Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	Life cycle psychology
Course Code	51129
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	PSIC-02/A
Language	Italian; English; German
Degree Course	Bachelor in Social Work
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	
Lecturers	Prof. Livia Taverna, Livia.Taverna@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/4202 Dr. Yasmine Soraya Ortler, yasmine.ortler@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/47464
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	Second semester
Course Year/s	2
CP	12
Teaching Hours	60
Lab Hours	20
Individual Study Hours	220
Planned Office Hours	36
Contents Summary	The course analyzes psychological development across the life cycle, from childhood and adolescence to adulthood and old age. The first part presents the main theoretical models and the cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and identity changes that characterize childhood and adolescence, considering the role of family, educational, and social contexts. The workshop explores social workers' professional observation of parenting skills, focusing

	on parents' ability to recognize developmental needs and provide care, protection, and educational support. The final part examines continuity and change in adulthood and old age, physiological aging, frailty, autonomy, family relationships, caregiving, well-being, and quality of life.
Course Topics	The course explores the main theoretical and methodological perspectives on psychological development across the lifespan. Special attention is paid to the cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and identity changes that characterize childhood and adolescence, developmental needs, and the role of risk and protective factors in different life contexts. The course also explores parenting skills and their observation in the professional settings in which social workers operate, considering the main observation techniques, methods for documenting behavior, and potential errors in observation and interpretation processes. The final section examines the psychological changes of adulthood and old age, with reference to physiological aging, frailty, autonomy, social and family networks, caregiving, psychological well-being, and quality of life.
Keywords	Childhood and Adolescent Development, Observation of parenting skills, Aging
Recommended Prerequisites	
Propaedeutic Courses	
Teaching Format	Teaching activities include lectures, guided discussions, case studies, observation and discussion of video materials, individual exercises, and small-group activities. Active student participation is promoted through questioning, peer discussion, application of theoretical concepts to professional situations, and critical reworking of content. In the workshop, particular attention is paid to the distinction between observation and interpretation and to formulating reasoned assessments that respect the limitations of the professional role.
Mandatory Attendance	In accordance with the regulation
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of the course, students will understand the main models of psychological development in childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age, as well as cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social changes and the role of life contexts. They will also understand the dimensions of parenting skills, the purposes and

	limitations of professional observation, and the main risk and protective factors. They will be able to apply this knowledge to the analysis of individual and family situations, recognizing developmental needs, vulnerabilities, and resources. They will be able to select observation criteria and tools, collect and organize information, distinguish behavior descriptions from their interpretations, and analyze parenting skills in relation to the child's needs. They will also understand the implications of aging for autonomy, fragility, caregiving, social networks, and quality of life. Students will be able to formulate reasoned assessments, integrate diverse information sources, and communicate observations and conclusions using clear, appropriate, and respectful language. Finally, they will develop critical reflection and independent learning skills, useful for professional development.
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	
Assessment	The exam consists of a written test consisting of multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions covering all three parts of the course.
Evaluation Criteria	The final assessment, graded on a thirty-point scale, consists of three components, weighted according to the credits assigned to the different courses that make up the integrated module. The assessment for Developmental Psychology and Psychology of Ageing consists of a written examination comprising closed multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. The assessment for the Laboratory on the Observation of Parenting Competencies comprises two components: - a written assignment based on one of the cases presented and analysed during the lessons, assessed for a maximum of 21 points; - active participation in laboratory activities, discussions and group work, as well as in the analysis of video recordings and cases, assessed for a maximum of 10 points. The assessment takes into account the accuracy and completeness of the answers and the written assignment, the ability to develop a

	well-reasoned argument, the coherence of the analysis, and the appropriate use of terminology.
Required Readings	L. Barone (a cura di), *Manuale di psicologia dello sviluppo*, nuova edizione, Carocci, 2019. Whitbourne, S. K., & Whitbourne, S. B. (2025). *Adult Development and Aging: Biopsychosocial Perspectives* (8th ed.). Wiley. Bornstein, M. H. (Ed.). (2019). *Handbook of Parenting* (3rd ed.). Routledge. Oerter, R. & Montada, L. (Hrsg.) (2008). Entwicklungspsychologie (6. Auflage). Weinheim: Beltz.
Supplementary Readings	Morganti, F. (2022). *Psicologia dell'invecchiamento e qualità della vita. Salute, fragilità, demenze*. Roma: Carocci.
Further Information	
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Quality education, Good health and well-being

Course Module

Course Constituent Title	Developmental psychology in childhood and adolescence
Course Code	51129A
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	PSIC-02/A
Language	Italian
Lecturers	Prof. Livia Taverna, Livia.Taverna@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/4202
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	Second semester
CP	5
Responsible Lecturer	
Teaching Hours	30

Lab Hours	0
Individual Study Hours	95
Planned Office Hours	15
Contents Summary	The course introduces the main theoretical models and research findings concerning psychological development from childhood through adolescence. It explores cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and moral development, taking into account the interaction between individual characteristics, family relationships, and educational and social contexts. Particular attention is devoted to developmental tasks, risk and protective factors, individual differences, and conditions of vulnerability. The course also addresses the changes characteristic of adolescence, identity development, peer relationships, and the influence of digital environments. The course content is linked to the professional contexts in which social workers engage with children, adolescents, and families.
Course Topics	1. Main theories and methods of developmental psychology. 2. Cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social development in childhood and adolescence. 3. Family relationships, attachment, parenting competencies, and educational contexts. 4. The development of identity, autonomy, and social relationships during adolescence. 5. Risk and protective factors, vulnerability, and resilience. 6. Implications of developmental psychology for social work practice with children, adolescents, and families.
Teaching Format	The course is delivered online and combines synchronous and asynchronous learning activities aimed at presenting, exploring, and discussing the main theoretical content. The lessons are complemented by guided discussion, self-assessment activities related to the learning process, and small-group discussions, carried out through the interactive tools provided by the digital platform. Students' active participation is encouraged through questions, collaborative activities, peer discussion, and critical reflection on the topics covered.
Required Readings	L. Barone (a cura di), *Manuale di psicologia dello sviluppo*, nuova edizione, Carocci, 2019.

Supplementary Readings	

Course Module

Course Constituent Title	Observation of parental skills in social professions (LAB)
Course Code	51129B
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	PSIC-02/A
Language	German
Lecturers	Dr. Yasmine Soraya Ortler, yasmine.ortler@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/47464
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	Second semester
CP	2
Responsible Lecturer	
Teaching Hours	0
Lab Hours	20
Individual Study Hours	30
Planned Office Hours	6
Contents Summary	The professional observation of parenting competencies is one of the core tasks of social work practice across different areas of child and youth welfare. It provides the basis for assessing family situations, identifying resources, risk and protective factors, and support needs, as well as for planning appropriate support measures. Particular attention is paid to the extent to which parents are able to ensure the child's care, protection, healthcare, upbringing, and age-appropriate development. Professional observation requires the ability to distinguish observations from interpretations, systematically integrate information from different sources, and provide sound professional justification for assessments.
Course Topics	List of topics: - Professional observation and social work assessment of parenting competencies; - Observation, documentation, interpretation, and hypothesis formulation;

	- Developmental psychology foundations of parenting competencies (e.g. sensitivity, responsiveness, and support for emotion regulation); - Risk and protective factors, as well as family resources Social psychological aspects of perception and observation; - Observational biases; - Ethical principles of professional observation.
Teaching Format	Practical exercises based on theoretical inputs; analysis of video recordings, case vignettes, and prepared case scenarios from different fields of child and youth welfare practice; documentation, analysis, and theory-informed interpretation of observations, as well as the formulation of evidence-based social work assessments and recommendations for intervention.
Required Readings	Budd, K. S. (2005). Assessing parenting capacity in a child welfare context. *Children and Youth Services Review, 27*(4), 429–444.
Supplementary Readings	• Bornstein, M. H. (Ed.). (2019). *Handbook of Parenting* (3rd ed.). Routledge. • Oerter, R. & Montada, L. (Hrsg.) (2008). Entwicklungspsychologie (6. Auflage). Weinheim: Beltz.

Course Module

Course Constituent Title	Psychology of aging
Course Code	51129C
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	PSIC-02/A
Language	English
Lecturers	Prof. Livia Taverna, Livia.Taverna@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/education/academic-staff/person/4202
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	Second semester
CP	5
Responsible Lecturer	
Teaching Hours	30

Lab Hours	0
Individual Study Hours	95
Planned Office Hours	15
Contents Summary	The course examines psychological ageing from a life-course perspective, considering the transformations that affect individuals from adulthood to old age. Changes in cognitive functioning, emotional regulation, identity, relationships, and social roles will be analysed, with particular emphasis on the heterogeneity of individual ageing trajectories. The course explores the relationship between personal resources, health conditions, living environments, and social participation, with specific attention to autonomy, frailty, and quality of life. It also addresses the psychological consequences of the transitions and losses that may characterise later life, as well as the role of family networks, caregivers, and services. The course content will be discussed in relation to social work interventions with older people and their families.
Course Topics	1. Theoretical and methodological perspectives on adult development and psychological ageing. 2. Continuities and changes in cognitive, emotional, motivational, and identity-related processes from adulthood to old age. 3. Normal ageing, individuali differences, frailty, and the main forms of cognitive impairment. 4. Autonomy, adaptation, psychological well-being, and quality of life in old age. 5. Family relationships, social networks, caregiving, and the role of living environments and services. 6. Risk and protective factors in different ageing trajectories. 7. Implications of the psychology of ageing for social work practice with older people, their families, and caregivers.
Teaching Format	The course is delivered online and combines synchronous and asynchronous learning activities aimed at presenting, exploring, and discussing the main theoretical content related to adult development and psychological ageing. The lessons are complemented by guided discussion, self-assessment activities related to the learning process, the analysis of situations relevant to social work, and small-group discussions carried out through the interactive tools provided by the digital platform. Students' active participation is encouraged through questions, collaborative

	activities, peer discussion, and critical reflection on the topics covered.
Required Readings	Whitbourne, S. K., & Whitbourne, S. B. (2025). *Adult Development and Aging: Biopsychosocial* *Perspectives* (8th ed.). Wiley.
Supplementary Readings	