# Elements of Psychopathology

## Prof. nicoletta pirovano

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

*Course aims*

The course aims to address psychopathology, contextualising theories and proposals for intervention within the scientific-methodological frameworks of clinical psychology.

The themes analysed will be approached on both a theoretical and applied level, in relation to diagnosis and treatment.

The social consequences of the approaches analysed will be highlighted by paying particular attention to the role of interpersonal relations both in psychopathological studies and in prevention and intervention programmes, systematically highlighting the implications of theory and intervention programmes on the work of social workers.

*Intended learning outcomes*

Students must understand the specific nature of the psychopathological perspective, which also integrates knowledge gained in other fields of psychology. They must also be able to organise and critically discuss the fundamental concepts of psychopathology with respect to certain dichotomies – normality/pathology, health/illness – and certain terms, such as discomfort, disorder and deviance.

By the end of the course, students should also be able to reflect in a critical way on the content learned, highlighting the potential and limits of the various approaches to psychopathology in the possible situations in which their new knowledge and skills may be applied, especially in the context of activities carried out by social workers. Students are also expected to be able to prefigure scenarios where knowledge could be applied, as well as analyse situations experienced in the first person to which such knowledge can be applied.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will present the main psychopathological disorders, connecting the diagnostic and therapeutic framework to the wider consideration of an individual’s life contexts (family, school, workplace, out-of-school spaces). Specifically, the course topics will be divided into two units.

1. *General psychopathology.* Overview of the main psychopathological disorders and the range of personality organisations, both from a nosographical-categorical point of view and a dynamic-functional point of view; these themes will then be applied to the context of social work, focusing on certain prototypical syndromes (anxiety, depression, personality disorders, eating disorders, sexual disorders, psychosomatic disorders).
2. *Developmental psychopathology.* Framing modern developmental psychopathology according to the latest diagnostic criteria, defined by age group, developmental trajectories of the child within their relational system and assessment tools and clinical interventions.

***READING LIST[[1]](#footnote-1)***

E. Sanavio, *Manuale di psicopatologia e psicodiagnostica,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2016. [*Acquista da VP*](https://librerie.unicatt.it/scheda-libro/autori-vari/manuale-di-psicopatologia-e-psicodiagnostica-9788815265654-240650.html)

A. Maggiolini (a cura di) *Psicopatologia del ciclo di vita,* Franco Angeli, 2017

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course includes frontal lectures and group discussions on topics and experiences of interest to students. Learning will be continually monitored by means of self-assessment activities, with a view to adapting teaching methods if required.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final exam will take the form of an oral interview, during which students will be assessed on their knowledge of the topics covered in both the general and single-subject parts of the course, as well as their skills regarding the possible ways of applying the acquired knowledge. The ability to make links between the theoretical approaches analysed and to discuss them in a relevant and consistent manner will also be assessed. The following count equally towards the final mark: critically analysed theoretical knowledge and competences relating to the contextualisation of this knowledge within the various fields of social work.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In general, it is considered a prerequisite that students show willingness to reflect on the issues that concern human beings, and are specifically curious about the psychological dimension, particularly situations of psychological suffering. Students will also benefit from any prior knowledge of psychology, particularly in the clinical field.

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.

1. These texts are available from the university bookshop as well as other retailers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)