

# COURSE DETAIL

## SEMIOTICS OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGIES

**Country**

Italy

**Host Institution**

University of Bologna

**Program(s)**

University of Bologna

**UCEAP Course Level**

Upper Division

**UCEAP Subject Area(s)**

Psychology

**UCEAP Course Number**

168

**UCEAP Course Suffix****UCEAP Official Title**

SEMIOTICS OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGIES

**UCEAP Transcript Title**

SEMIOTICS OF PSYCH

**UCEAP Quarter Units**

6.00

**UCEAP Semester Units**

4.00

## **Course Description**

This course is part of the Laurea Magistrale degree program and is intended for advanced level students. Enrollment is by permission of the instructor. The aim of the course is to develop semiotic skills for understanding the perceptual, affective, and cognitive dimensions of psychopathologies, as well as the discourses built to describe and understand them. The course provides a dual focus: first, it offers an overview of psychopathological literature from a philosophical perspective, reinterpreted through semiotic theories. Second, it equips students with tools to analyze the relationship between patients' expressive forms (including narratives, poetry, speech, and artistic productions), their lived experiences, and the surrounding sociocultural context.

The course of this year (Fall 2025) begins with a general overview of the role of semiotics in understanding psychopathology, emphasizing how psychiatric and psychological knowledge is embedded within a broader cultural network. This network selects and organizes notions such as normality and abnormality, reason and madness, sense and nonsense, through biopolitical mechanisms and discursive practices. Special attention is devoted to the cultural dimension in the construction of concepts related to mental illness and in the emergence of specific psychopathological conditions. The theoretical frameworks introduced in the first part of the course are applied to a range of diagnostic constructs, including Borderline Personality Disorder, depression, Narcissistic Personality Disorder, psychopathy, Dissociative Identity Disorder, and Autism Spectrum Disorder. These cases serve to test the analytical potential of semiotic theory and its relevance for contemporary mental health discourse.

In the second part of the course, the focus shifts to schizophrenia, one of the most enigmatic and debated psychiatric conditions. This topic is explored through a range of interdisciplinary perspectives that contribute to a richer understanding of psychopathology. Cognitive and phenomenological approaches are examined for their capacity to illuminate the lived experience of mental illness, and are critically integrated with semiotic analysis, as well as with insights from anthropology and the philosophy of

mind. The aim is to develop comprehensive and context-sensitive frameworks for interpreting the symbolic, narrative, and experiential dimensions of schizophrenia.

Key topics in this section include:

- a) the cultural dimension of schizophrenia and its representations across different media;
- b) the historical process of constructing and categorizing the disorder;
- c) communicative and linguistic features associated with the condition;
- d) narrative structures shaping patients' experiences and the role of psychotherapy;
- e) the disruption of experiential meaning and a semiotic account of delusion formation.

### **Language(s) of Instruction**

English

### **Host Institution Course Number**

B8834

### **Host Institution Course Title**

SEMIOTICS OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGIES (1) (LM)

### **Host Institution Course Details**

<https://www.unibo.it/en/study/course-units-transferable-skills-moocs/course-uni...>

### **Host Institution Campus**

BOLOGNA

### **Host Institution Faculty**

### **Host Institution Degree**

LM in SEMIOTICS

### **Host Institution Department**

PHILOSOPHY

**Course Last Reviewed**

2025-2026

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