UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Research Methodology for Services and The Third Sector

2526-1-F8702N010

Learning objectives

The course aims to provide students with key methodological and technical tools for conducting empirical research in the field of social services and the third sector.

Knowledge and understanding:
On completion of the course, students will have acquired a sound knowledge of the principal foundations of quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social sciences.

Applied knowledge and understanding:
In particular, students will acquire the methodological skills to design and carry out empirical research in the field of social services.

Independent judgement:
The course aims to stimulate a critical understanding of the role of social research in the field of social services, enabling students to express their own informed views on methodological approaches and the quality of research in their areas of interest.

Communication skills:
At the end of the course, students will be able to critically participate in the main debates on the role of social research in social services, both orally and in written work. In addition, they will have acquired the skills to recognise and discuss the ethical aspects of research and to adopt a reflective approach in their relationship with research subjects.

Learning skills:
At the end of the course, students will have acquired skills in data collection, analysis and communication of research results and will be able to integrate these skills into their future research projects.

Contents

The course aims to provide students with the principle methodological and technical instruments, both quantitative and qualitative, for carrying out social research in the field of social services and the third sector. In particular, the course will address the aims of social research, research design and data collection techniques, as well as the relationship between social research, services and the needs of subjects.

Detailed program

The course aims to provide students with the methodological and technical tools to design and carry out empirical research in the social sciences, with a specific focus on social services and the third sector. The course will address the various stages of research: from the epistemological aspects of social research to research design; from quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection tools to the analysis of qualitative data and the dissemination of research results. The ethical aspects of research, the position of the researcher in relation to their research participants, as well as the multiple opportunities for social research offered by new technologies and the internet will also be considered. With a focus on participatory learning, students will have the opportunity to experience the use of different methodologies and to develop critical skills to evaluate the impact and quality of a research project.

Prerequisites

No requirements are needed to attend this course

Teaching methods

The language of delivery is Italian. The 49-hour course will be structured around the following two teaching methods:

- didactic delivery (approximately 50% of the course), including lectures with the use of Power Point and the projection of audio-visual material;
- interactive teaching (approximately 50% of the course), including student discussions of readings and videos shown in class; individual and group classroom exercises; individual and group presentations on topics related to the course.

In addition, approximately 15% of the didactic delivery and interactive teaching (up to a total of 8 hours) will be conducted remotely, including the assignment of readings and audio-visual material, and short papers to be completed individually or in groups.

Assessment methods

The exam will consist of an oral interview that will allow interaction with the student to assess their critical understanding of the course topics and their ability to connect theory and practice in social research.

In addition to a critical understanding of the content of the lesson slides and reference texts, both attending and non-attending students will have the opportunity to write a research project on a topic of their choice. The final project will contribute to the overall assessment and will be discussed during the interview. Attendance and participation in classroom discussions and activities will also be assessed.

The assessment criteria and grading will take into account the following aspects: understanding of the readings and application of knowledge in different research contexts; appropriate use of terminology; clarity, precision and completeness in the presentation of topics; ability to construct a research project that connects methodological approaches, research questions and the selection of appropriate research techniques and methods of analysis.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Corbetta, P. (2014). Metodologia e tecniche della ricerca sociale. Il Mulino. (eBook access via UNIMIB library).
De Carlo M. (2018). Scientific Inquiry in Social Work. Open Social Work Education. (Open access publication downloadable here: https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/591)
De Rose, C & Taddei, L. (2022). Introduzione ai metodi della ricerca sociale: Manuale per assistenti sociali, educatori e operatori di comunità. Maggioli (a selection of chapters will be uploaded to the E-learning platform after the beginning of the course)

Further material on relevant topics will be made available by the course tutor.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES