



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Consultancy in Educational Discomfort: Theories and Practices

2425-2-F8501R011

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#### Course title

Theories and practices for a pedagogical counseling that knows how to stay in discomfort and to accompany its experience in the contemporary

#### Topics and course structure

The teaching proposes a critical reflection on educational distress, showing the intertwining of representations and treatment of what is commonly referred to as "distress."

More specifically, educational distress as a social construct is explored, questioning its meaning as an "individual fact" and seeking to understand it, instead, as an educational situation.

In addition, reference to philosophical disciplinary knowledge will deepen the hypothesis that the experience of distress is intrinsic to the human condition itself, while at the same time being historically determined. These reflections will allow one to ask how, at present, the experience of distress influences and interrogates education, particularly as an institutionally and formally predisposed experience. This leads to dwelling on the forms of discomfort experienced by the current educational workforce in particular.

Thus, counseling is proposed as a second-level pedagogical intervention aimed primarily at services and educators or teachers to thematize the discomfort experienced. Within a thematization of the field of action of pedagogical counseling, the course proposes an in-depth study of some theoretical-practical models capable of intercepting and interpreting the complexity of educational distress according to different approaches.

The course will address the following points:

- Discomfort as a social construct;
- Discomfort as an object of pedagogical gaze;
- Discomfort and existence: philosophical and pedagogical contributions;
- Discomfort and widespread education: the cultural historical connotation of discomfort between exclusion and social inclusion;

- Discomfort and intentional education: the current form of educational discomfort;
- Educational discomfort in contemporary experience;
- Educational distress and the area of mental health;
- Representations of counseling in distress situations and proposal of a mode of interpretation of counseling in educational distress as critical, reflective, and second-level research work with respect to educational experience;
- View and positioning of the educational consultant in the current social and educational scenario: methodological hypotheses and project dimension;
- Positioning of the educational counselor in the mental health area: challenges and opportunities;

## Objectives

With this teaching, with constant and participatory attendance at the lessons, we intend to promote the following learning, in terms of:

- Knowledge and understanding: understanding, deconstructing and problematizing the concept of "discomfort", knowing how to identify the components connected with education;  
-Ability to relate differentiated knowledge and models: identify models, views and postures of pedagogical consultancy with respect to educational discomfort;
- Ability to apply knowledge and models: understand, deconstruct and problematize situations of educational hardship by questioning the most appropriate methods and approaches of pedagogical consultancy.

## Methodologies

Teaching methods will stimulate reflection on various educational situations, promoting both discussions in large group and activities in small groups (case studies, problem solving, etc.).

The course will be held in Italian.

All training activities planned for the 56 hours are carried out in person. The prevalent teaching method consists of alternating frontal lesson activities (theoretical explanations and conceptual frameworks) and interactive activities supervised by the teacher (individual exercises, group work, case work, planning, role playing, dialogic exchanges). Approximately, it is planned to carry out 50% didactic teaching and 50% interactive teaching.

## Online and offline teaching materials

Online and offline teaching materials.

Case work, slides, videos, if possible, available online in the virtual classroom.

## Programme and references

Can distress be understood as the object of educational work and pedagogical counseling?

How can educational professionals operate "within" discomfort?

In answering these questions and in sketching discomfort as something structurally inherent in the educational experience, the course aims to traverse the experience of discomfort in contemporary times, offering glimpses and

directions for pedagogical reflection. Specific reflections around the concepts of limit and discard, which constitute enormous challenges in contemporary Western reality, will allow pedagogical positions to be proposed around the theme of discomfort.

How are situations of distress generated today and what responsibility does education, whether formal, nonformal or informal, have in this? Indeed, it is a widespread feeling that the educational experiences proposed by the world of schools or services are from time to time accomplices or victims of contemporary experiences of hardship. The question arises, however, as to whether an alternative position can be identified, one capable of putting the world of formal and nonformal education in a position to act proactively, fleeing both salvific illusions and self-destructive drifts.

The space of counseling work in educational distress can open up precisely from the search for such a position. This requires the counselor to define a specific position with respect to the current situation of widespread educational distress: a position certainly never defined once and for all, but characterized at the same time by risk and creativity. Consistent with these questions and hypotheses, the course aims to provide elements of knowledge and reflection on the dimensions that structure the contemporary life experience leading it to take on connotations of discomfort, and to identify together with the students conditions, characteristics, attitudes, and tools essential for the construction or recognition of a pedagogical position in this regard. A topic, this one, as relevant as ever today, in a world that is about to face the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of minors, adults and the elderly, as well as on all educational contexts, from schools to vocational and university training, to educational, socio-educational and social welfare services. The reference to the health emergency situation that has occurred since 2020 will be an interesting hook that the course will propose in order to thematize the experience of distress in contemporary times, its educational implications and possible trajectories of pedagogical thinking oriented toward counseling work.

To thematize the specificity of counseling intervention, finally, the course intends to promote a firm anchoring of practices to the pedagogical theories that support them, presenting and analyzing in detail different approaches to think and act pedagogical counseling in educational distress, which will be directly experienced by students through case work and situations and concrete.

Students have to study:

- Palmieri C. & Gambacorti-Passerini M.B. (a cura di) (2021), *Disagio e lavoro educativo: prospettive pedagogiche nell'esperienza della contemporaneità*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Gambacorti-Passerini M.B. (2020), *La consulenza pedagogica nel disagio educativo. Teorie e pratiche professionali in salute mentale*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Barone P., Cucuzza G., Ferrante A. (a cura di) (2024), *Ecologie della materia. Educazione e materialità nello scenario contemporaneo*. Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Augelli A. (2023), *Dello scarto e del recupero. Per una pedagogia della sostenibilità*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

In addition, students have to choose one book in the following list, focused on rethinking the experience of distress (with a specific focus on the mental health area) from the point of view of different disciplines:

For an educational point of view:

- Annacontini G. (2019), *Imparare a essere forti. Segnavia di pedagogia della salute per pensare la relazione di cura*, Progedit, Bari.
- Antonacci F., Cappa F. (a cura di) (2001), *Riccardo Massa. Lezioni su "La peste, il teatro, l'educazione"*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Biesta G.J.J. (2023), *Oltre l'apprendimento* (traduzione di C. Montà), Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Brambilla L. & Rizzo M. (a cura di) (2020), *Giovani, modelli e territori. Esplorazioni pedagogiche attorno al divenire di ragazzi e ragazze nella contemporaneità*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Bruzzone D. & Zannini L. (a cura di) (2021), *Sfidare i tabù della cura. Percorsi di formazione emotiva dei professionisti*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Cornacchia M. & Tramma S. (a cura di) (2019), *Vulnerabilità in età adulta. Uno sguardo pedagogico*,

Carocci, Roma.

- Daniele K. (2024), *Il disagio degli adolescenti. Tornare a educare a scuola per promuovere la salute mentale*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Freire P. (2018), *Pedagogia degli oppressi*, Edizioni Gruppo Abele, Torino.
- Gagliardo M., Rizzo S., Tarsia T. & Vergani E., (a cura di) (2018), *Corporeità. Pratiche educative nell'incontro con i corpi in crescita*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Galanti A. (2007), *Sofferenza psichica e pedagogia. Educare all'ansia, alla fragilità e alla solitudine*, Carocci, Roma.
- Gambacorti-Passerini M.B. (2016), *Pedagogia e medicina: un incontro possibile. Un'esperienza di ricerca in salute mentale*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Marescotti E. (2020), *Adolescenza e dintorni. Il valore dell'adulità, il senso dell'educazione*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Mortari L., Guberti M., Ghirotto L. (a cura di) (2023), *Covid-19. Il sapere dall'esperienza*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Palmieri C. & Gambacorti-Passerini M.B. (2019), *Il lavoro educativo in salute mentale. Una sfida pedagogica*, Guerini e Associati, Milano.
- Pagano G. & Sabatano F. (a cura di) (2020), *Oltre il disagio. Il lavoro educativo tra scuola, famiglia ed esperienze di comunità*, Guerini e Associati, Milano.
- Pasta S. & Santerini M. (2021), *Nemmeno con un click. Ragazze e odio online*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Simone M.G. (2022), *Cambiamenti. Sfide e compiti educativi*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Zannini L. (2023), *L'educazione del paziente. Per una consapevolezza pedagogica dei professionisti della cura*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano.
- Zannoni F. (2022), *Educare nelle periferie. Descrivere, comprendere, progettare*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

For a philosophical point of view:

- Foucault M. (2006), *Il potere psichiatrico. Corso al Collège de France (1973-1974)*, Feltrinelli, Milano.

For a sociological point of view:

- Bauman Z. (2007), *Modus vivendi. Inferno e utopia del mondo liquido*, Laterza, Roma-Bari.
- Micheli G.A. (2013), *Il vento in faccia. Storie passate e sfide presenti di una psichiatria senza manicomio*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

For a psychiatric point of view:

- Basaglia F. (1982), *Scritti: 1968-1980. Dall'apertura del manicomio alla nuova legge sull'assistenza psichiatrica*, Einaudi, Torino.
- Binswanger L. (2015), *La psichiatria come scienza dell'uomo*, Mimesis, Milano.
- Maone A., D'Avanzo B. (2015), *Recovery. Nuovi paradigmi per la salute mentale*, Cortina, Milano.
- Saraceno B. (2014), *Discorso globale, sofferenze locali. Analisi critica del movimento di salute mentale*, Il Saggiatore, Milano.

For a multidisciplinary point of view:

- Consorzio Cascina Clarabella (a cura di) (2018), *I luoghi del possibile. Fare salute mentale oggi*, Le Matite di Animazione Sociale, Torino.

The book that can be chosen in the list can also be replaced with the study of ALL the following scientific articles, also available through the search engine of the University Library:

1. Ferrante A. & Galimberti A. (2018), *Interrogare le transizioni tra contesti di apprendimento. Un confronto tra differenti approcci teorici*, in *Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica - Journal of Theories and Research in Education*, 13(3) <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1970-2221/7846>.
2. Gambacorti-Passerini M.B. (2021). *Educating to prevent youth (aged 16– 24) mental distress: giving meaning to an educational effort*, in *Encyclopaideia*, 25(59), pp. 83-95,

<https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1825-8670/11628>

3. Biesta G. J. (2023), Good Education in an Age of Measurement: On the Need to Reconnect With the Question of Purpose in Education, in *Encyclopaideia*, 27(1s), pp. 9-20, <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1825-8670/16834>
4. Morganti C., Porcellana M., Biancorosso C., Fontana R., Lanzo F., Malchiodi F., Mastromo D., Motto D., Oltolina M., Savino C., Vairelli F., Zanobio A. & Percudani M. (2019). L'esperienza budget di salute di comunità dell'ASST Grande Ospedale Metropolitano Niguarda con aMlcittà, in *Psichiatria Oggi*, XXXII(1), pp. 88-94.

Erasmus students have to study:

- Dewey J. (1983), *Experience and Education*, Kappa Delta Pi, New York.
- Dahlberg K., Dahlberg H. & Nyström M. (2008), *Reflective Lifeworld Research*, Student Litteratur, Hungary.
- Malti T. & Noam G. (2009), *Where youth development meets mental health and education: the RALLY approach*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

For every difficulty in finding references, please contact the teacher: [maria.gambacorti@unimib.it](mailto:maria.gambacorti@unimib.it)

The programme and references are the same for students who will attend classroom lectures and for those who will not attend.

## Assessment methods

There are no ongoing tests planned. The final exam is scheduled in oral mode, with two options detailed below. There are two modes provided for taking the examination, involving only the final test :

1. Oral interview in which each student will present and discuss the topics covered in class and the exam texts, starting from a "product", created independently so as to synthesize the key steps of the course taken in the classroom and critically express the formative gain that each person has been able to take from the course. The "product" should include references to the group work done in the classroom and to all the studied texts. Special reference should be made to the free choice text, justifying its choice and identifying its contribution in the construction of the formative path experienced during the course. The "product" can take any form: a piece of writing, a presentation, an object, a collection of objects, an artifact, an image, a metaphor, a poem, a song, etc.; something that helps not only to reconstruct scenarios and reflections created during the course, but also to structure and express an autonomous pedagogical position referring to the experience lived in the classroom and reworked also through the study of the texts, which will necessarily have to be cited. The colloquium will begin with a discussion of the paper and will then focus on an in-depth study of the content found in the texts in the bibliography.

The colloquium will assess:

- The ability to structure and express an autonomous pedagogical position relative to the lived experience in the classroom and also reworked through the study of texts;
- The ability to make connections between texts;
- The ability to critically argue around the conceptual cores that the texts highlight;
- The ability to connect what has been studied to one's own professional or personal experience;
- The ability to use the knowledge provided by the texts to identify, deconstruct, and understand situations of educational distress;
- The ability to use the knowledge gained to construct intervention projects in educational distress;
- The ability to use the acquired knowledge to set up contexts and develop strategies for pedagogical counseling in educational distress.

2. Oral interview, based on the exam texts, aimed at assessing:

- the knowledge of the texts;
- the ability to develop an independent discourse on the cross-cutting topics of the texts;
- the ability to critically argue around the conceptual cores that the texts emphasize;
- the ability to connect what has been studied to one's own professional or personal experience;
- the ability to use the knowledge provided by the texts to identify, deconstruct, and understand situations of educational distress;
- the ability to use the knowledge acquired to construct intervention projects in educational distress;
- the ability to use the acquired knowledge to set up contexts and develop strategies for pedagogical counseling in educational distress.

## **Office hours**

By appointment, writing to: [maria.gambacorti@unimib.it](mailto:maria.gambacorti@unimib.it)

## **Programme validity**

Programme lasts two academic years.

## **Course tutors and assistants**

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

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