# Developmental and Social Psychology

## Prof. Marco Farina; Prof. Giulia Peretti

***COURSE CONTENT AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with basic notions of the development of the cognitive, emotional, relational, and social skills of the individual during the life cycle, with particular attention to the family dimension of psychological development and its typical and atypical characteristics in the childhood and adolescence.

At the end of the course, students will be able to describe and understand the characteristics of the typical and atypical cognitive, emotional, relational, and social skills of children and adults.

In detail, during the first part of the course (prof. Farina) dedicated to the development of the individual in the family environment, students will be aware of the critical events that the family encounters in its life cycle and will be able to evaluate its normal adaptation ability as well as the difficulties in overcoming some phases. In this perspective, students will be able to plan and implement educational interventions to raise awareness and support for parents and children; as well as to adapt their interventions made in other areas to the criticalities experienced by the individuals entrusted to them in specific moments of their life cycle.

As regards the second part of the course (Prof. Peretti), students will be able to describe the stages of typical and atypical childhood development, and to identify their critical aspects. More specifically, students will delve into the most recent tools used in the educational, healthcare and clinical fields, with particular reference to the use of new technologies. At the end of the course, students will be able to define the key aspects of an educational and/or rehabilitative intervention and will be able to identify the most suitable tools to use from a development perspective.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into two modules corresponding to the two semesters of the academic year.

First module (prof. M. Farina)

It is dedicated to the study of the family life cycle intended as an essential context for the growth and well-being of all its members and as such it is preparatory to the second part focused on the adolescence stage.

The main theoretical orientations for the study of the family life cycle will be presented and particular attention will be paid to the symbolic relational approach. Subsequently, the course will address the individual phases of the family life cycle: couple formation, birth of children, adolescence, young adult stage, “empty nest” family, family with elderly. For each of them, potential and expected critical events will be considered as well as unforeseen events that, taking place in the time of the family history, will require all its members to adapt.

Attention will be focused precisely on the strategies, on the development tasks, implemented by the members to overcome the crisis and achieve a new balance, thus highlighting that a “healthy” family is above all a family able to change by adjusting “emotional distances” among its members and with the external environment.

Second module (prof. G. Peretti)

This module will present some approaches to the study of typical and atypical development. A first overview of the classical theories of infant development will be proposed (with particular reference to the conceptualisations of Piaget, Vygotskij, and Bruner).

The focus will be on the critical aspects of development in childhood and, in particular, on the typical and atypical development of the prerequisites of cognitive and social skills. The main educational and training tools relating to coding and educational robotics will also be investigated from a psychological perspective. In particular, the course will focus on the usefulness of these tools during development, analysing their characteristics and implications on a cognitive level. The course will also present the most recent rehabilitation and care approaches aimed at treating neurodevelopmental disorders in the clinical setting. In this context, it will describe how new technologies (with reference to robotic technologies) can contribute to the effectiveness of social and cognitive rehabilitation protocols, as an additional tool for care staff. Furthermore, the module will present the results of research in the field of coding, educational robotics and assistance technology in recent years, in order to give students the opportunity to explore through a critical eye the limits and future directions of commonly used educational and assistance approaches.

***READING LIST***

*First module*

Scabini E., Iafrate R., *Psicologia dei legami famigliari*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2019. (excluding chapters 9 and 10)

*Second module*

All the material will be provided and covered during the lessons, the main scientific reference publications (open-access) will be uploaded in Blackboard “teaching materials” section. For the topics addressed during the course, see:

Caravita S., Milani L., Traficante D., *Psicologia dello sviluppo e dell’educazione*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2018

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will adopt an active methodology in which theoretical lessons, case discussion, and videos are integrated. Students will be invited to experiment with some proposed cases and identify ways to promote satisfactory development in the people they will work with in the future.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The learning assessment will consist of a computerised questionnaire with multiple-choice questions concerning both parts of the course. The questionnaire will include 30 questions equally divided between the topics covered in the two semesters. Students will be allowed 1 hour to complete the test. The final mark will be proportional to the number of correct answers provided by the candidate.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no content-related prerequisites for attending the course. However, interest and curiosity for psychological and social issues is expected.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at <http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG> or on the Faculty notice board.