UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Fundamentals of Psychotherapy

2526-1-F5111P004

Learning area

Methods and techniques for treatment and rehabilitation

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Major theories and models in psychotherapy
- Specific and non-specific factors of psychotherapies
- Introduction to evidence-based treatments
- Psychotherapeutic treatment for Personality Disorders (PDs)

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Theory and practice in psychotherapy
- Techniques and relations in psychotherapy
- How to test efficacy in psychotherapy

Making judgements
Through the comparative analysis of major psychotherapeutic models, critical discussion of scientific articles, and the development of individual written assignments, the course fosters the ability to independently reflect on the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic interventions, on specific and nonspecific therapeutic factors, and on the relationship between theories of mental functioning and intervention techniques. Students are encouraged to critically evaluate clinical cases, manualized treatments, and theoretical frameworks by integrating scientific knowledge with relational and ethical considerations.

Communication skills

Through group work, oral presentations, and discussion of clinical and theoretical material, the course supports the development of communication skills appropriate for conveying complex concepts in the psychotherapeutic field. Students learn to use discipline-specific terminology, to present their arguments clearly and coherently, and to engage respectfully and collaboratively with peers and instructors in academic and simulated clinical contexts.

Learning skills
The use of international scientific literature, critical reflection on clinical material, and the independent development of written essays enhance students' ability to pursue continuous learning. The course aims to strengthen autonomous learning strategies by promoting the critical use of scientific sources and encouraging a reflective and integrated approach to the study of psychotherapy.

Contents

The course aims at providing theoretical, technical, methodological, and clinical elements that are useful for the understanding and comparison of the main contemporary models of individual and group psychotherapy. The psychotherapy models will be presented comparatively, and students will acquire competences and skills that will allow forming a critical opinion with respect to the different approaches. Particularly, students will acquire competences for understanding and analyzing studies on treatment efficacy, specific and aspecific therapeutic factors, connections between theory and techniques in the different approaches. Finally, manualized treatments for personality disorders will be presented.

Detailed program

- Introduction to psychotherapy: models, specific and aspecific factors, indications
- Comparison of the main contemporary models of individual and group psychotherapy: theories and techniques
- Methods for the assessment of treatment efficacy
- Manualized treatments for personality disorders.

Prerequisites

A background in abnormal psychology and descriptive diagnosis (DSM5) and in the basic concepts of psychodynamics will help in understanding the course content. Students lacking such basic knowledge are encouraged to ask for a list of basic references.

Teaching methods

The course will be held in presence. The course will consist of lecture-based lessons, an also interactive classwork on scientific papers, classwork on clinical material, group work, clinical seminars on specific issues. All lessons will contain at least a part of interaction with students. All course material (e.g., slides, readings) are made available on the e-learning website of the course, so that also non-attending students can use it.

Assessment methods

The exam will verify the level of mastery of the course contents.
The exam will consist of multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions aim to ascertain the student's preparation; the open questions aim to evaluate the ability to think critically and create links between the acquired knowledge. The evaluation criteria are: accuracy of the answers for the multiple choice questions, adequacy of the contents, of the logical and formal organization and of the terminology for the answers to the open questions.
The examination could be replaced by activities to be held during term time (e.g., presentations, essays).

Participation in optional activities (e.g., thematic discussions, essays, presentations) offered during the course contributes to the evaluation.
These will consist in:
Mid-term assignment: Group project work and presentation (20% of final grade)
End-term assignment: Critical analysis of part of the reading material consisting in an individual essay (30% of final grade).
End-term multiple choice test on course content (50% of final grade)

Although this course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students, course material can also be available in English, and students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

References will be provided at the beginning of the course and published on the e-learning website.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING