UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# COURSE SYLLABUS

# Theories and Models of Educational Consultancy

**2627-2-F5703R014**

## Course title

**The clinical-pedagogical approach to organisational consultancy: between processes of reflexivity and promotion of organisational well-being**

## Topics and course structure

The course aims to explore clinical educational consultancy as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge, informed by other disciplines, as well as a framework capable of highlighting the paradoxes that permeate today's organisations, which are increasingly exposed to logics that struggle to reconcile profit with the precariousness and flexibility of working relations. How can we interpret the needs, the explicit requests and the latent issues within the client system in order to creatively bridge the contradictions of a constantly changing labour market? Clinically-oriented educational consultancy offers an approach capable of providing an in-depth analysis of certain critical issues affecting the work environment, promoting, amongst professionals, groups and organisations processes of reflection and meta-reflection that reinforce the sense of efficacy among men and women in today's organisations, as they grapple with questions that concern the boundary between labour policies and the construction of identity within an existential process through a forward-looking investment in their profession.The course offers the opportunity to reinterpret the contributions of other paradigms (philosophical, sociological, psychoanalytical, etc.) from a transdisciplinary perspective, in order to develop experiential theoretical knowledge of consulting that can bring into focus the different narratives and modes of operation within each organisational framework and identify possible pathways for change.
The first part of the course will focus on the theoretical and methodological principles of pedagogical-clinical consultancy and their updating in the context of today's labour market, whilst the second part will explore topics relating to group dynamics and how to identify potential pathways for group development. The teaching approach offered will take a theoretical and experiential approach which, in line with the course content, centres on the value of learning by and within a group.

## Objectives

1. The main teaching objectives concern both the promotion of the capacity for reflection, critical analysis clinical-pedagogical understanding of consultancy and training processes and practices, as well as the acquisition and consolidation of knowledge and skills relating to the various methods that the proposed consultancy approaches provide, in particular for the development of groups and work teams, methodologies that are fundamental for making organisations capable of autonomously promoting internal growth and development processes.

In particular, this teaching is intended to support the following learnings:

**1. Knowledge and understanding**

- Knowledge and comprehension of the main consultancy models with a pedagogical-clinical focus and their epistemological references;
- Knowledge and understanding of the theories and models proposed as frames of sense for a reading of consultancy questions in organisations.

**2. Applied knowledge and comprehension skills**

- Knowledge and understanding of the competences - key of the consultant and his/her professional role in supporting organisational development;
- Knowledge and comprehension of theories of group function and its dynamics;
- Knowledge and comprehension of effective relational and organisational models for the successful functioning of a team.

**3. Autonomy of judgement**

- Acquisition and consolidation of the ability to analyse and think critically in organisational situations, through a reflexive posture in relation to both one's own cultural and ethical/deontological posture;

- Development of meta-cognitive skills and self-awareness of one's own cultural assumptions.

**4. Communication skills**

- Knowledge and understanding of the central role of communication in the development of organisational processes;

- Knowledge and acquisition of soft skills to read and interpret different levels of functioning both within the organisation and in relations with stakeholders.

**5. Learning capacity***

- Capacity to re-elaborate and meta-reflect on proposed knowledges;

- Ability to identify methods and tools to support one's own and others' personal and professional growth, in particular on the consultancy dynamics that guide a request for help in an organisation.

The Expected Learning Outcomes (disciplinary and transversal) are coherent with the cultural, scientific and professional profiles identified by the CdS. By the end of the course, students should be able to understand the underlying theories and models of consultancy and be able to apply them in practice through the application of some consultancy methodologies (cases, self-cases, etc.). More generally, they will have to show that they know

how to activate processes for building generative relationships and support the development of personnel in organisations, as required by the outgoing professional profiles of the degree course. They will also have to show that they have transversal skills in communication, dialogue, relations, and the reading of explicit and implicit individual and group demands, which are indispensable for those who are called upon to manage and develop human resources in order to operate in dynamic and complex organisational contexts.

## Methodologies

**The teaching will be delivered in Italian.

A**ll the teaching and training activities planned in the 56 hours will be carried out,indicatively in presence.
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Each lesson will include a part of Didactic Delivery (theoretical explanation, in-depth study of the concepts and themes envisaged) and a part of Interactive Teaching oriented towards the involvement of individual students and the group by the following methods :

- dialogical discussions in plenary;
- small and large group works;
- development of specific exercises supervised by the professor (*examples: exercises on scientific articles, case works, elaboration of video-materials, etc.).

The overall distribution can be approximately quantified as 50% DE and 50% DI.

## Online and offline teaching materials

The teaching materials (slides, selection of video-recorded lectures, in-depth articles on topics, work traces etc.) used during the course will be made available on the e-learning page of the course.

## Programme and references

**Course topic 2025-2026**:** **Clinical-pedagogical approach to organisational consultancy: between processes of reflexivity and promotion of organisational well-being**
In today's world, discussing organisational consultancy means coming to terms with the complexity of a scenario presenting various kinds of uncertainty for professionals, who are grappling with an increasingly widespread struggle to chart a career path in a labour market characterised by precariousness and instability. Organisations today can be represented as 'theatres' where different generations and cultures come face to face, each with their own expectations and needs that must be put into dialogue, in order to reflect, from a shared perspective, on how to combine organisational efficiency with an interpretation of professionals' frequent experiences of inadequacy and ineffectiveness, bringing these out of the 'unspoken'.
On the other hand, work teams also appear increasingly less cohesive and are affected by competitive dynamics, the result of performance-driven approaches that push workers to constantly produce ever more. Much of the suffering experienced by workers and organisations stems from the gap between ideal expectations and the

principles of everyday reality. The paradoxes of the world of work requires consulting interventions that do not choose the shortcut of a strictly technical solution, but instead call for the involvement of organisations in processes and practices designed to bridge the difficulties and regain vitality, efficiency and creativity – both in terms of the professional motivation of every individual within the organisation, and in terms of structural processes that can bring about authentic transformation for the organisation itself.
Looking at the consultancy process from a pedagogical-clinical perspective, starting from a focus on the needs expressed by the client system, means handing back to an organisational system the responsibility and the tools to grow and evolve autonomously, considering the ability to create an environment in which the promotion of wellbeing, inclusivity and equal opportunities is supported by individual and collective interventions and practices, authentically embodied in the reality of organisational life. Clinical-pedagogical consultancy draws on a plurality of models and epistemologies to deconstruct working models and practices and give meaning back to the *symptoms* that may afflict an organisation, focusing on processes of care for individuals and internal relationships, which are today increasingly fragmented and, at times, rarefied. Giving meaning back to work is becoming an urgent priority in order to ensure that the involvement of the younger generations in their life and career paths is truly effective. Indeed, we are witnessing a gradual decline in life paths that find their significance in the polarity of work; at the same time, educational and training pathways are becoming longer, leading to postponed entry into the labour market or, at times, career plans that are difficult to realise.
In the socio-educational sector, as well as in the business sector, the need for mid-level professionals capable of promoting a coordinated approach between the organisation's objectives, the tasks of working groups and an understanding of the needs of those targeted by interventions has become increasingly pressing: in the face of new demands spanning a wide range of areas – including, amongst many others, the prevention of youth distress and deviance, school dropout rates as well as educational and career guidance, etc. – practitioners are calling for new cultural and intervention models that will equip them to respond to the challenges posed by needs and demands that change over time.
The course will take an in-depth look at the consultant's clinical posture and professional ethics, reflecting on the conditions that would allow him or her to act as a guide and facilitator during moments of crisis or critical transitions experienced by an organisation.
The course will be structured around an institutional part aimed at exploring clinical counselling models in depth, before applying these to the functioning of working groups as driving forces in the daily life of an organisation. Particular attention will be paid to authors and approaches that have developed innovative thinking on the formative potential of the group, exploring its various levels of functioning at the intersection between intersubjectivity and the functions of collective thought. A group, as a networked and multi-layered subjectivity, is characterised not only by a formal structure—comprising roles and functions—but also by emotional and affective dynamics and processes.
They can act as resources or, at certain phases of an organisation's life, as obstacles: this is particularly evident during periods of transition that require the organisation to re-examine its cultural and relational models. Furthermore, its productivity is linked to the well-being of the group as a whole and to the well-being of each individual within it.
The teaching device will focus on how to function within a group, so that students can experience its dynamics and processes directly and from within. The emphasis on dialogue, combined with a focus on specific interactive and workshop-based activities in both small and large groups, enables students to develop knowledge that is not only theoretically well-founded, but also encourages each individual to re-examine their own implicit epistemologies, allowing them to develop a clearer awareness of the value-based assumptions that will inform their positioning within an organisation. Developing communication and interpersonal skills means developing transversal skills of key importance for a successful integration into the employment market.
Complex knowledge is built through a pedagogical approach in which the group takes on the role of an active protagonist; starting from specific and targeted stimulus (analysis of cases drawn from the scientific literature, collaborative case-building, etc.), the group is encouraged to develop not only its ability to process content but also an awareness of the group work process itself, in order to foster an implied understanding of how a working group functions.
In particular, the course content – developed during lectures and then revisited by individual students and the group through interactive methods – will cover the following topics:

- A theoretical and interdisciplinary review of the models that inform pedagogical consultancy;
- An in-depth examination of the pedagogical-clinical paradigm in consultancy;
- The scenarios and models underpinning organisational cultures within profit and non-profit sectors;

- The interpretation and analysis of an organisation's needs in terms of both their manifest and hidden aspects;
- The centrality of the organizational context in forming the meanings that professionals attribute to work;
- The languages and symbols that circulate in a work group and in an organizational reality;
- an in-depth examination of the concepts of well-being and distress in feed-back processes between professionals, groups and organisations;
- The relationship between group work and work group;
- The phenomena of retroaction and feedback within work groups;
- The emotional dynamics that characterize the life of a work group between the construction of individual meanings and collective mentalities;
- The levels of functioning of the group between content and relationship;
- Consultancy work as co-construction of change processes;
- Trust and empathic movement in consultancy processes;
- Active listening as an indispensable resource for a consultant an implicit understanding of the context;
- Observation and meta-reflection in the work of consulting;
- The phenomena of resistance underlying the request for a helping relationship.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY: MANDATORY texts for all students**

1. M.Tomè, Umidon P. (2025) (Eds), *Clinica del benessere organizzativo. Quali risposte al disagio sul lavoro*. Milano: FrancoAngeli;

2. L. Regogliosi & G.Scaratti (2007), *Il consulente del lavoro socioeducativo. Formazione, supervisione, coordinamento*. Roma: Carocci;

3. C. Kaneklin (2010),* *Il gruppo in teoria e in pratica. L'intersoggettività come forza produttiva*.* Milano: Cortina.

**ERASMUS STUDENTS**
Erasmus students are kindly requested to contact their course lecturers to agree on the syllabus and references.

## Assessment methods

**TEST TYPE**

The examination will consist of an **oral colloquium**.
**No intermediate examinations are planned.**

**Each examination will be structured in a discussion lasting approximately 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the general progress of the discussion.**

The decision to use an oral examination is consistent with the course learning objectives and, through a dialogue-based communication setting, provides an opportunity to interact with students in order to assess their ability to critically understand the course topics, analyze the texts in the reading list, and establish connections between theories and practical applications in real-world situations.

In particular, assessment will follow the following criteria:

**Knowledge and understanding**

- Knowledge of pedagogical and clinical counselling models will be assessed through an oral exam aimed at

verifying, by means of appropriate questions, the level and extent of understanding of the fundamental concepts and key ideas covered during the lectures and set out in the texts listed in the bibliography;

- The students' ability to critically analyse the material presented will also be evaluated, both in relation to individual text and with a focus on dialogue and comparison between authors and models;
- Students will be tested on the clarity of their presentation and their ability to use the scientific vocabulary specific to the disciplines presented.

**Ability to connect theories and practices

- Students' ability to analyse real-life case studies will be assessed;
- Students' ability to analyse group processes and dynamics will be assessed;
- Skills for managing effective communication and relations in organisational contexts will be assessed;
- The ability to self-reflect on one's own role positioning within a work context and a work group will be subject to assessment;
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- The formative and self-formative implications produced by the experience of the course and the reference texts will be verified.

**Evaluation will be based on a 30-point scale, according to the following assessment criteria:**

1. **Inadequate (0–17)**
   Insufficient knowledge of the main topics covered in the syllabus and course bibliography; very limited and poorly developed ability to argue, analyse and think critically; insufficient ability to link theory and practice and to identify relevant connections between the texts and course topics; incorrect presentation skills and use of subject-specific vocabulary.

2. **Sufficient – More than sufficient (18–23)**
   General preparation, and in some respects uncertain or incomplete, on various topics covered in the syllabus andcourse bibliography. Arguments, analysis and critical thinking are at times limited and lack independence; difficulty in linking theory and practice and in identifying relevant connections between the course texts and topics; presentation skills and subject-specific vocabulary are partially correct.

3. **Adequate (24-27)**
   Adequate preparation on the main topics covered in the syllabus and bibliography, but lacking in depth on some more specific issues; ability to argue, analyse and engage in critical thinking is present, but not always precise or independent; reasonable ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between the texts andcourse topics; presentation skills and subject-specific vocabulary are generally correct.

4. **Good – Very Good (28–30/30)**
   Comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of the topics covered in the syllabus and course bibliography; ability to argue, analyse and engage in structured and independent critical thinking; good/excellent ability to link theory and practice and to identify relevant connections between the texts and course topics; good/excellent presentation skills and mastery of the vocabulary specific to the discipline.

## Office hours

In the 2026/2027 academic year, the reception will take place, by prior appointment via e-mail, either in person or remotely.

Interested students are invited to send an e-mail to:
**stefania.ulivieri@unimib.it.**

## Programme validity

The programmes are valid for two academic years.

## Course tutors and assistants

Dott.ssa Daniela Del Colle.
Dott. Matteo Fantoni.

## Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS