

Course Title**SOCIOLOGY OF WELLBEING AND CHILDHOOD**

Academic Year 2025/2026

Degree Level and Programme

Master's degree in educational sciences (LM-85)

Scientific Disciplinary Sector (SSD)

GSPS-05/A (formerly SPS/07)

Year of Study

2

Total Credits

6 ECTS

Prerequisites

n.a.

Lecturers

Marxiano Melotti and Vincenzo Mini

Faculty webpages:

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Tutor

Gemma Errico

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Course Description

The course aims to provide knowledge and in-depth understanding of sociological theories related to well-being, with particular reference to childhood. The most relevant concepts and theories in the sociology of well-being and childhood will be presented, guiding students in exploring the field from both a scientific and methodological perspective.

The analytical models examined during the course will enable students to understand emerging cultural paradigms in the sociology of well-being and childhood and to interpret phenomena, policies, cultural practices, and lifestyles.

The course also includes an in-depth focus on the most innovative cultural trends within welfare society and on the relationship between well-being, childhood, and the use of cultural heritage, with reference to children's museums and educational activities in museums and archaeological sites.

Learning Objectives

The course aims to contribute to the training of educators, policymakers, consultants, and professionals working in the social, educational, and museum sectors by providing tools to understand the relationships between well-being, society, and childhood, and to analyze, design, and implement interventions, projects, policies, and best practices.

Entry Requirements

No formal prerequisites are required. Students are expected to have acquired, during their Bachelor's degree, familiarity with the basic concepts of General Sociology, Sociology of Cultural and Communication Processes, and Sociology of Education.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to acquire tools to critically and independently understand and analyze models, policies, and interventions related to individual and collective well-being, as well as the relationships among public and private stakeholders involved in welfare processes.

They are also expected to develop the ability to evaluate and design educational and heritage interpretation activities for children.

Knowledge and Understanding

Students will acquire knowledge and understanding of:

- the main research methods in the sociology of well-being and lifestyles;
- key issues related to the study of welfare society;
- cultural orientations and best practices in children's and young people's engagement with cultural heritage.

Applying Knowledge and Understanding

Students will be able to use the concepts learned to connect theoretical knowledge of the sociology of well-being and lifestyles with cultural and social processes and to propose innovative heritage engagement activities for children and young people.

Making Judgements

Students will develop the ability to reach informed personal conclusions regarding the above-mentioned activities, managing complexity and critically and independently weighing the social and ethical responsibilities connected to the application of their knowledge and judgments.

They will be able to problematize the object, characteristics, and content of the discipline and to identify the most appropriate social research methods for analyzing phenomena related to well-being and welfare.

Communication Skills

Students will develop the ability to communicate their knowledge, underlying rationale, and conclusions clearly and in depth to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. They will understand the structure, aims, language, and content of research in the sociology of well-being and welfare.

Learning Skills

By the end of the course, students will have developed independent learning skills in the educational and socio-cultural areas addressed. They will be able to understand and apply the most relevant sociological models and interpretative paradigms in the discipline.

Course Organization

The course consists of 6 thematic modules and is delivered through pre-recorded audio-video lectures, accompanied by slides and handouts available on the online platform.

Teaching is complemented by “thematic lessons” delivered synchronously and subsequently uploaded to the platform. The calendar of these lectures—an integral part of the exam syllabus—is available in the notices [“Avvisi”] section of the course. These lectures are accessible in the “Total Learning” section.

Interactive teaching is carried out through videoconferences and forum activities in the “virtual classroom.” Through the forum, students complete e-tivities, including collaborative activities designed to apply knowledge acquired during lectures to different contexts, encouraging personal reflection and critical thinking.

During the 8-week study period, students may complete two e-tivities covering different sections of the course.

Asynchronous self-assessment tests accompany the pre-recorded lectures and allow students to verify both comprehension and level of knowledge acquired for each lesson.

The total workload is approximately 150 hours:

- about 120 hours for viewing recorded lectures (6 recorded lessons for each of the 6 ECTS) and studying the handouts;
- about 30 hours of interactive teaching, including preparation and submission of e-tivities, forum participation, and completion of self-assessment tests.

Each module includes 6 recorded lessons, corresponding to approximately 20 hours per module.

Students are advised to distribute their study over 8 weeks, dedicating between 15 and 20 hours per week.

Course Contents

The course is divided into two parts.

The first part (Modules 1–3) focuses on the concept of social well-being in relation to postmodern society and explores the relationship between welfare and childhood.

The second part (Modules 4–6) examines the relationship between childhood, well-being, and cultural heritage.

Module 1 (Week 1):

Theory of Well-Being: well-being as an evolving concept. Postmodern society: definition and development. Postmodernity vs. well-being.

Module 2 (Weeks 2–3):

The market, the Welfare State, and social well-being; welfare models: the Italian case; classification of regional welfare systems.

Module 3 (Weeks 3–4):

Measuring well-being beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP): the theory of Equitable and Sustainable Well-Being (BES). Historical evolution of the debate on GDP. National Action Plan for the Child Guarantee.

Module 4 (Weeks 4–5):

Education, childhood, and well-being: the Brooklyn Children's Museum.

Module 5 (Weeks 6–7):

Beyond museums: children, well-being, and play-educational spaces.

Module 6 (Weeks 7–8):

Museums and well-being between inclusion and integration.

Assessment Methods**Syllabus**

The 6-ECTS exam requires the study of materials related to all 6 modules and participation in supplementary teaching activities (forum, e-tivities, etc.).

Written Exam (online)

The written exam consists of 30 multiple-choice questions (4 options per question). Each correct answer is awarded one point.

Oral Exam (in person)

The oral exam consists of an interview on the course topics (15–20 minutes). It assesses clarity and precision of language, ability to interact with the lecturer and other candidates, content relevance, quality of critical and conceptual elaboration, ability to formulate independent judgments, and capacity for original and interdisciplinary reflection, including awareness of social and ethical responsibilities.

Comparative abilities across historical and socio-cultural contexts are also evaluated. The exam may be taken jointly by up to 3–4 candidates, including discussion among them. Assessment remains individual.

E-tivities

Final assessment (both written and oral) takes into account participation in interactive activities and completion of e-tivities (graded 0–3 points), evaluating precision, completeness, originality, and quality of interaction.

Erasmus Students

Erasmus students are invited to contact the lecturer to agree on a personalized programme. An English version of the handout is available. The oral exam may be taken in English.

Final Thesis Assignment

Thesis assignment follows an interview (in person or via videoconference), during which the candidate proposes a topic related to the course themes.

The thesis must include field research with in-depth analysis of a specific case or a detailed comparison between cases. The work should preferably include an educational or communication project.

The proposal must include a brief abstract (topic, objectives, provisional outline) and initial bibliography. If approved, the topic and structure are defined with the supervisor.

Students are encouraged to propose research related to their local area or professional, cultural, or educational experiences. All submitted materials must be original and entirely produced by the student. Sources must be properly re-elaborated and cited. Candidates whose work does not comply with academic integrity standards will not be admitted to the final defense.