UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Childhood Pedagogy

2627-2-E1902R019

Course title

Experiences, methodologies, tools, contexts, and approaches for early childhood education

Topics and course structure

It also aims to support a discussion on what it means to educate children today, in dialogue with their adult caregivers, exploring **experiences, methodologies, tools, contexts** (both indoor and outdoor) and materials (from the most to the least structured) within educational services for children aged 0 to 6.
Finally, it aims to develop the educational role, with specific reference to childhood and its contexts, through an observant, questioning and critical **approach**, cultivated through the exercise of the actions of an educator engaged in research.

These are the **main thematic areas**:

- images of childhood,
- guidance documents,
- educational planning and exploratory research involving children,
- the role of adults in educational relationships,
- peer relationships and the group dimension,
- physical and relational educational contexts for children, both indoors and outdoors,
- the participation of adult caregivers.

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

- Knowledge of the main characteristics of the pedagogical foundations of early childhood education
- Understanding and contextualization of multidisciplinary references in relation to the educational dimensions of early childhood education

Ability to Apply Knowledge and Understanding

- Ability to connect theoretical and practical knowledge regarding early childhood education
- Ability to analyze and pedagogically plan educational activities for children

Autonomy of Judgment

- Develop, through participatory classes, reflective and critical thinking in order to acquire the ability to exercise independent judgment and to anticipate the outcomes, consequences, and results of educational interventions, including from the perspective of ethics and professional conduct in early childhood education

Communication Skills

- Develop communication skills, learning to construct arguments based on acquired knowledge and to apply them to socio-educational contexts and professional roles in early childhood education
- Synthesize and document processes, using both analog and digital tools, through interactive classes, group work and discussions, and case studies

Learning Skills

- Learn to learn through reasoning and metareflection on content and study methods
- Know how to find useful sources to continuously update one’s knowledge, following the evolution of theories and methodologies in the field of early childhood education
- Know how to positively integrate into professional contexts in early childhood education, gradually analyzing both their objectives and various socio-organizational dimensions
- Know how to develop critical and reflective thinking skills useful for interpreting social and professional contexts in early childhood education

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.

More precisely, the hours of teaching activities are indicatively organised 60% as lecture and 40% as interactive teaching (classroom discussions, case presentations, group work, exercises, etc.).

About 20% of the teaching activity will take place remotely, through moments of deeper understanding and e-tivity aimed at promoting participation and active learning, both individual and group, in synchronous or asynchronous mode.

Online and offline teaching materials

Brief summaries - in presentations, maps or videotaped pills - of the issues discussed and pointed out links, articles and videos of interest will be offered during the course through the platform.

Programme and references

The **programme** will include discussion of the issues and themes covered in the course, useful for introducing and framing childhood pedagogy and educational experiences for children aged 0-6. The many possible representations of girl and boy that those who educate may hold will then be shared and analyzed, to probe how much and how they may condition educational experiences. The main reference documents relating to services 0-3, 3-6 and 0-6 will be discussed. Theoretical and methodological approaches useful for learning about, but also for designing, educational experiences for boys and girls will then be presented, with particular reference to ways that enhance exploration and play through an educational role that invests in observation, documentation and shared research between adult and child. Finally, children's educational services, such as nurseries, preschools, childcare centers, and outdoor educational experiences will be encountered, including through the voices of educators, coordinators, and atelierists, in order to explore the many different possible modes of educational contexts capable of responding to the intelligences and supporting the skills of young children.

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

1. Guerra, M., Luciano, E. (eds.) (2023). *Accanto a bambine e bambini. Questioni e prospettive per educare nello 0-6*. Edizioni Junior-Bambini
2. Guerra, M. (2019). *Le più piccole cose. L'esplorazione come esperienza educativa*. FrancoAngeli
3. a text to be chosen from:
   • Clark, A., Moss, P. (2011). *Listening to Young Children: The Mosaic approach*. National Children's Bureau
   • Giudici, C., Krechevsky, M., Rinaldi, C. (eds.) (2009), *Making learning visible: children as individual and group learners*. Reggio Children Editore
   • Guerra M. (2020). *Nel mondo. Pagine per un'educazione aperta e all'aperto*. FrancoAngeli
   • Guerra M., Luini L. (2026). *Documentare all'aperto. Significati, linguaggi, strumenti*. FrancoAngeli
4. a collection of documents and papers uploaded to the platform and freely downloadable.

In order to consciously identify questions for observation, documentation and research around a context it is also required to read:
Guerra, M. (2024). *Taccuino per un luogo. Pagine per una ricerca quotidiana*. Corraini

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

Assessment methods

The course includes a final examination, which consists of **an oral exam based on a previous paper**, while **no intermediate attempts are planned**.
This assessment method is consistent with the objectives of the course, as the short paper allows students to carry out preliminary observation and reflection, while the oral exam allows for interaction that is useful for assessing students' critical understanding and discussion of the course topics, pedagogical analysis and the connection between theory and practice.

The **project** is a brief work of personal research around one or more contexts, with the aid of some of the proposals presented in the text *Taccuino per un luogo* (Corraini, Mantova, 2024).
In the oral examination, this work will serve as the starting point for discussion.
The experience may take place outside the university (which is encouraged), but it may also be conducted on campus. You are encouraged to choose places that are not directly connected to your educational or professional experience, in order to foster a more exploratory approach and reduce the risk of interpreting the experience through already established knowledge and perspectives.
Choose several questions from the *Taccuino per un luogo* to explore, learn about, and document your encounter with a place. When making your selection, avoid questions that refer to memories of a place and prioritize those that invite direct experience. Regardless of their mode of attendance, students who wish to do so may carry out these experiences progressively and upload them to the dedicated Padlet boards, where they can be shared and discussed.
Try to gather observations by going as deep as possible and allowing yourself to be challenged by the questions that arise during the experience.
Document your explorations and research in the way you prefer (with texts, graphics, images, audio, collections, etc.) so that you can share them.
Complete with initial reflections on the processes activated during the experience and related to the course topics and texts in the reference list. To support this process, we invite you to refer to some of the meta-reflective questions included in the final pages of *Taccuino per un luogo*.
When you have finished, assess your work using the dedicated form.

To facilitate the work, a preliminary reading of the book *Le più piccole cose* (FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2019) is suggested.
The paper should be submitted 15 days prior to the roll call to which one intends to present. The address to send the papers to is esploratoridelmondo@gmail.com. Before sending, files should be named with surname and first name, numbering them in case there are more than one. Ex: Guerra Monica 1-2 (first of two), and reduce the weight of the images, so as to avoid excessively heavy papers. Any heavier and non-reducible materials can be shared on Drive of the same address.

The **oral exam** will open with a discussion about the evaluation of the paper 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.

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 Dr Letizia Luini to agree on the most coherent examination method.

Working students are invited to write to Dr Angela Rinaldi for any needs.

Erasmus students are invited to write to Dr Francesca Rota 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 tutors:
Dr. Alessandra Bocchi
Dr. Angela Rinaldi
Dr. Francesca Rota
Dr. Angela Sangalli
Dr. Monica Zanchi

Tutor:

Dr. Angela Rinaldi
Dr. Francesca Rota
Dr. Angela Sangalli

Sustainable Development Goals

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