

Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	Digitalization and AI in Social Work (Lab)
Course Code	51131
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	INFO-01/A
Language	English
Degree Course	Bachelor in Social Work
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	
Lecturers	Dott. Mag. Andrea Molinari, Andrea.Molinari@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/3420
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	Second semester
Course Year/s	2
CP	2
Teaching Hours	0
Lab Hours	20
Individual Study Hours	30
Planned Office Hours	6
Contents Summary	The course explores how digital transformation and artificial intelligence are reshaping social work practice, service delivery, professional communication, and relationships with clients. Students are introduced to the main technology standards, digital tools, and platforms used in social services, with particular attention to accessibility, confidentiality, data protection, and professional ethics. The course provides a non-technical introduction to artificial intelligence, machine learning, deep learning, and generative AI. Through laboratory activities and case studies, students examine how AI can support communication with clients, information management, service accessibility, and the

	design of digital interventions. Particular attention is devoted to the risks associated with digital and AI-supported social work, including privacy violations, algorithmic bias, exclusion, unequal access to technology, lack of transparency, and inappropriate reliance on automated systems. Students critically evaluate the relationship between AI, inclusion, social justice, and professional responsibility. The course concludes by examining emerging technologies and their possible future impact on social work.
Course Topics	1 – Digital Transformation of Social Work 2 – Technology Standards, tools and platforms for social work 3 – Digital Service Delivery 4 - Introduction to AI 5 - AI, machine learning, deep learning and Generative AI 6 – AI, Confidentiality & Data Protection 7 – Using AI for Digital Communication with Clients 8 – AI, inclusion & Social Justice 9 – Future Technologies in Social Work
Keywords	social work, artificial intelligence, digital services, Data Protection
Recommended Prerequisites	No previous technical or programming knowledge is required. Students should preferably have: • basic knowledge of social work principles, methods, and professional roles; • introductory knowledge of professional ethics and confidentiality; • basic understanding of social services and service-user needs; • basic digital literacy, including the use of web-based communication and collaboration tools; • willingness to critically examine the social and ethical implications of technology. Prior completion of introductory courses in social work, social policy, professional ethics, or social work methods is recommended but not essential.
Propaedeutic Courses	
Teaching Format	The course adopts an interactive and laboratory-based teaching format combining theoretical instruction with practical experimentation. Teaching activities may include: • short frontal lectures introducing the main theoretical concepts; • guided laboratory sessions using digital and generative AI tools;

	• analysis of real or simulated social work cases; • demonstrations of digital platforms and AI-supported services; • critical analysis of privacy, confidentiality, bias, and accessibility risks; Laboratory activities will use anonymised, fictional, or synthetic cases. Students should not enter identifiable or confidential client information into public or unauthorised AI systems.
Mandatory Attendance	In accordance with the regulation
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes	The course introduces the main digital technologies, platforms, and standards relevant to social services, with a specific focus on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI applications. Expected Learning Outcomes (Dublin Descriptors) • Knowledge and Understanding: Identify and explain the main digital technologies, platforms, and AI standards relevant to the social work sector. • Applying Knowledge and Understanding: Apply digital and generative AI tools to simulated social work cases in a responsible, secure, and professionally appropriate manner. Use digital tools to design clear, accessible, and inclusive communication materials for service users. • Making Judgements: Critically evaluate AI-generated outputs, identifying inaccuracies, hallucinated information, bias, lack of transparency, and potential discriminatory effects. Justify the decision to adopt, modify, or reject an AI-generated solution based on ethical considerations, professional standards, and data protection rules (GDPR). • Lifelong Learning Skills: Evaluate the suitability, benefits, and structural limitations of emerging digital and AI solutions in relation to specific, evolving social work contexts.
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	
Assessment	The evaluation will be based on a written exam (100%) with open questions about the concepts tools and techniques seen during the course.
Evaluation Criteria	• understanding of course concepts (30%) • appropriate application of course concepts to social work

	contexts (30%) • attention to confidentiality and data protection (15%) • consideration of accessibility, inclusion, and social justice (15%) • clarity of written communication; (10%)
Required Readings	1) Othelia EunKyoung Lee, Moon Sun Song, (2026), Social Work Practice and Artificial Intelligence for the Common Good Ethics, Equity, and Innovation in Human Services, Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2026, ISBN 978-1041275787 2) Rafal Olszowski, Jakub Gomulka (2027) Generative AI in the Social Sciences and Humanities Navigating Challenges and Opportunities in Research and Education, CRC Press 2027, ISBN 9781041143703 Due to the rapid and continuous evolution of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, no single academic textbook can provide sufficiently comprehensive and consistently up-to-date coverage of all the topics addressed in the course. Required learning materials will therefore be a selection of the above bibliography, selected and regularly updated by the lecturer on the OLE portal. These materials will also include lecture slides, links to authoritative online resources, relevant academic articles and institutional reports, and short excerpts from reference texts.
Supplementary Readings	
Further Information	
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Quality education, Climate action, Responsible consumption and production, Industry, innovation and infrastructure