UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# COURSE SYLLABUS

# Experimential and Participatory Theories and Methodologies for Education

**2627-1-F5702R003**

## Course title

Gazes, Postures and Traces between Art and Pedagogy

## Topics and course structure

'Nothing is a mistake. There's no win and no fail, there's only make.' –Corita Kent

The course explores theories and methodologies that bring together the possibilities offered by **artistic and pedagogical approaches and languages**, and that can find relevance, application, and meaning within educational professions and across different professional contexts. **Observation, experimentation, and documentation** constitute the main cross-cutting methodological tools of the course.

More specifically, the course follows a progression that begins with the knowledge, analysis, and experimentation of exploratory approaches and individual experiential practices, to progress towards the knowledge and development of participatory approaches, shared experiential practices, and participatory actions.

To this end, theories and practices grounded in artistic processes and carrying educational significance will be presented, discussed, and, above all, experienced through **different modes and languages**, including *writing*, *photography*, *graphic practices*, *illustration*, *mapping*, and *collecting*.

The course will also explore approaches, practices and participatory actions related to the **experience of places and environments**, with attention to an *outdoor perspective* and to *being in place, wandering and walking* as ways of exploring and knowing.

Through a fluid and recursive process, languages, approaches, and practices will contribute to shaping **multimodal**

forms of observation, experience, and documentation, developed through intersections and layers.

Within each session, every approach, practice, or language introduced will be explored through lived and, at times, shared experiences. Their observation and documentation will contribute to generating knowledge, supporting the creation of a **personal archive** that can help each participant recognise the modes most consistent with their own way of working, while also building an **articulated repertoire of possibilities** and contributing to the development of an experiential, participatory, attentive, and creative **pedagogical stance**. From this perspective, creativity is understood primarily as the ability to recognise available resources and, in turn, to foster relationships and connections among subjects, objects, and contexts.

The theories and methodologies explored throughout the course may thus provide advanced pedagogical professionals with conceptual frameworks and tools that can be applied across a range of contexts.

The *blended* format of the course and the materials made available on the online platform will support the **participation** of all students in the proposed experiences.

The course is held in Italian.

## Objectives

The teaching aims primarily to support the aptitude to problematize educational situations and events, to analyze them in depth and process them in a reflective form; to make judgment on educational situations and events after taking accurate documentation; and to renew educational practices through openness to research, experimentation and innovation.

This teaching is intended to develop the following learning:

*Knowledge and understanding*

- Understand and master expressive, performative and participatory art-based languages in the educational professions;
- Acquire knowledge regarding models of coordinating services, events, and training pathways;
- Acquire knowledge regarding theories, methodologies, tools and procedures of training, management and development of human resources in the arts and culture settings;
- Acquire knowledge regarding models of cultural and environmental heritage enhancement.

*Application of knowledge and understanding*

- Apply knowledge and skills to solve problems in both concrete contexts and unexpected situations, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between theory and practice
- Identify and read educational and training needs in different contexts
- Design and coordinate responses to needs, using and enhancing the power of the arts
- Know how to apply acquired knowledge to design, implement and evaluate educational activities in cultural and artistic contexts

*Autonomy of judgement*

- Develop original reflections and projects in response to the needs of work contexts
- Promote innovative research based on the synergy between educational and artistic skills

*Communication skills*

- Knowing how to use artistic-expressive languages as fundamental communications media

*Learning skills*

- Ability to use personal methods of self-advocacy and tools to support one's professional growth
- Reflective and metacognitive skills to monitor the suitability of one's knowledge and skills and identify any areas that need further study

The acquisition of the expected learning outcomes is supported through the solicitation of reflection from the discussion of content, experiences, contexts and materials, as well as through the proposal of opportunities for observation, research and documentation.

## Methodologies

The course is divided into moments of theoretical framing and synthesis, presentation and discussion of experiences in children's educational services, and individual and group activation. As such, active and critical participation is required of attending students, which will be favoured in any case for everyone through the lessons organised in blended learning mode and the materials made available on the platform.

More precisely, the hours of teaching activities are indicatively organised 30% as lecture and 70% as interactive teaching (classroom discussions, case presentations, group work, exercises, etc.).

About 40% of the teaching activity, corresponding to approximately 7 lectures, will take place remotely, through e-tivity aimed at promoting participation and active learning, both individual and group, in asynchronous mode. The e-tivity will take different forms: recorded lessons, reading and work materials, exercises, co-constructed pages, “after-hours” meetings...

## Online and offline teaching materials

Brief summaries of the issues discussed and pointed out materials, links, articles and videos of interest will be offered during the course through the platform e-learning.

## Programme and references

The **programme** provides an in-depth examination of the issues and topics covered in the course.

The **references** consist of the following books:

1. Guerra M. (2019), *Le più piccole cose. L’esplorazione come esperienza educativa* (*The smallest things. Exploration as an educational experience*), FrancoAngeli.
2. Rasch M., Gijsen J., Staal H. (eds.) (2024), *Hands on research for artists, designers & educators*, Set Margins’.
3. Tishman S. (2018), *Slow Looking. The Art and Practice of Learning Through Observation*, Routledge.
4. In-depth analysis of experiential proposals from a book chosen from among the following:

- Guerra M. (2024), *Taccuino per un luogo. Pagine per una ricerca quotidiana*, Corraini.

- Guerra M., Ottolini L. (2020), *In the Street. Participatory Actions in Public Spaces*, Corraini.
- Smith K. (2016), *The Wander Society*, Penguin.

**Erasumus students**
Students from foreign universities can contact the lecturer to arrange program and bibliography in English.

## Assessment methods

The course includes a final assessment, which consists of an oral exam based on a previously submitted paper, while there are no midterm assessments.
The paper is intended to encourage preliminary personal research, while the oral exam focuses on discussing the course topics, balancing theory and practice.

The assignment consists of experimenting with and analyzing selected experiences and/or methodologies presented during the course, in class and/or asynchronously, or in the assigned readings. These are to be organized and critically reinterpreted in dialogue with the bibliography and the teaching materials available on the e-learning platform.

The way in which the experience is documented and the design of the overall work is at the discretion of each student.
The paper must be uploaded in the dedicated e-learning folder at least 15 days before the call you intend to attend. Before uploading, you must name the files with your surname and first name, numbering them if there are more than one. E.g.: Guerra Monica 1-2 (first of two), and reduce the weight of the images in order to avoid excessively heavy documents.

The oral exam will open with a discussion about the work and will ascertain the knowledge of the topics and the ability to critically use the acquired knowledge, also referring to experiences, situations, examples discussed in class or belonging to the students' educational and/or professional experience.

Students who wish to take the oral exam without completing the written assignment may contact the professor to discuss alternative arrangements, including possible changes to the required reading and assessment format.

During the oral exam, the following will be assessed with appropriate requests for further study and, for those who took part in the lessons, through references to the lived experience during the course:

- the knowledge acquired;
- the ability to argue, analyse and critically and reflectively process the topics and issues covered;
- the ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant links, re-examining situations and experiences through the lens of the perspectives and tools used;
- the ability to develop an independent discourse with appropriate vocabulary on the topics studied in depth.

The assessment will be graded on a scale of 30, based on the following assessment scale:
*Not sufficient*: insufficient preparation on the main topics covered in the programme and in the course bibliography; very limited and poorly independent ability to argue, analyse and critically elaborate; insufficient ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between the texts and the course topics; incorrect presentation skills and specific vocabulary of the discipline.
*Sufficient* (18-21/30): general preparation and, in some respects, uncertain or incomplete on various topics covered in the course programme and bibliography; limited and not very independent ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate; difficulty in connecting theory and practice and in identifying relevant links between the texts and topics covered in the course; only partially correct presentation skills and specific vocabulary for the discipline.
*Fair* (22-24/30): adequate preparation on the main topics covered in the course programme and bibliography, but lacking depth on some more specific topics; ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate present, but not always

accurate and independent; fair ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant links between the texts and topics covered in the course; presentation skills and subject-specific vocabulary mostly correct.
*Good* (25-27/30): comprehensive and in-depth preparation on almost all topics covered in the course programme and bibliography; generally articulate and independent ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate; good ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant links between the texts and topics covered in the course; good presentation skills and mastery of the specific vocabulary of the discipline.
*Very good - Excellent* (28-30/30): exhaustive and in-depth preparation on all topics covered in the course programme and bibliography; ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate in a well-structured and independent manner; very good/excellent ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between the texts and topics covered in the course; very good/excellent presentation skills and complete mastery of the vocabulary specific to the discipline.

Students with a PUOI are invited to write to the professor in advance to agree on the most coherent examination mode.

## Office hours

By appointment, to be arranged by e-mail with the lecturer at monica.guerra@unimib.it.

The reception can also be held remotely in the teacher's Webex room: https://unimib.webex.com/meet/monica.guerra.

## Programme validity

The programme is valid for two academic years.

## Course tutors and assistants

Course tutor:
Dr. Letizia Luini

## Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS