UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Pedagogy of Disability

2627-3-E1901R130

Course title

Education of disability: cultural and pedagogical perspectives for inclusion

Topics and course structure

The course offers an in-depth reflection on the pedagogy of disability, with particular attention to inclusion. It examines the specific terminology of the field (special education), as well as historical and contemporary approaches to disability and, more broadly, to Special Educational Needs (SEN). Moving beyond the traditional biomedical perspective, special education is explored from a biopsychosocial, cultural, and pedagogical perspective, strongly anchored in human rights (inclusion, self-determination, active citizenship, etc.) and belonging contexts (family, early childhood education centers, schools, etc.). Building on this framework, the course aims to analyze the educational-didactic implications of disability, providing theoretical insights and practical tools for designing inclusive educational environments that value differences and promote equal opportunities for all.

Objectives

With this course, the following learning objectives are intended to be PROMOTED, in terms of:

1. Knowledge and Understanding

Understand the lines of development in Special Education and the main approaches to disability.

Know the key national and international documents on disability.

Be familiar with the specific terminology of Special Education.

2. Knowledge and Applied Understanding

Apply methodological approaches to build an inclusive educational environment in reference to the socio-pedagogical educator's profession.

Apply theoretical knowledge in educational contexts, designing inclusive educational and/or didactic interventions that respect differences and promote active participation.

3. Judgment Autonomy

Develop the ability to analyze educational situations, identifying barriers and facilitators, and proposing inclusive methodologies to guarantee equal learning opportunities for all.

Acquire and strengthen analytical and critical thinking skills in educational situations, even complex ones, taking reflective positions characterized by professional responsibility.

4. Communication Skills

Articulate and justify the educational and methodological choices made, demonstrating the ability to connect theory and practice.

Appropriately and consciously use the specific terminology of special education as a key professional competence to build a solid and recognizable professional identity.

5. Learning Skills

Critically reflect on educational practice, linking different knowledge and models together.

Show an inclination to expand, also independently, pedagogical and methodological-didactic culture, in relation to the advancement of scientific research and/or the search for bibliographic sources.

Methodologies

The language of instruction is Italian.
The course is primarily conducted in person (56 hours).

The course includes a combination of lectures (focused on the presentation and explanation of key content by the instructor) and interactive teaching activities (designed to foster dialogue, individual and group work, project-based activities, and the discussion of case studies and audiovisual materials). In addition, the course includes experiential and reflective learning sessions held as part of the scheduled classes, featuring guest speakers and external experts. These sessions are organized in collaboration with local organizations and professionals working in the field of disability. In particular, one session will be co-facilitated by people with disabilities, in line with an emancipatory approach to disability.

In total, the tuition paid represents - approximately - 55% of the course and the interracial teaching 45%.

Online and offline teaching materials

Slide, case study analysis, video, expert testimony

Programme and references

Foundational texts

Cottini L. (2021). Didattica speciale per l'educatore socio-pedagogico. Roma: Carocci Editore.

Cinotti A. (2017). Padri e figli con disabilità: Incontri generativi, nuove alleanze educative. Napoli: Liguori.

Thematic texts: vocabulary and inclusion in early childhood

Melio I. (2022). E' facile parlare di disabilità (se sai davvero come farlo). La comunicazione per un mondo inclusivo. Trento: Erickson.

Cinotti A., Merucci M., Doumit-Naufal Y. (2025). Insieme a scuola. Decostruire i pregiudizi..costruire la partecipazione. Foggia: Edizioni del Rosone.

Assessment methods

Exam modality: written exam.
No intermediate tests are planned.
It’s only a final test.

There are two possible exam formats. On the day of the exam, each student is free to choose which format they prefer to take.

Format A:
Six questions ("open-ended" answers within a defined space of 10-15 lines for each question). The six questions require studying the basic and thematic volumes, which must be critically related to the issues/perspectives addressed/emerged during the lessons (students who do not attend the lessons can also choose Format A by studying the materials available on the E-learning platform, which include theoretical content, teaching materials and videos.
The duration of the exam is 2 hours.

Format B:
Six questions ("open-ended" answers within a defined space of 10-15 lines for each question). The six questions require studying the two basic and thematic volumes (students who attend the lessons can also choose Format B).
The duration of the exam is 2 hours

Four questions is essentially aimed to assessing the knowledge of the contents in the texts (and lcontents learned during the cours - only for madality A); and two questions verify the critical-reflexive ability of the student with reference to the subjects of the discipline, as well as the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practice.

- Final evaluation
- The parameters of the evaluation are the following: the completeness and congruence of the answers, the discursively organized knowledge, the adequacy of the vocabulary used, the completeness and feasibility of the project proposal (for attenfing students); reference to the plurality of bibliographic sources; the critical

revision of the themes dealt with (the test will be argumentative and not summarizing).

The evaluation will be based on a scale from 0 to 30, according to the following grading scale:

Insufficient (0-17)
Insufficient preparation on the main topics in the course syllabus and bibliography; very limited and poorly autonomous argumentation, analysis, and critical elaboration skills; insufficient ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant connections between texts and/or course topics; incorrect expository skills and discipline-specific terminology.

Sufficient – More than Sufficient (18-23)
General preparation, uncertain or incomplete in some areas of the course syllabus and bibliography; occasionally limited and not very autonomous argumentation, analysis, and critical elaboration skills; difficulty in connecting theory and practice and in identifying relevant connections between texts and/or course topics; partially correct expository skills and discipline-specific terminology.

Fair – Good (24-27)
Adequate preparation on the main topics of the syllabus and bibliography, but less in-depth on more specific themes; argumentation, analysis, and critical elaboration skills present, but not always precise and autonomous; decent ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant connections between texts and/or course topics; mostly correct expository skills and discipline-specific terminology.

Very Good – Excellent (28-30/30L)
Comprehensive and in-depth preparation on the topics in the course syllabus and bibliography; articulated and autonomous argumentation, analysis, and critical elaboration skills; good/excellent ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant connections between texts and/or course topics; good/excellent expository skills and command of discipline-specific terminology.

- Other information

- In order to keep up to date with the various aspects of the course, students are invited to register on the course's Moodle page (a.y. 2026/27), where the teacher uploads materials presented in class and sends, if necessary, communications through the “Notices” section.

- During the first lesson, the teacher will explain the programme in detail and in depth, as well as all the elements in the Syllabus.

STUDENTS with Specific Learning Disability or Disability
Students who have an “Individualized University Project (PUoI)” and wish to request accommodations and/or compensatory measures for the written examination are kindly asked to contact the course instructor well in advance of the exam date, or more generally for any specific learning needs for the lessons.

ERASMUS STUDENTS
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.”

Office hours

To schedule an interview, send an email to the professor.

Programme validity

Programme validity: two academic years

Course tutors and assistants

Subject Matter Experts - Prof.sse / Dr. (in alphabetical order) Franceca Bassi, Alice Calcagno, Clara Cavinato, Irene Centonze, Marta Franchi, Filomena Martori, Alessia Lusardi, Elisa Piva, Giuliana Santarelli and Dr. Natanaele Sustovich

Academic Tutors - Dr. Clara Cavinato and Natanaele Sustovich

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION