



EDUC/PSYC 353 - Education in Italy: Seminar and Practicum

Course Syllabus

Spring Semester 2025

Instructor: Natascia Petringa, PhD

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 50

3 contact hours/week practicum; 30 contact hours total

1.5 contact hours/week seminar; 20 contact hours total

Prerequisites: none

Class Meeting Days & Time: Mondays 12:30-2:00 pm (Aula 4) and practicum in schools

Office Hours: One hour before or after class. Please email the Professor to schedule an appointment.

Course Type: Seminar and Practicum

Course Fee: \$ 20.00

Course Description

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the Italian educational system, with mutual benefit and growth through dialogue and hands-on experience. This course is designed for students willing to broaden their cultural perspectives, develop a heightened sense of multicultural awareness and sensitivity, and view different communities from a comparative and unbiased standpoint.

The course has two components: one reflective (seminar) and one experiential (practicum). The weekly seminar component is designed to expose students to the structures of the Italian educational system in order to identify similarities and differences between the educational systems in Italy and the United States. Its main focus is on multicultural education. It intends to explore different pedagogical models and teaching practices amongst diverse educational systems, share their experiences, as well as examine alternative educational systems such as the rapidly growing numbers of international schools throughout Italy and abroad.

The goal of this course will be to scaffold teaching (in all subject areas) in order to meet the growing needs of multicultural students with diverse backgrounds. Through a series of in-class discussions and a school placement, students will increase their understanding of how educational systems, culture, and pedagogy influence student learning. The practicum provides an opportunity for students to improve both their teaching practices and theoretical knowledge as well as gain practical, field-specific experience. Students will work with local primary and secondary schools. Practicum placements are determined by the students' and schools' class schedules and will be decided during Week 2. Students who commit to this course should keep an open mind, be motivated to actively engage and learn, and be confident in trying techniques that can maximize the needs of diverse classrooms.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- *Identify* the similarities and differences between the Italian and US educational systems (K-12);
- *Analyze* the role and missions of alternative educational systems such as international schools in Italy in order to respond to the following questions: Who do they serve? What are the advantages and

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disadvantages of having international schools in a host country such as Italy? How do these schools do with regards to multiculturalism?

- *Recognize* the need for diverse pedagogical and teaching practices in today's classrooms.
- *Identify* the challenges associated with multicultural education in Italy and elsewhere.
- *Evaluate* and *justify* the affordances and limitations of our current school systems in terms of multicultural education.

Course Materials

Readings will be made available online to students. The books cited are also available online as PDFs.

Assessment

Class attendance	10%
Course journal entries	10%
Weekly quizzes on Moodle	10%
Midterm exam	25%
Design of a multicultural lesson plan	20%
Gallery Walk of lesson plan	5%
Group Activity	5%
Learning Log during the practicum	5%
One-on-one meetings with professor (office hours)	5%
End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations	5%

Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late).

Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional Excellent
A-	90% - 92%	
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Please note: Decimal and centesimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

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Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is an essential part of this course. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences per course without penalty, per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Class attendance encourages positive class participation. My definition of participation means active engagement in the course: being prepared for class (having carefully read the daily assignments), asking questions, responding to questions, and/or attentively listening to others.

Course journal entries (10%)

Students will be required to keep a weekly journal. The journal entries will be student responses and reflections on the weekly readings. These are not summaries of the readings. Ideally, and whenever possible, students will be encouraged to relate the topics to their own practicum experiences. Refer to the full prompt on Moodle for more information. Students will submit their journals twice during the semester (Week 5 and Week 10). Each submission is worth 5%.

Weekly quizzes on Moodle (10%)

Students will be assigned a short quiz (approx. 3-5 questions) every week on Moodle and it is not timed. There will be a combination of content, methodological, and technical questions. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The methodological questions will test skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author's argument, assessing sources etc. Whereas the technical questions will help students learn the class's policies and administrative procedures.

Midterm exam (25%)

The midterm exam will consist of a combination of open-ended questions as well as reactions to case-studies and/or short articles. There will be a full prompt on Moodle.

Submission of a lesson plan (20%)

Students will have to submit a multicultural lesson plan (in any subject area), which takes into account the cultural, linguistic and social needs of diverse students. The teacher will provide the students with a clear rubric for the lesson plan as well as assist students with the steps involved in lesson planning. Examples of lesson plans in diverse subject areas (i.e., science, language arts, social studies etc.) will be available for their perusal. This submission will occur in three stages: students will first be asked for an outline (5%); then a rough draft (5%); and for a final lesson plan (10%). There will be a full prompt on Moodle.

Gallery Walk of lesson plan (5%)

Students will present their multicultural lesson plans to their peers in the form of a *Gallery Walk*. They will be asked to design any visual format they choose to showcase their lesson plan. This may be a poster-board, video, Powerpoint, etc. There will be a full prompt on Moodle.

Group Activity (5%)

Students will be asked to design a **game** geared towards young adults (18 years +) on the differences between US and Italian schools. They will engage in a highly interactive and experiential session to showcase what they have learned from both theory and their practicum experiences. All members in the group will get the same grade. This is worth 5% of your overall grade.

Learning Log during the practicum (5%)

At the beginning of the semester, students will choose five skills on multicultural education (from a list provided by the teacher) which they intend to develop and improve upon during their practicum experience. During each practicum session, students must record the date and time, the activities they have done, and which skill(s) they have used in order to accomplish those activities.

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Halfway through the semester, students will evaluate which skills have been developed and which need to be developed further. At the end of the semester, the last weekly journal reflection will be self-evaluation as to whether these five skills were achieved or not.

One-on-one meetings with professor (office hours) (5%)

Students are expected to sign up for two slots of 10 minutes for a one-to-one meeting during my office hours. The rationale for this will be shared with the class. Getting to know your professor makes you more comfortable with that person and therefore more likely to ask for help. It might also help you to ask questions about the various assignments. In this course, 2.5% of your grade will be allocated to you for every time you visit me. This amounts to a total of 5% on your overall grade. I would suggest a fairly early visit and then an intermediate one.

Don't wait until the end of the semester!

End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations (5%)

During Special Academic Events Week, the class will present a 15-minute summary of the project experience to the Umbra community during the Community Engagement Presentations on **Thursday, April 24**. Students will receive the guidelines and presentation order after the mid-semester break. Participation in this event is MANDATORY and an integral part of the community engagement grade.

Extension & Submitting Late Work

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment except the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. The first two absences per course due to illness will be considered excused "sick days" and do not require medical documentation. To receive additional excused absences due to illness, students are required to see a local physician or request a letter from an Institute-approved doctor documenting they should be excused from class for illness.

Unexcused absences will adversely affect a student's academic performance and will result in a reduction of the student's final course grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Participation in practicum sessions is imperative to the course. Failure to attend a practicum session will be regarded as an absence.

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness include death in the immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, and medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled.

Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director, but only if a medical certification is provided.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

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Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence. Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the generation of content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism. Should the Institute become aware of a student's use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set on silent mode before the beginning of each class; earbuds and other electronic devices must be put away.

Laptop/Smartphone Policy

An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, students are asked to keep computers and phones away and use a regular notebook. There are four exceptions: 1) if you have an accommodation; 2) if you're using a tablet to take notes, 3) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer; or 4) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools.

Schedule of Topics, Readings and Assignments

Week 1 (January 20-24, 2025)

Week 1: Welcome and introduction to “Education in Italy” course

Meeting 1:

This session will be an overview of the seminar and practicum. The goals of the course, class expectations and policies will be discussed. Please check Moodle and do each weekly assignment **BEFORE** the weekly meeting. For example, the reading CES Chair of Education Systems. “Factbook Education System: Italy” (2019) (pp. 11- 18 and 38-40) will need to be done **BEFORE** our Monday January 27 class. This is how the syllabus works.

Introduction of the practicum by Umbra staff

Week 2 (January 27-31, 2025)

Week 2: The Italian education - An overview

Meeting 1:

This session will serve as an introduction to gain an overall understanding of the Italian educational system and compare it to the United States’ (K-12) system and/or to an educational system that students are most familiar with.

Reading:

CES Chair of Education Systems. “Factbook Education System: Italy” (2019). (Read only pp. 11-18 and 38-40).

Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

Week 3 (February 3-7, 2025)

Week 3: International schools in Italy and abroad

Meeting 1:

This session looks at the role and mission of international schools in Italy as it compares with the national, public system. (Students will engage in a debate about the advantages and disadvantages that international schools represent in their nation states. It will also be an opportunity for students to ask about teaching in international schools, as I have over 25 years of teaching experience in international schools.

Reading:

Hayden, Mary, and John Jeffrey Thompson. International schools: Growth and influence. Vol. 92. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2008. (Read only pp. 27-29; pp. 43-51 and pp. 82-86).

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Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

The practicum portion begins this week. Either Manuel or Margherita will send you a separate email with your class matchings beforehand. For the initial visit to your assigned classes you will be accompanied by either Manuel or Margherita.

**Week 4
(February 10-14, 2025)**

Week 4: Multiculturalism in Italian education

Meeting 1:

In this session, students will explore the development of a culturally sensitive pedagogy in light of today's globalization. There are many perspectives about what multicultural education is and whose role it is to teach it. Technologies can provide good support, however such an approach involves going beyond the school infrastructure towards a more community-based approach. This is largely because multiculturalism affects our daily lives beyond the confines of our school walls.

Readings:

Barzanò, Giovanna, Paola Cortiana, Ian Jamison, Maria Lissoni, and Lorenzo Raffio. "New means and new meanings for multicultural education in a global-Italian context." *Multicultural Education Review* 9, no. 3 (2017): 145-158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2017.1346554>

Torres, Carlos Alberto, and Massimiliano Tarozzi. "Multiculturalism in the world system: Towards a social justice model of inter/multicultural education." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 18, no. 1 (2020): 7-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2019.1690729>

Optional Reading:

Gay, Geneva. "The what, why, and how of culturally responsive teaching: International mandates, challenges, and opportunities." *Multicultural Education Review* 7, no. 3 (2015): 123-139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2015.1072079>

Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

**Week 5
(February 17-21, 2025)**

Week 5: Teacher attitudes towards multicultural education

Meeting 1:

This session will examine teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education and self-efficacy for inclusive education. In those countries that attract immigrants such as Italy, Finland, Turkey, Spain, Sweden etc., teachers need to adopt skills that will "best" meet the needs of their immigrant students, as well as those of native Italians. However, this largely depends on their attitudes and perceptions towards multicultural education.

Readings:

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Acquah, Emmanuel O., Madhavi Tandon, and Sonia Lempinen. "Teacher diversity awareness in the context of changing demographics." *European Educational Research Journal* 15, no. 2 (2016): 218-235.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904115611676>

Buzzai, Caterina, Alessia Passanisi, Melina Aparici Aznar, and Ugo Pace. "The antecedents of teaching styles in multicultural classrooms: Teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive practices and attitudes towards multicultural education." *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 38, no. 3 (2023): 378-393.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2022.2107679>

Assignments:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

First Course Journal submission

**Week 6
(February 24-28, 2025)**

Week 6: Midterm Week

Meeting 1: Midterm (in class)

Students will be expected to integrate material from their assigned readings in their midterm exam. The exam questions will be diverse (in the form of case studies; open-ended questions; and/or short answers etc.). A review sheet will be provided on Moodle.

Practicum: Hand in your hours log to Manuel (mbarbato@umbra.org) by **Thursday, February 27 at 12pm**

Mid-Semester Break: March 3-7, 2025

**Week 7
(March 10-14, 2025)**

Week 7: Effects of migration on multicultural education in Italy

Meeting 1:

This session will focus on equal educational opportunities for immigrant students in Italian schools. It will analyze whether the existing infrastructures and support systems in place truly meet the needs of "All" students. Students will examine the educational methodologies and strategies adopted by teachers to integrate migrant and refugee students in Italian schools.

Readings:

Barban, Nicola, and Michael J. White. "Immigrants' children's transition to secondary school in Italy." *International Migration Review* 45, no. 3 (2011): 702-726.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2011.00863.x>

Biasutti, Michele, Eleonora Concina, and Sara Frate. "Working in the classroom with migrant and refugee students: The practices and needs of Italian primary and middle school teachers." *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 28, no. 1 (2020): 113-129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2019.1611626>

Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

**Week 8
(March 17-21, 2025)**

Week 8: Multiculturalism in Italian schools: How has Italy been doing?

Meeting 1:

This session will address the status of multiculturalism in Italian schools. It will analyze the performance of immigrant students as well as the reasons relating to their often low performance. This session will focus on the current challenges and constraints.

Readings:

Azzolini, Davide, and Carlo Barone. "Do they progress or do they lag behind? Educational attainment of immigrants' children in Italy: The role played by generational status, country of origin and social class." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 31 (2013): 82-96. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2012.11.002>

Azzolini, Davide, Philipp Schnell, and John RB Palmer. "Educational achievement gaps between immigrant and native students in two "new" immigration countries: Italy and Spain in comparison." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 643, no. 1 (2012): 46-77. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23316160>

Triventi, Moris, Eleonora Vlach, and Elisa Pini. "Understanding why immigrant children underperform: evidence from Italian compulsory education." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48, no. 10 (2022): 2324-2346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2021.1935656>

Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

**Week 9
(March 24-28, 2025)**

Week 9: Teacher training: Case study of a study abroad program

Meeting 1:

During this session, students will look at the complexities of training preservice and in-service teachers about intercultural development within a study abroad program. Students will examine study abroad programs as a case study. This research emphasizes the need for teachers to integrate more cross-cultural experiences into their existing teacher preparation programs.

Readings:

Cherng, Hua-Yu Sebastian, and Laura A. Davis. "Multicultural matters: An investigation of key assumptions of multicultural education reform in teacher education." *Journal of Teacher Education* 70, no. 3 (2019): 219-236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224871177428884>

Marx, Helen, and David M. Moss. "Please mind the culture gap: Intercultural development during a teacher education study abroad program." *Journal of Teacher Education* 62, no. 1 (2011): 35-47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224871103819>

Papadopoulou, Konstantina, Nektaria Palaiologou, and Zoe Karanikola. "Insights into teachers' intercultural and global competence within multicultural educational settings." *Education Sciences* 12, no. 8 (2022): 502 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12080502>

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Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

Week 10
(March 31-April 4, 2025)

Week 10: Lesson planning for multicultural classes

Meeting 1:

During this session, students will be asked to design a multicultural lesson plan (in their subject area). In addition to the traditional steps involved in lesson planning, specific accommodations accompanied by clear justifications will need to be made explicit highlighting the multicultural component of the lesson plan. Students will be provided with samples of lesson plans for their perusal.

Readings:

McDonald, Jason K., and Richard Edward West. "Design for learning: Principles, processes, and praxis." (2021). https://edtechbooks.org/id/designing_for_diverse_learners

Tunney, Jessica, and Amy Hanreddy. "Inclusive teaching requires inclusive lesson planning." In *Minding the Marginalized Students Through Inclusion, Justice, and Hope: Daring to Transform Educational Inequities*, pp. 111-134. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-363620210000016007>

For use as reference only:

Forghani-Arani, Neda, Lucie Cerna, and Meredith Bannon. "The lives of teachers in diverse classrooms." OECD Education Working Papers No. 198. (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1787/8c26fee5-en>

Gay, Geneva, and Tyrone C. Howard. "Multicultural teacher education for the 21st century." *The Teacher Educator* 36, no. 1 (2000): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730009555246>

Houston, Debby, and Marty Beech. *Designing lessons for the diverse classroom: A handbook for teachers*. Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools and Community Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, 2002. <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070084-4dclessn.pdf>

Assignments:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

Second Course Journal submission

Week 11
(April 7-11, 2025)

Week 11: Gallery Walk of student lesson plans

Meeting 1:

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Students will prepare a visual of their multicultural lesson plans in any format of their choice provided that they respect the criteria indicated on the rubric provided by the teacher. This session will be a Gallery Walk and your teacher will explain the process to you in detail.

Week 12
(April 14-18, 2025)

Week 12: Preparation for the Community Engagement presentation

Meeting 1:

This class will be dedicated to the preparation of the Community Engagement presentation. The students will work on a Powerpoint to showcase the highlights of their practicum experiences in the Italian schools.

Week 13: Group Activity on US-vs-Italian Schools
Special Academic Events Week
(April 21-25, 2025)

April 21 Easter Monday. No classes.

Meeting 1 (Wednesday, April 23): **An offered takeaway lunch in class today.**

This session will be a wrap up of the course. Students will be asked to design a **game** geared towards young adults (18 years +) on the differences between US and Italian schools. They will engage in a highly interactive and experiential session to showcase what they have learned from both theory and their practicum experiences about the educational system in Italy. All members in the group will get the same grade. This is worth 5% of your overall grade.

Practicum: Hand in your hours log to Manuel (CE Office, Umbra 1st floor) by Thursday, April 24

Thursday, April 24: End of the Semester Community Engagement Presentations - Special Academic Events (time and place to be announced)

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