



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Health and Poverty

2526-3-E4001N096

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#### Learning area

#### Learning objectives

##### Knowledge and understanding (D1)

The course aims to provide the theoretical and methodological tools to recognise and interpret social inequalities and poverty, with particular reference to social inequalities in health and the approach to social determinants of health.

##### Ability to apply knowledge and understanding (D2)

Students will acquire analytical skills on the phenomena covered, in particular in relating differences in morbidity and mortality to socio-economic factors, as well as poverty to structural dimensions of social regulation processes.

##### Autonomy of judgement (D3)

The course promotes active student participation through classroom discussions based on scientific articles and individual and group work on concrete cases. The aim is to stimulate the individual ability to independently identify and interpret the social processes that lead to poverty and health inequalities.

##### Communication skills (D4)

All students will be invited to participate in classroom discussions and to present individual and group papers in order to refine their argumentation and public presentation skills.

##### Learning skills (D5)

Students will be able to independently and reflectively study and analyse the phenomena covered in the course, as well as critically examine policies and services aimed at combating poverty and health inequalities.

## Contents

The course provides students with the conceptual and theoretical tools to critically analyse:

1. social inequality in contemporary societies, both in terms of the social mechanisms at its origin and in terms of its manifestations and consequences at the individual and collective levels;
  2. poverty as an expression of social inequality, with reference to the transformations in the nature of poverty throughout different historical phases, the specific characteristics of the Italian poverty regime, and the policies and tools adopted to combat it;
  3. health inequalities, understood as a specific manifestation of social inequality.
- Some methodological aspects relating to the measurement and empirical analysis of the topics covered in the course are also presented and discussed.

## Detailed program

The course discusses the complex relationship between poverty and inequality on the one hand, and health conditions on the other. The first part of the course is dedicated to an in-depth analysis of poverty from both a theoretical perspective – distinguishing concepts such as inequality, absolute and relative poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion – and from a methodological and empirical perspective. The case of the Italian poverty regime is examined in depth. The second part of the course introduces the concept of health and social inequalities in health, showing the main social determinants of the health conditions of the population. The last part of the course is dedicated to policies aimed at improving the health conditions of the population and reducing inequalities, with reference to the literature on welfare regimes. The various topics are addressed mainly with reference to economically developed countries, but some references will also be made to developing countries.

## Prerequisites

None

## Teaching methods

The course adopts a variety of teaching approaches aimed at stimulating active learning, critical thinking and the active involvement of participants.

The following teaching activities are planned: Lectures (28 hours): lectures distributed throughout the course and aimed at conveying the theories and concepts used in the scientific literature, as well as methodological approaches and the main analysis techniques.

Interactive teaching (28 hours): participants will be actively involved in a series of individual and group activities, including: watching videos and subsequent discussion, preparing group presentations on topics covered in class, statistical exercises on health data, written answers to weekly questions on the e-learning platform, and use of the main online databases (OECD, Eurostat).

Teaching will be delivered in person (unless unforeseen circumstances suggest that some lessons should be held remotely).

## Assessment methods

The exam is written and oral.

For students who attend classes, the assessment will take into account the activities carried out during the course (group presentations, answers to weekly questions, participation in classroom discussions and exercises on health data) and will include a written test with two open questions on the two exam texts (Saraceno et al. and Marmot), and an oral test to certify the grade.

For all other students, the assessment will consist of a written test with three open-ended questions on the three exam texts and an oral discussion of the written test.

Erasmus students: written exam according to an agreed programme.

The exam aims to assess the ability to correctly apply the theories and concepts covered in class, as well as to independently analyse specific cases. The grade will measure the level of skills acquired and the level of autonomy in analytical application.

## Textbooks and Reading Materials

1. C. Saraceno, D. Benassi e E. Morlicchio, La povertà in Italia, Il Mulino, 2022 or C. Saraceno, D. Benassi e E. Morlicchio, Poverty in Italy. Features and drivers in a European perspective, Policy Press, 2020
2. Carbone e Kazepov Che cos'è il welfare state, Carocci, 2021 (non l'edizione precedente)
3. Michael Marmot, La salute diseguale, Il Pensiero Scientifico, 2016

Erasmus students: ad hoc reading list agreed at the beginning of the course.

## Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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