# Legal Psychology

## Prof. Miriam Parise

1. ***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***
2. The course aims to provide students with knowledge and experience of the interventions characterising the psychologist's presence in judicial civil and criminal matters, with particular attention to differences and borderline areas between the disciplines of law and psychology.

The aim of the course is to stimulate students’ thought on both the topics of the relationship between different sciences and on the differences in methods and objectives found in them, and in the daily operativeness by which psychology becomes a discipline applied to the world of justice, which has precise norms and procedures to be respected and fields of active cooperation among the operators,particular attention will be paid to – for every theme analysed – the method through which the psychologist is asked to intervene in strict collaboration with workers in the legal system (lawyers and judges).

The hypothesis guiding this consideration is that the legal context can act as a useful framework for clinical psychological intervention aimed at enhancing awareness of the subjects involved, regain and develop interpersonal resources, caring for emotional ties in both family and professional relationships between workers involved, and finally, recovering and promoting family and social wellbeing.

At the end of the course students:

- will be able to understand logic driving the formulation of legislation regulating social co-habitation and, in particular, certain laws representing the framework of the work of psychologists within civil and penal environments;

- will understand theoretical and procedural references of workers within the legal system with whom psychologists work;

- will experience some of the main contexts of psycho-legal work in which they may operate in the future, via the intervention of selected figures;

* they will learn the margins of professional autonomy in psychological interventions, in particular when requested by a judge;
* they will experience some of the typical situations presented in class, in which to apply the methodologies learned.

***COURSE CONTENT***

*Unit 1: Evolution of the relationship between the legal and psychological fields*

* History of psychological intervention in the legal field.
* Differences and similarities between the legal and psychological fields in theoretical and applicative terms.
* Psychology and free will: the topics of freedom and responsibility.

*Unit 2: The specificities of psychological work in the legal field*

* Psychologist's counselling of the judge: areas of competence and contexts.
* Family and Court: the dimensions of evaluation, judgment, support.
* Differences in the psychological clinical intervention between forced and spontaneous requests for consultation/therapy.

*Unit 3: Psychological intervention in the context of separation and divorce*

* Stakeholders in the legal field (judge, lawyer) and legal rule.
* Forms of help and damage control within the legal and psychological fields: the Court Appointed Expert and parenting coordination.
* The protection of minors and the exercise of parental care.
* The evaluation of parenting skills: criteria, methods and tools.

*Unit 4: Violence in couples and families from a psychological and legal point of view*

* Different forms of violence
* The phenomenon of *stalking.*
* Protective measures in cases of abuse within the family.

*Unit 5: Psychological interventions for the benefit of minors*

* Tools for protecting and overseeing the bonds between parents and children: the Neutral Space.
* The need to protect and psychologically support child victims or perpetrators of crime, or in cases of development risk.
* The logic of rehabilitation and alternative options to prison.

*Unit 6: Legal regulations and psychological intervention in the criminal field*

* Criminal proceedings for adults and the protagonists (e.g. lawyer, judge).
* The request for a psychologist's evaluation in the criminal field Waiting for justice and a sense of punishment. The alternatives to prison for adult offenders. Psychological interventions within prison.

*Unit 7: Family-related aspects and legal implications in contexts of addiction*

* The problems related to alcohol addiction.
* Problems in gambling addictions.

***READING LIST***

1. A. Salvini-A. Ravasio-T.da Ros, *Psicologia clinica giuridica,* Giunti, Florence, 2008 (chaps. 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 15).
2. M.Gennari-M. Mombelli-L. Pappalardo-G. Tamanza-L. Tonellato, *La consulenza tecnica familiare nei procedimenti di separazione e divorzio,* Franco Angeli, Milan, 2014.
3. G. Zara, *La psicologia criminale minorile,* Carocci, Rome, 2012 (chaps. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

4. The *legislation to be studied* will be available on the Blackboard platform as well as in paper form from the Photocopying Office.

The *material used during the course* will be available on the Blackboard platform.

Further reading references will be communicated in class.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will consist of:

– periods of lectures in the lecture room;

– periods of meeting and talks by experts in both the field of legal training and the psycho-social field;

* – discussion of symbolic cases in the civil and penal areas and representation of typical situations through role playing;

– presentation, edited by a sub-group of students who attend the course, of in-depth study of the legislation in force regarding the topics covered during the course;

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be able to prepare for the exam in two ways: a) by studying the texts indicated in points 1-2-3-4 of the Reading List as well as the slides presented in the different course lectures; b) by studying the texts indicated in points 1-2-3-4 of the Reading List as well as one book chosen from those indicated in the list that will be published on the lecturer's Blackboard page from September. The exam consists of a written test, followed by an integrated in-depth oral test. The written test will be in the form of a questionnaire containing 30 multiple-choice questions and on the content of the reading material (points 1-2-3-4); if the total of correct answers is at least 18/30 students may sit the oral test. In the oral test students will be assessed on: 1) the accuracy of psycho-legal language; 2) the ability to address topics, showing an understanding of both the main elements of the legal context as well as clinical tools for each topic area; 3) the ability to establish connections analogies and differences between topics. The final mark will be the average of the two marks of the written test and oral test.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course, however students have already acquired good critical skills related to tools for psychological assessment and clinical intervention so a sto be able to apply them to the psycho-legal ambit.

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.