**Psychology of Traumatic Relationships**

## Prof. Chiara Ionio

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

The aim of the course is to teach students a basic and specialist understanding of the main theoretical models and most important realms of research and intervention in the field of the psychology of trauma and traumatic relationships.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

– recognise the latest theories shared by scientific literature;

– recognise the characteristics of an event which could be termed as being traumatic;

– recognise the different potential psychological responses to a traumatic event, with particular reference to cognitive, emotional and mnestic dynamics;

– recognise the modalities of intervention and treatment for PTSD and complex disorders, with particular reference to childhood and adolescence.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

– refer to reference reading for the understanding of a clinical picture of a traumatic experience;

– analyse the evalutative and diagnostic criteria in reference to specific symptoms;

– navigate the different tools for assessment and various intervention techniques.

***COURSE CONTENT***

A first set of lectures is aimed at providing information about the concepts of stressful and traumatic events, neurobiological correlates and individual and relational psychological factors favouring or preventing the onset of symptoms of stress and post-traumatic disorder in childhood and adolescence. The course will then look at assessment and diagnostic guidelines and selected tools devised in relation to specific sets of symptoms. A second group of lectures will illustrate specific conditions that can be traumatic while growing up or in adulthood (child maltreatment, violence linked to war and political situations, immigration, chronic diseases, post-partum disorders and relationship with the child, bereavement, natural disasters; poverty, social deprivation and inequality; and racial, ethical, gender, sexual orientation or class discrimination) together with the cognitive, emotional and memory mechanisms they involve. A third group of lectures will focus on the methods of intervention and treatment for PTSD and complex disorder, with particular attention to childhood and adolescence.

Specifically, the course is divided into the following units and sub-units:

Unit 1: Definitions

Stressful and traumatic events

Neurobiological correlates

Simple and complex trauma

Diagnostic classification

Unit 2: Traumatic events and their impact on development

PTSD post-partum and the relationship with the child

Chronic diseases

Wars and political conflicts

Immigration

Unit 3: Traumatic memories

Characteristics of traumatic memories

Re-enactment and narration of traumatic events

Unit 4: Assessment and treatment

Characteristics of the assessment

Assessment tools

Treatment methods (EW, NET, EMDR, TF-CBT, - NMT)

***READING LIST***

Reading list for the path based on lecture content:

Lectures

G. Craparo, *Il Disturbo Post-Traumaticoda stress.* Carocci, 2015

Reading list for the text-based path:

G. Craparo, *Il Disturbo Post-Traumaticoda stress.* Carocci, 2015

liotti-Farina, *Sviluppi Traumatici.* Cortina, Milano, 2011

Students of both paths will have to study two of the articles listed:

C. Ionio-P. Di Blasio (2013). *Post Traumatic Stress Symptoms after Childbirth and Early Mother*

*Child Interactions: An Exploratory Study*. Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology (disponibile su blackboard)

C. Ionio-E. Mascheroni-P. Di Blasio (2019) *The Centrality of Events Scale for Italian Adolescents: Integrating Traumatic Experience Into One’s Identity and Its Relation to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptomatology. EJOP*(disponibile su blackboard)

M.A. Bellis-K. Hughes-K. Ford-G.R. Rodriguez-D. Sethi-J. Passmore (2019). Life course health consequences and associated annual costs of adverse childhood experiences across Europe and North America: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet*, published online September 3, 2019

B.D. Perry (2009). *Examining child maltreatment through a neurodevelopmental lens: Clinical applications of the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics*. Journal of Loss and Trauma, 14:4, 240-255.

B.D. Perry-E.P. Hambrick (2008). The Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 17(3), 39-43.

***TEACHING METHOD***

In addition to lectures, the course will also include class exercises, group discussions and analyses of film clips and case studies.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

One part of the exam will involve writing a paper of about ten pages on one of the topics covered in class and on the texts indicated in the Faculty Guide (published on the website www.unicatt.it in the specific section), to be delivered at least one week before the exam. The other part of the exam will be an in-depth supplementary oral examination to be carried out according to the procedures established by the Commission.

The oral exam questions will cover the entire exam programme and will be formulated with reference to specific topics.

1. In reference to knowledge and understanding, students will be asked to illustrate a reference framework, valutative and diagnostic criteria and traumatogenic situations, defining the most effective mode of intervention.

2. In reference to the ability to apply knowledge and understanding, students will be required to provide examples of application related to theories when answering the questions.

*Assessment criteria*

Assessment will be based on the completeness, relevance and accuracy of answers and the appropriateness of language. In the written test, the answers to the open-ended questions will be marked on a scale of 0-3, based on the following criteria:

0 = no or wrong answer.

1 = answer with sporadic or non-systematic correct elements, with an overall prevalence of incorrect, irrelevant content not presented effectively.

2 = correctly contextualised answer with sufficient but incomplete content, incorrect elements not presented effectively or completely.

3 = correct answer, well presented, relevant and consistent.

In order to pass the examination, students must answer all questions sufficiently, at least.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students should have basic knowledge of typical and atypical development trajectories and the impact negative and unfavourable events can have on developing children.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

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.