# Clinical Psychology of Family Relationships

## Prof. Federica Facchin

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

The course will focus on the family and couple relationships, with special reference to the research path carried out at the Università Cattolica Centre for Study and Research on the Family. The model of thought and the clinical intervention matured over time as the outcome of this path is that of the “Symbolical Relationship”. It will be compared with other clinical approaches in order to identify points in common and significant differences.

Emphasis will be given to the subjects of family “origins”, and of the emotional-historical vicissitudes of the couple bond, with special attention paid to health-illness problems that the relationships generate.

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

1. Knowledge and understanding:

* Recognise the fundamental concepts and main theories of the functioning of families;
* understand the essential elements of relational concepts.

1. Applying knowledge and understanding:

* Analyse a clinical problem regarding families and couples according to a Relational-Symbolic perspective, by developing a diagnostic-assessment plan and formulating interpretative hypotheses;
* Apply certain relational tools which can be used within clinical research and intervention.

1. Communication skills:

* Present a critical clinical reading of a family situation;
* draw up a summary relational diagnostic report in an appropriate and clinically argued form.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course deals with the fundamental topics of family clinical care, from the epistemic and theoretical foundations through to the clinical applications, and is divided into two modules:

MODULE 1

*Unit 1*: The hallmarks of bond-oriented clinical care

*Unit 2*: The clinical care of family ties: crises and transitions

2.a the establishment of the couple

2.b parenting

2.c adolescent children

2.d separation and the reconstituted family

*Unit 3*: The distinctive identity of the family and the relational-symbolic orientation

*Unit* 4: Methods and tools for diagnosing and clinically intervening with couples and families.

4.a The Genogram

4.b The Generational Clinical Interview

4.c The Joint Design of the Family

4.d The Family Life Space

MODULE 2

*Unit 1*: Birth of Family Therapy

* 1. Introduction to the clinical side of bonds
  2. Historical foundations of family therapy
  3. Epistemological foundations of family therapy

*Unit 2*: Models of family therapy - the "systemic strain"

2.1 The Mental Research Institute model

2.2 The structural model

2.3 The systemic model of Milan

2.4 The "constructionist turn"

*Unit 3*: Models of family therapy - the "psychodynamic-generational strain"

3.1 "Generational transference"

3.2 The Bowenian model

3.3 The contextual model

3.4 The symbolic-experiential model

*Unit 4*: Clinical care of bonds and cinema

4.1 The family clinic and the action-drama

***READING LIST***

S. Molgora-F. Facchin-C. Fusar Poli, *La clinica familiare. La storia, i fondamenti, i modelli,* Co Dispensa del corso EDUCatt, 2012.

– Possible integration with:

A.S. Gurman-D.P. Kniskern, *Manuale di terapia della famiglia,* Bollati Boringhieri, Turin, 2003.

A book at students' choice for each of the three subject areas specified below (here is a list of some textbooks by way of example)

AREA 1 – The authors:

I. Boszormenyi Nagy-G.M. Spark, *Lealtà invisibili. La reciprocità nella terapia familiare intergenerazionale,* Astrolabio, Rome, 1988.

V. Cigoli, *Intrecci Familiari,* Raffaello Cortina, Milan, 1998.

M. Selvini Palazzoli-S. Cirillo-M. Selvini-A.M. Sorrentino, *I giochi psicotici nella famiglia,* Raffaello Cortina, Milan, 1988.

P. Watzlawick-D. Jackson-J. Beavin, *La pragmatica della comunicazione umana*, Astrolabio, Roma, 1971.

AREA 2 – The “Relational Symbolic” model and tools:

V. Cigoli, *Il viaggio iniziatico. Clinica dei corpi familiari,* Franco Angeli, Milan, 2012.

V. Cigoli-G. Tamanza, *L’Intervista clinica generazionale,* Raffaello Cortina, Milan, 2009.

M.L. Gennari-G. Tamanza, *Il disegno congiunto della famiglia,* Franco Angeli, Milan, 2012.

G. Tamanza, *Interventi clinici con la coppia in separazione*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2017.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course includes both *theoretical lectures* by the lecturer, and *classroom practice* with students. The theoretical lectures will examine the “relationship” as intervention subject and research area as well as the main models of clinical intervention for couples and families in various contexts. Classroom practice with students will focus on the analysis of clinical cases, novels and movies/tv series, which may also include the co-presence of other teachers.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam will consist of an *oral* exam regarding presentation and discussion of topics discussed in the reading list.

Students will be assessed on their ability to develop a critical approach to the course content rather than a merely mnemonic one, the relevance and completeness of the answers, the appropriate use of specific terminolgy, structured arguments and consistent discourse, the ability to identify conceptual connections and open questions.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students should have basic knowledge of Clinical Psychology.

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.