

Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	Social Work methodology and organisation
Course Code	51126
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	GSPS-05/A
Language	German; Italian
Degree Course	Bachelor in Social Work
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	
Lecturers	Prof. Dr. Urban Nothdurfter, Urban.Nothdurfter2@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/17145 dr. Maria Chiara Pedroni, MariaChiara.Pedroni@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/48833 Dr. Elisabeth Berger, elisabeth.berger@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/17921
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	First semester
Course Year/s	2
CP	10
Teaching Hours	48
Lab Hours	20
Individual Study Hours	182
Planned Office Hours	30
Contents Summary	The course combines an introduction to social work methods with an overview of the fields of social work practice and issues relating to its organisation.

	The module and laboratory on social work methods combine a general introduction to the significance of methods in social work with an overview of methodological approaches, as well as the fundamental principles and stages of support planning. Particular attention is paid to participatory approaches to the planning, implementation, documentation, and evaluation of support interventions. These topics are deepened in the laboratory through a practice-oriented approach and are illustrated and discussed using a range of case studies from different fields of practice. The course also provides a practice-oriented introduction to various social work tools and to the fundamentals of conducting professional interviews. The module on fields of practice and the organisation of social work provides an overview of different fields of social work practice and how they are structured and organised in the local context, in both the public and private sectors. It also introduces key concepts from the sociology of organisations and examines questions concerning the organisation of social services and their significance from a social policy perspective.
Course Topics	The integrated course provides foundational knowledge of social work methods, fields of practice, and organisation, combining theoretical foundations with learning oriented towards professional practice. Students deepen their understanding of methodological approaches and the main stages of the helping process and experiment with relevant methods, tools, and techniques within a participatory laboratory. At the same time, they acquire systematic knowledge of the main fields of practice, organisational forms, and social service providers, as well as the institutional, organisational, and policy conditions that define the context of professional practice.
Keywords	Social work methods; support planning; fields of practice; organisation.
Recommended Prerequisites	
Propaedeutic Courses	
Teaching Format	Lecture, discussions, group work
Mandatory Attendance	In accordance with the regulation
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning	The course provides foundational knowledge of social work methods, fields of practice, and organisational forms. Students

Outcomes	develop an understanding of the significance of methodologically guided professional practice, become familiar with key approaches, tools, and stages of support planning, and engage with participatory forms of planning, implementation, documentation, and evaluation of support interventions. They also develop a basic understanding of the organisational and policy frameworks governing social services in the public and private sectors. Knowledge and understanding Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to: • explain the importance of methods for professional social work practice; • describe key methodological approaches, fundamental principles, and stages of support planning; • identify and explain fundamental social work tools and principles of professional interviewing; • distinguish between different fields of social work practice and identify their respective tasks and target groups; • describe the main organisational forms of social services in the public and private welfare sectors; • explain key concepts from the sociology of organisations and assess their relevance to social work and social policy. Applying knowledge and understanding Students will be able to: • apply methodological approaches and tools to simple case examples from different fields of practice; • analyse and design support processes while taking into account the individual stages of support planning; • incorporate participatory approaches into the planning, implementation, documentation, and evaluation of support interventions; • apply fundamental professional interviewing techniques in practical exercises; • take organisational and institutional frameworks into account when analysing social work practice situations; • select and justify appropriate approaches for specific case situations. Making judgements Students will be able to: • assess the appropriateness of methodological approaches for different situations, target groups, and fields of practice;
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	- critically reflect on the opportunities and limitations of different tools and support interventions; - assess the importance of participation, self-determination, and professional responsibility in helping processes; - critically analyse organisational frameworks and their effects on professional practice; - situate social services and their organisational forms within their broader social policy contexts; - justify and critically reflect on their own professional decisions in a comprehensible manner. Communication skills Students will be able to: - use key disciplinary concepts and methodological considerations clearly and appropriately; - present case analyses and proposed courses of action in a structured manner, both orally and in writing; - participate constructively in professional discussions and group work; - recognise the different perspectives of service users, professionals, and organisations and incorporate them into discussions; - conduct professional interviews in a respectful and service-user-oriented manner; - present and justify jointly developed results clearly and comprehensibly. Learning skills Students will be able to: - critically reflect on their own methodological practice and learning process; - receive feedback and use it to further develop their professional and communication skills; - independently consult relevant specialist literature and other sources of information; - connect theoretical content with practical cases and experiences; - identify gaps in their knowledge and skills and develop appropriate strategies to address them.
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	

Assessment	Assessment is based on group work or written assignments in all three modules, as well as an integrated written and oral exam. The group work and written assignments are designed to apply and deepen the content covered in the course and account for a total of 50% of the final grade (30% for the laboratory and 20% for the lectures, 10% for each). The written exam (30%) assesses students' knowledge and understanding of the key theoretical, methodological, and organisational content of the course, as well as their ability to apply this knowledge to specific questions and/or case examples. The oral exam (20%) involves an in-depth discussion of selected topics and assesses, in particular, students' ability to establish connections between relevant concepts and issues, reflect critically on them, and present well-reasoned arguments. All components of the examination must be passed individually.
Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation is based on the achievement of the stated learning outcomes. It takes into account subject-specific knowledge, the ability to apply what has been learned to concrete practice situations, critical reflection skills, and the quality of written and oral presentation.
Required Readings	see module descriptions
Supplementary Readings	
Further Information	
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	No poverty, Good health and well-being, Peace, justice and strong institutions, Reduced inequalities, Gender equality

Course Module

Course Constituent Title	Methods and techniques of Social Work
Course Code	51126A
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	GSPS-05/A
Language	Italian
Lecturers	dr. Maria Chiara Pedroni, MariaChiara.Pedroni@unibz.it

	https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/48833
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	First semester
CP	3
Responsible Lecturer	
Teaching Hours	18
Lab Hours	0
Individual Study Hours	57
Planned Office Hours	9
Contents Summary	The module aims to provide students with the fundamental methodological principles of social work. By the end of the course, participants should be familiar with the principles and theoretical foundations of the discipline, as well as the various stages of the helping process, from the initial contact with services through to the conclusion of the intervention.
Course Topics	This module aims to provide students with the fundamental methodological elements of social work. By the end of the course, participants should be familiar with the principles and theoretical foundations of the discipline, as well as the various stages of the helping process, from when people first access services through to the conclusion of the intervention. Topics covered: - Key considerations for reflecting on methodology in social work - Principles and values of social work - The stages of the helping process: access to services, initial assessment, the intervention plan, closure and the final evaluation of the intervention.
Teaching Format	Lectures
Required Readings	Fargion, S. (2013) Il metodo nel servizio sociale, Carocci, Roma.
Supplementary Readings	Additional bibliographic references will be indicated over the course.

Course Module

Course Constituent Title	Methods and techniques of Social Work (LAB)
Course Code	51126B
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	GSPS-05/A
Language	German
Lecturers	Dr. Elisabeth Berger, elisabeth.berger@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/17921
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	First semester
CP	2
Responsible Lecturer	
Teaching Hours	0
Lab Hours	20
Individual Study Hours	30
Planned Office Hours	6
Contents Summary	The laboratory aims to deepen the content covered in the lecture on Methods and Techniques of Social Work. Building on the syllabus for the 'Methods and Techniques of Social Work' lecture and the theoretical background knowledge of social work covered to date, this workshop aims to explore in greater depth the methodological approaches, tools and techniques used within a participatory support process in professional social work, and to develop these collaboratively through practice-oriented content.
Course Topics	Further exploration of the topics covered in 'Methods and Techniques of Social Work', in particular: - The help process in professional social work: opportunities and limits; - Professional assessment in social work in voluntary and compulsory contexts: the example of psychosocial assessment in child protection and family support; - Tools of professional social work (interviews, home visits, documentation, networking, etc.); - Interview techniques in professional social work;

	- professional writing: the basics;
Teaching Format	Lab activities: brief theoretical introductions, working through practical examples, discussions, group work, role-plays;
Required Readings	Fargion, S., 2013, Il metodo del servizio sociale. Analisi dei casi e ricerche, Carocci, Roma.
Supplementary Readings	Texts made available on Ole;

Course Module

Course Constituent Title	Fields and organisation of Social Work practice
Course Code	51126C
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	GSPS-05/A
Language	German
Lecturers	Prof. Dr. Urban Nothdurfter, Urban.Nothdurfter2@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/17145
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	First semester
CP	5
Responsible Lecturer	
Teaching Hours	30
Lab Hours	0
Individual Study Hours	95
Planned Office Hours	15
Contents Summary	The module provides a systematic overview of key areas of practice, institutional contexts, and organisational forms of social work. It addresses different fields of practice, their respective target groups, tasks, professional roles, and methodological characteristics. Particular attention is paid to how these fields are structured and organised in the local context and to the responsibilities assumed by public, private, and civil society organisations.

	A further focus is the institutional and organisational context of professional practice. Students are introduced to key concepts and approaches from the sociology of organisations and examine organisational structures, decision-making processes, divisions of labour, cooperation, professional discretion, and the relationships between organisations and their environments. The module also considers cooperation between different services and professional groups, as well as the coordination and networking of support services. The organisation of social services is also examined within its broader societal and social policy context. The module explores how legal frameworks, social policy objectives, funding arrangements, and changes in the welfare state shape social services and influence professionals' scope for action. In this way, students learn not only to describe fields of social work practice and social work organisations but also to critically analyse their structures, functions, and development.
Course Topics	Fields of social work practice Provider organisations Organisation of social services Framework conditions for professional practice Local welfare system
Teaching Format	Lectures, guest lectures, discussions, group work
Required Readings	• Graßhoff, G., Renker, A., & Schröer, W. (2018). <i>Soziale Arbeit: Eine elementare Einführung</i>. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. • Schnurr, S. (2025). Organisationen. In <i>Soziologische Basics: Eine Einführung für pädagogische und soziale Berufe</i> (pp. 279-287). Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. • Farrenberg, D., & Schulz, M. (2020). <i>Handlungsfelder Sozialer Arbeit: Eine systematisierende Einführung</i>. Beltz Juventa.
Supplementary Readings	• van Rießen, A., & Bleck, C. (Eds.). (2022). <i>Handlungsfelder und Adressierungen der Sozialen Arbeit</i>. Kohlhammer Verlag. • Mund, P. (2019). <i>Grundkurs Organisation(en) in der Sozialen Arbeit</i>. utb GmbH. • Gesmann, S., & Merchel, J. (2019). <i>Systemisches</i>

	<i>Management in Organisationen der Sozialen Arbeit: Handbuch für Studium und Praxis.</i> Carl-Auer Verlag. • Hughes, M., & Wearing, M. (2022). <i>Organisations and management in social work: Everyday action for change.</i> SAGE Publications Ltd. • Campanini, A. (2016). <i>Gli ambiti di intervento del servizio sociale.</i> Roma: Carocci. • Rossi, P. (2014). <i>L'organizzazione dei servizi socioassistenziali. Istituzioni, professionisti e assetti di regolazione.</i> Roma. Carocci. • Rossi, P. (2018). <i>L'innovazione organizzativa. Forme, contesti e implicazioni sociali.</i> Roma: Carocci. More detailed information, as well as references to additional book chapters and academic articles, will be provided in writing at the beginning of the course. Additional literature will be made available on the learning platform.
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