UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Professional Ethics and Responsabilities for Psychologists in Healthcare Settings

2627-1-F5111P007

Learning area

Models and techniques for intervention and reheabilitation

Learning objectives

The course aims to equip students with the theoretical knowledge and practical competencies necessary to understand the role of professional ethics in the development of psychologists' professional identity and the responsible exercise of the profession.
By examining the Code of Ethics of Italian Psychologists, international ethical principles, and professional case studies, students will develop ethical decision-making skills and a critical awareness of their professional responsibilities towards clients, commissioners, colleagues, institutions, and society.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:
Dublin Descriptor 1 – *Knowledge and Understanding*

- Demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental national and international principles of professional ethics in psychology;
- Understand the role and functions of the Code of Ethics in regulating and guiding professional practice;
- Describe the structure, functions, and responsibilities of the Order of Psychologists;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the regulations concerning informed consent, confidentiality, professional secrecy, and their exceptions.
  Dublin Descriptor 2 – *Applying Knowledge and Understanding*
- Apply ethical principles to the analysis of professional situations and case studies;
- Identify ethical and professional issues in different contexts of psychological practice;
- Use the Code of Ethics as a framework for professional decision-making;

- Formulate appropriate strategies for addressing ethical dilemmas based on professional and regulatory standards.
  Dublin Descriptor 3 – *Making Judgements*
- Critically evaluate complex professional situations, balancing client welfare, professional duties, and ethical responsibilities;
- Recognize the limits of their own professional competence;
- Make informed and reasoned decisions consistent with ethical principles and the protection of the well-being of those involved;
- Critically reflect on the ethical implications of future professional choices.
  Dublin Descriptor 4 – *Communication Skills*
- Communicate clearly, appropriately, and transparently with clients and other stakeholders;
- Discuss ethical and professional issues using appropriate terminology;
- Present and justify professional decisions in discussions with colleagues and other professionals;
- Communicate effectively and respectfully in situations involving differing interests, perspectives, or values.
  Dublin Descriptor 5 – *Learning Skills*
- Independently consult and use the Code of Ethics and relevant legal and regulatory sources;
- Engage in continuous professional development regarding ethical and professional issues;
- Develop a reflective approach to lifelong learning and professional responsibility.

Contents

Fundamental principles of professional ethics for psychologists and their application across different areas of professional practice, with a focus on decision-making processes, professional responsibility, and the management of ethical dilemmas.

Detailed program

• Philosophical and epistemological foundations of professional ethics in psychology.
• Introduction to professional ethics and the professional responsibility of psychologists.
• The Code of Ethics of Italian Psychologists: structure, principles, and regulatory functions.
• Professional identity of the psychologist and boundaries of professional competence.
• Professional relationships with clients, commissioners, and other stakeholders.
• Informed consent and the principle of self-determination.
• Confidentiality, professional secrecy, and legal and ethical exceptions.
• Professional relationships with colleagues, institutions, and other professionals.
• The psychologist’s role in society and the social responsibility of the profession.
• Ethical and professional dilemmas in psychological practice.
• The Order of Psychologists: structure, functions, and disciplinary procedures.
• Analysis of professional case studies and ethical case law

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of the main domains of psychological practice and of the professional characteristics of psychologists, in order to facilitate the analysis of the ethical issues covered in the course.

Teaching methods

The course consists of 4 in-person sessions. The activities are structured as 50% lecture-based teaching (didattica erogativa) and 50% interactive teaching (didattica interattiva).
In the initial phase of each session, lecture-based teaching methods are used, aimed at providing the fundamental theoretical content; in the subsequent phase, interactive teaching activities are planned to actively engage students. The teaching activities include:
• interactive lectures (dialogue-based teaching);
• analysis and discussion of real professional cases;
• guided group work and exercises in small groups;
• role playing and simulations;
• plenary discussion of ethical dilemmas and complex professional situations.
Particular attention will be devoted to developing ethical reasoning skills and critical reflection on the professional implications of the decisions made.

Assessment methods

Attendance at 70% of classes is required for course approval.
In order to assess the achievement of the learning outcomes, ongoing (in-itinere) assessments are planned, including observation of students' participation in class discussions and proposed activities, as well as written tests consisting of deontological questions requiring the analysis of complex cases, open-ended questions, and closed-ended questions.
Course approval will take into account:

knowledge of the theoretical content;
the ability to apply deontological principles to concrete situations;
independence of judgment;
the quality of argumentation and participation in the teaching activities.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

- https://www.psy.it/entra-in-vigore-il-nuovo-codice-deontologico/
- Universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists. Adopted unanimously by the General Assembly of the International Union of Psychological Science in Berlin on July 22nd, 2008
- Janel Gauthier , Jean Pettifor & Andrea Ferrero (2010) The Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists: A Culture-Sensitive Model for Creating and Reviewing a Code of Ethics, Ethics & Behavior, 20:3-4, 179-196.
- Parmentola C. e Leardini E. (2020) Il manuale deontologico degli psicologi – tra le parti e nella parte. Ed. psiconline
- Calvi E., Gulotta G, Leardini E. (2018) Il nuovo codice deontologico degli psicologi. Commentato articolo per articolo con decisioni ordinistiche e giurisprudenza ordinaria. Giuffrè
- Calvi E, Presutti M. e Zara G. (2016) Lo psicologo tra l’essere e il fare. Vol. I e II. Publiedit.
- Pingitore M. e Mirabelli A. (2018) 100 domande e risposte sul codice deontologico degli psicologi. Ordine degli Psicologi del Friuli Venezia Giulia ed.
- Pingitore M. e Mirabelli A. Il consenso informato in psicologia.Ordine degli Psicologi del Friuli Venezia Giulia ed.
- Cesaro G. F. (a cura di) (2007) La tutela dell’interesse del minore: deontologie a confronto. Franco Angeli ed.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING