# Specialist Module with Workshop: Child Witnesses

## Prof. Rossella Procaccia

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

The course aims to help students achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. With reference to knowledge and understanding, it seeks to:
   1. Deepen the objectives, contexts and methodological problems of listening to minors in the legal field
   2. Explore the main *theories* around a child's testimony
   3. Learn the main *techniques* for interviewing minors developed at an international level
2. With reference to the application of knowledge and understanding, the seminar aims to:
3. Understand, through *direct experience*, how interviews with minors are carried out in the context of Italian justice, both by the Public Prosecutor's Office and by the Police Headquarters
4. Reflect on the emotional aspects that concern all the actors involved (the child, the helper, the judge, etc.)
5. With reference to autonomy of judgment, the course aims to:
   1. Critically analyse interviewing techniques with children in the event of abuse
   2. Offer reflection on one's own emotional journey
6. With reference to communication skills, the course aims to:
   1. Provide students with the technical language of the psychology of testimony

***COURSE CONTENT***

The workshop will analyse the main techniques for interviews and hearings used at international level. Considerable space will be dedicated to analysing the various stages that take place in the course of an interview with a child witness. There will be presentation and discussion of the various strategies used to facilitate communication with the child, partly through the use of external aids such as play and drawing. The course will also examine how different kinds of questions (open questions, closed, leading, misleading questions and so on) can influence how a child relates the event he has experienced. It will also look at the theme of memory in relation to trauma and witnesses. Lastly, time will be spent recognising and managing the emotions of professionals when faced with a child who is the victim of maltreatment or abuse.

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

1. Analysis of the legislation:

* Legislation on listening to minors
* Guidelines on listening
* Interview techniques

1. The phases of the interview:

* Building the relationship
* The free story
* The questionnaire
* Closing the interview

1. The use of external aids:

* Game
* Drawing
* Anatomical dolls

1. Auditioning special needs children:

* Auditioning very young children
* Auditioning minors with mental disabilities

1. The assessment of a witness's credibility:

* The CBCA (Criteria-Based Content Analysis)

***READING LIST***

Melita Cavallo (2012), *Le mille facce dell’ascolto del minore*, Armando editore (ONLY part 3 from page 233 to page 310)

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course includes theoretical insights through frontal lectures, practical activities such as role-playing, group discussions, small group and individual work, and the presentation of videos and reading of examples.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

An oral exam which will analyse and discuss an essay that students must produce at the end of the course, focused on the analysis of one of the interviews analysed during the module, with specific attention to the conducting technique and emotional aspects, and/or the exploration of a theoretical topic addressed in the course.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students must have a good knowledge of the basic concepts of the main reference theories of psychology of trauma and traumatic relationships.

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.