UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Developmental Processess of Family Relationships

2627-2-F5111P012

Learning area

Models and techniques for assessing psychological functioning

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Normative and not critical events and their possible pathological outcomes;
- Support models for specific critical events;
- The role of the psychologist within family systems.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Basic understanding of the assessment of family pathology;
- Basic knowledge of observational techniques of family dynamics;
- Understanding requests and predisposing interventions.

*Communication skills

- Ability to critically analyze theories and models related to family functioning and to evaluate the impact of psycho-social events on the genesis and evolution of family dynamics. The activities that contribute to the development of these skills include: presenting to the class, in small groups, and/or individually, the characteristics of family functioning; the developmental tasks that characterize the stages of the life cycle in different family configurations; through the therapeutic elements of systemic-relational psychology acquired during the training process.

*Making judgements

- Ability to independently assess complex situations and propose targeted intervention strategies, based on the analysis of the specificities of different family and couple configurations, also considering risk and protective factors. Activities that contribute to developing these skills include: presentations to the class, individually and in small groups, concerning the developmental processes of various family configurations; and the preparation of reports involving the assessment of typical and atypical functioning of couples and families through carefully crafted clinical vignettes.

*Learning skills

- The course provides solid theoretical skills that enable the development of:
  the ability for self-directed learning in the field of family dynamics and couple relationships, through acquired competence that allows for the selection of scientifically relevant sources, thereby facilitating continuous updating and deepening of knowledge.

Contents

The aim of the course is to develop the student's abilities pertaining to:

the analysis and understanding of the development of family and couple typical and atypical functioning related to normative and not events;

In particular considering the developmental tasks of new family configurations and current socio-economic changes;

Changes resulting from critical events will also be discussed;

Finally, a model for evaluating and intervening in these specific relational realties.

Detailed program

- family configurations and supplementary developmental tasks in the family life cycle, and associated risk factors ad indices of adaptation
- atypical critical events (traumas; cancer and cardiac pathologies; natural disasters; terroristic attacks; grief; dementia etc);
- instruments for the assessment and intervention in families;
- the psychological profession in different contexts.

Prerequisites

A good knowledge of of the basis of Psychodynamics of development and family relations and Family Counseling enables a more aware use of the course contents. Students lacking such basic knowledge are encourage to ask for a list of basic references.

Teaching methods

All lessones will be held in person.
Classroom lectures (approximately 65%) are combined with the case studies, video presentations focused on the course topics and guided exercises, discussion of scientific articles.

These modalities have the purpose of making the course contents more usable and facilitate the acquisition of specific skills on the family system and on the tools for the evaluation of relational processes.

Most of the material used in the classroom (excluding films) will be made available on the e-learning site of the course.

Assessment methods

The verification of learning will be carried out through a written (required) and oral (optional) examination.

The written part includes 2 open questions and 15 multiple choice questions (with only one correct answer). The multiple choice questions aim to evaluate extensively the preparation of students, the open questions want to evaluate the ability to critically think and to create connections between the acquired knowledge.

For all the students who will request it, it will be planned also an oral examination, in addition to the written one. The oral examination covers the whole program. In order to access the oral examination, it's necessary to have a score of at least 18 in the written part.

No mid-term assessments are scheduled.

The evaluation's requirements are: accuracy of open questions' answers, precision of the contents, logical and formal organization and correct terminology in the answers.

The verification of learning aims to verifying the specific knowledge of the main theoretical aspects of the course. The knowledge about the instruments used in the evaluation of relational processes will be the main subject of evaluation. A specific attention will be given to the knowledge of the technical language, the understanding and the evaluation of the normal and pathological functioning of the family.

Final assessment is based on the overall score achieved across the different parts of the examination, according to the following grading scale:
18: Barely sufficient knowledge of the tools used to assess relational processes; minimal ability to understand and describe normal and pathological family functioning; basic use of technical terminology.
• 19–22: Sufficient knowledge of the fundamental course contents; ability to identify and apply, albeit with some uncertainty, the tools for assessing relational processes; basic understanding of normal and pathological family functioning; adequately appropriate use of specialized terminology.
• 23–26: Fair knowledge of the theoretical contents; good ability to use the tools for assessing relational processes and to analyze normal and pathological family functioning, with some minor inaccuracies; generally appropriate use of technical language.
• 27–30: Solid and in-depth knowledge of the course contents; good command of the tools for assessing relational processes; ability to critically analyze normal and pathological family functioning; accurate and appropriate use of specialized technical terminology.
• 30 with honors: Comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of all course contents; full mastery of the tools for assessing relational processes and their application to the analysis of normal and pathological family functioning; excellent critical thinking and ability to integrate course concepts; rigorous, precise, and highly appropriate use of specialized technical language

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Andolfi, M., Mascellani A. (2020). Intimità di coppia e trame familiari, Raffaello Cortina, Milano

Andolfi M., (a cura di), (2015). La Terapia familiare multigenerazionale. Strumenti e risorse del terapeuta, Raffaello Cortina, Milano

Andolfi M., D'Elia A., (a cura di), (2024). La famiglia che cura, Raffaello Cortina, Milano (chapters: 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 20, 22 , 23, 32, 33)

Pace C.S., Santona A., (2024). Adozione, attaccamento e narrazione. Un modello di intervento, Il Mulino, Bologna

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING