UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Psychology of Disability and Inclusion

2627-5-G8501R029

Course title

Psychology of Disability and Integration

Topics and course structure

The course aims to address the topic of disability through a perspective grounded in positive psychology and the promotion of well-being. The first part of the course will examine the concept of disability and its historical evolution, ranging from the medical model to the biopsychosocial model. Additionally, the various types of disabilities and key assessment methods will be presented. The second part of the course will introduce the foundations of positive psychology and major theories of psychological well-being. Concepts of resilience and coping strategies that foster adaptation and well-being will be explored in depth. The third part of the course will focus on positive technologies; specifically, it will examine applications of virtual reality and video games for mental health and the promotion of empathy.

Objectives

The course aims to enable students to acquire a critical and informed understanding of disability, psychological well-being, and the role of technology in promoting mental health and empathy. The learning objectives are detailed below.

Knowledge and understanding
Students will acquire knowledge regarding the main theoretical models of disability, their historical evolution, and relevant assessment and classification tools. They will also become familiar with key models in positive psychology, theories of psychological well-being, and coping strategies that foster adaptation and quality of life. Finally,

particular attention will be paid to "positive technologies"—specifically the use of virtual reality and commercial video games—in the context of mental health and the promotion of empathy.

Making judgments
The course encourages students to independently form and effectively articulate their own opinions, developing a critical perspective on the main issues surrounding disability.

Communication skills
Communicating concepts related to the psychology of disability, positive psychology, and positive technologies clearly and rigorously, using appropriate scientific terminology.

Learning skills
Students will learn to use the proposed concepts and theoretical models to critically analyze situations involving disability and the promotion of psychological well-being. They will also be encouraged to apply this knowledge to the evaluation of programs and technologies aimed at improving people's quality of life. Learning skills are fostered through active participation in lectures, case study discussions, and practical activities.

Methodologies

The course combines instructional teaching (lectures and interactive discussions using PowerPoint slides) with interactive teaching, comprising the following activities

• Analysis of video sequences
• Practical exercises

All classes are held in person and in Italian, with 60% (34 hours) dedicated to instructional teaching and 40% (22 hours) to interactive teaching. 30% of the classes (16 hours) will be delivered remotely in asynchronous mode via video materials, readings, and online activities uploaded to the learning platform. The schedule for remote classes will be posted as a notice in the e-learning section.

Online and offline teaching materials

• Lecture slides, downloadable online
• Asynchronous online lectures, downloadable online
• In-person and online exercises

Programme and references

1. Soresi S. (2016), Psicologia della disabilità e dell’inclusione. Il Mulino, Bologna (Chapters 1, 2, 5)
   N.B. The indicated chapters are to be studied as follows:
   • From Chapter 1: ONLY sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5
   • From Chapter 2: ONLY sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5
   • From Chapter 5: ONLY sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5

2. Boniwell, I. (2015), La scienza della felicità. Introduzione alla psicologia positiva. Il Mulino (Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 11)

3. Pallavicini F. (2020), Psicologia della realtà virtuale. Mondadori Università, Milan (Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6)
   N.B. The indicated chapters are to be studied as follows:
   • Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 6: in full
   • Chapter 5: only sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3

4. Pallavicini F. (2025), *Gamers. Breve storia dei videogiochi e degli esports*. Mondadori Università, Saggi Oltre (Chapters 2, 4, 8)
   N.B. For the indicated chapters, please prepare only the following sections:
   • Chapter 2: ONLY pages 17–20
   • Chapter 4: ONLY section 4.2
   • Chapter 8: ONLY sections 8.1, 8.2, and 8.4
   Students are strongly advised to register for the course in the e-learning area in order to access materials, information, and announcements.

Assessment methods

The exam is a written test lasting 75 minutes. It consists of three open-ended questions, each relating to one of the three main thematic areas covered during the course. Up to 10 points are awarded for each question, based on: a) the relevance of the answer to the question; b) the completeness of the answer; and c) the quality of language used. The final grade is expressed on a scale of 30.

Assessment criteria

1. Not sufficient
   Insufficient preparation regarding the main topics in the course syllabus and bibliography; very limited and largely non-independent argumentation, analysis, and critical synthesis skills; insufficient ability to connect theory and practice or identify relevant links between course texts and themes; incorrect presentation skills and discipline-specific terminology.

2. Sufficient - More than sufficient (18-23)
   General preparation that is, in some respects, uncertain or incomplete regarding various topics in the course syllabus and bibliography; argumentation, analysis, and critical synthesis skills that are at times limited and lack independence; difficulty connecting theory and practice and identifying relevant links between course texts and themes; partially correct presentation skills and discipline-specific terminology.

3. Fairly Good (24-27)
   Adequate preparation on the main topics in the course syllabus and bibliography, though lacking depth on some more specific themes; argumentation, analysis, and critical synthesis skills present, though not always precise or independent; fair ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant links between course texts and themes; largely correct presentation skills and discipline-specific terminology.

4. Good - Excellent (28-30/30L)
   Comprehensive and in-depth preparation on the topics in the course syllabus and bibliography; Ability to construct arguments and to conduct analysis and critical synthesis in a structured and independent manner; good to excellent ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between course texts and themes; good to excellent presentation skills and command of the discipline's specific terminology.

Erasmus students are requested to contact the lecturer to arrange an alternative reading list in English.

Office hours

For updated office hours, students are advised to consult Professor Federica Pallavicini's personal webpage.
For any questions or difficulties regarding the course or exam preparation, students may contact the instructor by email at federica.pallavicini@unimib.it

Programme validity

The programs are valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Marzia Quaglia

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING