UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Epistemologia e Storia delle Scienze Sanitarie e della Midwifery

2627-1-K0103D003

Aims

The course aims to consolidate the professional identity and autonomy of Master's-level students through a critical synthesis of historical, epistemological, ethical, and regulatory foundations.
The curriculum begins with an analysis of the historical method—an essential tool for deciphering the evolution of midwifery from empirical knowledge into a structured scientific discipline—while examining its epistemological status in light of modern Evidence-Based Midwifery models and the philosophy of salutogenesis.
The course explores concepts of ethics, bioethics, and professional conduct, aiming to foster the independent judgment required to navigate challenges posed by biotechnological innovations and complex gender-specific health pathways, thereby integrating the ethics of care with professional responsibility.
Finally, the course provides a rigorous understanding of the national and European regulatory framework, examining liability issues and the laws governing management, education, and research roles; this ensures that Master's-level practitioners possess full operational legitimacy to drive innovation and manage complex services within the contemporary healthcare landscape.

Specifically:
*Knowledge and Understanding *
The student will become familiar with the key stages in the evolution of the midwifery profession, distinguishing between traditional empirical knowledge and its subsequent scientific professionalization. They will be able to identify the scientific paradigms of midwifery and understand gender-based health as a diverse, non-pathological human phenomenon.
The student will gain knowledge of fundamental bioethical principles and the ethical standards governing the relationship with the person receiving care. They will understand the national and European legal framework, with a focus on the civil, criminal, and disciplinary liabilities associated with the profession.

*Applied Knowledge and Understanding *
The student will be able to use the historiographical method to contextualize current care practices and interpret changes in models of care, as well as apply midwifery and evidence-based midwifery models to the design of innovative services.
The student will be able to use the tools of the ethics of care to manage complex gender-related health pathways

and actively counter "minority stress" in individuals with non-stereotypical identities, and to apply current regulations regarding the management of clinical units and the coordination of training processes.

*Independent Judgment *
The student will be able to critically evaluate the impact of prejudice and socio-cultural stigmatization on the health of gender minorities, and to apply the principles of the Code of Ethics to assess the ethical propriety of new biotechnological and clinical procedures.
The student will be able to make autonomous management decisions grounded in legal rigor and the protection of human rights and equitable health.

*Communication Skills *
The student will be able to appropriately communicate using the technical-scientific, ethical, and legal terminology required for interdisciplinary and institutional dialogue. They will acquire the ability to communicate in an inclusive and non-judgmental manner, respecting diverse gender identities and expressions in order to break down barriers associated with stigmatization.
The student will be able to discuss the historical evolution of midwifery and present proposals for innovating healthcare models and policies.

*Learning Skills *
The student will acquire skills useful for developing an independent study method to constantly monitor regulatory developments and international guidelines. They will also acquire the methodological tools to conduct historical and epistemological studies aimed at advancing the midwifery discipline.

Contents

HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE AND METHOD – Gaining a deeper understanding of the history of midwifery care and acquiring frameworks for interpreting it. Study of historiographical methodology applied to midwifery, including the analysis, classification, critical assessment, and interpretation of historical sources.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL STATUS OF MIDWIFERY – The development and epistemological foundations of midwifery science. The doctrinal body of midwifery. Midwifery constructs. The Midwifery Partnership Model. The methodological body of midwifery. The need for classification: ICF.

ETHICS, BIOETHICS, AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN MIDWIFERY – Foundations of clinical and social bioethics. Relevant ethical theories. Bioethical principles: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, with a focus on equity in access to care. Status of the embryo and reproductive technologies. Neonatal bioethics. Ethical leadership.

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION – In-depth study of key regulations regarding healthcare organization, professional practice, and midwifery education, identifying their significance and impact on professional development.

Detailed program

HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE AND METHOD – Foundations of historiographical methodology. Theory and processes regarding historical sources in midwifery. Facts and documents: intrinsic and extrinsic examination. Classification of sources and authors. Interpretation of historical sources in midwifery. Hermeneutics applied to midwifery sources.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL STATUS OF MIDWIFERY – Exploring the foundations of midwifery sciences and strengthening professional identity. Identifying the elements that define midwifery care as a profession, a discipline, and a science; acquiring the knowledge needed to critically evaluate theories developed within the field of midwifery. recognize the philosophical and theoretical references—across various levels of theorization—that can guide midwifery practice

ETHICS, BIOETHICS, AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN MIDWIFERY: The ethical responsibilities of the midwife. Overview of the development of codes of professional conduct for the midwifery profession. Ethical concepts of advocacy, accountability, and caring. Taking moral action. Models of ethical decision-making, including the Fry and Johnstone model.

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION: Health as a fundamental right. The law establishing the National Health Service (SSN) and subsequent reforms, from the 1970s to the present day. Healthcare professions and their specific scopes of practice and responsibility. Healthcare profession management and leadership. University education, continuing medical education (CME), professional regulatory bodies, patient safety, and professional liability.

Prerequisites

As defined by the Academic Regulations.

Teaching form

8 ECTS credits (72 hours total) delivered through lectures, practical exercises, and clinical case studies.

Textbook and teaching resource

As reported in the individual teaching modules.

Semester

First year, first semester

Assessment method

Oral exam accompanied by a written paper. In line with the course content, the paper requires the student to critically analyze a concept relevant to nursing and midwifery sciences, following detailed guidelines provided by the instructors. Students will be shown the assessment rubric used to grade their work. The written paper accounts for 50% of the final grade. The mandatory oral exam covers course content and consists of at least three questions (one on history, one on theory, and one on methodological aspects). The instructor may ask additional questions to

determine the final grade.

Office hours

By appointment, scheduled with the teachers via e-mail.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES