critical and collaborative ways in relation to others and to the context;

- being able to name one's emotions, values and prejudices, taking a distance from one's own history and origins;

- being able to develop systemic hypotheses: multiple, critical and useful in order to open possibilities;

- cross-sectional competences: language, writing, exploration, critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, learning to learn… (thinking like an adult, transformative learning, see Mezirow).

Methodologies

The method is constructivist, based on students' experience, active exploration and groupwork (learning by doing).

Each topic is presented with videolectures, individual and group activities, forums and a weekly task to be delivered within established delay, to be analyzed and commented in presence (flipped class), as interactive and dialogic as possible. Online activities are tracked to certify attendance.

From start, students are invited to take an active and reflexive position, writing a reflexive log and collaborating. Texts for the exam must be studied from the beginning of the course and used to reflect, problematize and systematize knowledge.

Online and offline teaching materials

Diverse materials, readings, videolectures, and links will be uploaded in the Moodle platform, as well as stories and video excerpts from films, and the record of classes in presenze, except groupworks.

Other materials will be provided by the students, through online exploration and bibliographic research.

Programme and references for attending students

The course is blended with 36 hours "in presence" and 20 hours of online activities. It is divided in 3 parts:

A) Introduction to the systemic approach, concepts and methods:

B) The 4 Cs to the facts: Family cultures and clichés; Gender scripts: from boring mom to absent father; Online parents: peer-to-peer learning spaces? The construction of the incompetent parent in services; Creative family: symbols, maps, metaphors.

C) Group work on cultural objects: online group activities, tutored forums and group presentations in the class with peer-to-peer and tutors' feed-back.

Bibliography: 3 textbooks

Mandatory: Formenti L. (a cura di) Re-inventare la famiglia. Apogeo, Milano 2012.

Choice of other 2 books from the list below or free. For those who are interested in scientific papers (in Italian of English), 4-5 papers can be gathered up to a total of at least 90 pages.

Libri:

Bertotti T. Bambini e famiglie in difficoltà. Teorie e metodi di intervento per assistenti sociali. Carocci, Roma, 2012.

D’Antone A. La famiglia come sistema educativo. Analisi e messa a punto del setting di educativa familiare a valenza pedagogica. Mario Adda, 2018.

Formenti L. Sguardi di famiglia. Tra ricerca pedagogica e pratiche educative. Guerini e ass., Milano 2014.

Guerra M. & Luciano E. (a cura di), Costruire partecipazione. La relazione tra famiglie e servizi per l’infanzia in una prospettiva internazionale, Ed. Junior, 2014.

Milani P., Educazione e famiglie. Ricerche e nuove pratiche per la genitorialità. Carocci, Roma, 2018.

Roudinesco E., La famiglia in disordine. Meltemi, 2002.

Secchi, G. Lavorare con le famiglie nelle comunità per minori, Erickson 2015.

Serbati S., Milani P. La tutela dei bambini. Teorie e strumenti di intervento con le famiglie vulnerabili. Carocci, Roma, 2013.

Alcuni testi in Open Access (reperibili online):

Gigli A. (a cura di), Infanzia, famiglie, servizi educativi e scolastici nel Covid-19. Dossier CREID, 2020. https://centri.unibo.it/creif/it/pubblicazioni/servizi-educativi-e-scolastici-nel-covid-19-riflessioni-pedagogiche

Gruppo CRC (a cura di), I diritti dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza in Italia, 10° Rapporto di aggiornamento sul monitoraggio della CRC, 2019. http://gruppocrc.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/RAPPORTO-CRC-2019-x-web-1.pdf

Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, MLPS, Linee di indirizzo nazionali per (1) **l'intervento con bambini e famiglie in situazione di vulnerabilità, (2) l'accoglienza nei servizi residenziali per bambini e ragazzi** e (3) l'affidamento familiare. I tre documenti (e anche le loro versioni "a misura di bambino") possono essere scaricati dal sito del Ministero: https://www.lavoro.gov.it/notizie/Pagine/Linee-di-indirizzo-per-il-sostegno-alle-famiglie-vulnerabili-per-la-tutela-dei-bambini-e-dei-ragazzi.aspx

Attention: novels, films or websites cannot be brought as texts for the exam, but, as cultural objects, they can be used in group work.

Programme and references for non-attending students

The program and exam are **identical** for attending and non attending students.

Students who complete all weekly tasks and follow at least the 70% of class activities will be considered "attending". Those who cannot keep this 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.

What happens with non attending students? The course program is the same, but working alone might hinder some learning objectives. Reading books is not enough. You need to do and/or analyse experiences.

Tips for non attending students: establish regular times for you to access the platform (e.g. a certain hour in certain days of the week); for each topic, start by thinking about your professional or personal experience; do the exercises in the book Re-inventare la famiglia; participate to forums.

Assessment methods

The exam is oral, after uploading a reflexive essay
Evaluation criteria, based on the learning objectives, are
for the essay: correctness (orthography, syntaxis, punctuation, vocabulary); academic appropriateness (argumentation, quotations from scientific sources, bibliography), conceptual clarity (concepts and language must mirror the readings and course), pertinence and richness of the addressed topics and quotations (ALL readings in

bibliography must be used in depth and critically), and reflexive competences.
For the oral part, same criteria, with two further aspects: the student's capacity to reflect on the learning experience overall and on the specific limits of the essay, after correction and feed-back, and to answer in detail direct questions on readings.

This exam modality aims at favoring personal learning, bridging theory and praxis, experience and concepts, favoring personal, critical and (self)reflexive thinking. Learning to write in a correct, personal, academically solid and effective way is also important for an educator.

What is a reflexive essay? A text answering the question “what and how did I learn?”; the experience of the course is analyzed with explicit reference to the concepts, to the acquired knowledge, skills and competences, the experience of the course (or personal self-directed study, for non attending students), dilemmas or probrlems that emerged, not least in group work, and how they were overcome.

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

The essay is uploaded in the Moodle repository by 10 days before the exam session, it receives a qualitative commentary by the teacher or a collaborator, 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. If readings are insufficiently used inside the essay, one or two questions will be asked to assess study.

The essay’s evaluation is communicated the day before the oral session. If a student decides to re-edit or re-write his/her reflexive essay, it can be discussed during the oral session with the examiner.

What are the most common critical issues? The essay shows if texts have been really studied and understood. The systemic model is counter-intuitive, simple commonsense does not apply, it may even go against common sense. Hence, superficial studying does not help, readings must be studied during the course, taking notes and developing one’s own position. Avoid copy-and-paste from books or the internet: prof. Formenti uses an anti-plagiarism software that alerts on the rate of copying.

Some students show a scarce capacity to de-center themselves, to reflect critically, or to write academically. These capacities can be developed during the course, or even afterwards. So, do not worry: suggestions will be offered to you during evaluation to sustain small steps further in building these complex competences, which will be useful for the final dissertation and for your future job.

Features of the reflexive essay: 6-8 numbered pages, WORD FORMAT, readable font, size 12, interline 1,5 - 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 to deliver: The upload is possible until 10 days before the exam session. The repository in Moodle will be visible some days in advance. **WARNING:** avoid e-mailing copies to the teacher.

Office hours

Prof. Formenti receives upon appointment, however for most issues related to the course the best thing to do is writing in the dedicated forum.

Programme validity

Programmes have 2 years' validity

Course tutors and assistants

Course's tutors are:

Davide Cino, laureato in Scienze Pedagogiche, dottore di ricerca

Ludovica Sebastiano, laureata in Scienze Pedagogiche

Other experts and members of the exam commission:

Valentina Calciano, laureata in Scienze Pedagogiche, educatrice, coordinatrice Lab'O

Ilaria Denti, laureata in Scienze Pedagogiche, pedagogista

Andrea Di Martino, insegnante, collaboratore esterno

Silvia Luraschi, laureata in Scienze Pedagogiche, PhD, pedagogista, ricercatrice indipendente, insegnante metodo Feldenkrais

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Mara Pirotta, laureata in Scienze Pedagogiche, educatrice e pedagogista, consulente sistemica, tutor tirocini, docente incaricata (laboratori)

Andrea Prandin, pedagogista, consulente, formatore e supervisore sistemico

Alessandra Rigamonti, laureata in Scienze Pedagogiche, PhD, pedagogista, docente incaricata (laboratori), docente alla SUPSI (Lugano, Svizzera)

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Federica Vergani, laureata in Scienze Pedagogiche, pedagogista, psicomotricista, consulente sistemica