



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

| Course unit (module) title | Code |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Understanding and Preventing Suicide | |

| Academic staff | Core academic unit(s) |
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| Coordinating: Dr. Eglė Mažulytė-Rašytinė Other: | Suicide Research Centre, Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University |

| Study cycle | Type of the course unit |
|--|-------------------------|
| Bachelor studies, Master studies, Doctoral studies | Optional |

| Mode of delivery | Semester or period when it is delivered | Language of instruction |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Lectures and seminars | Autumn, Spring | English |

| Requisites | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Prerequisites: Introduction to Psychology | Co-requisites (if relevant): - |

| Number of ECTS credits allocated | Student's workload (total) | Contact hours | Individual work |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 5 ECTS | 135 | 32 | 103 |

| Purpose of the course unit | | |
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| The course focuses on the introduction and basic knowledge of suicidology. The goal is to acquire knowledge about theories of suicidology, principles and means of suicide prevention, modern suicide risk assessment and intervention methods, principles of postvention, and the relationship between suicidal behaviour and other biopsychosocial factors. As a result of the course, students will be familiar with basic support methods and principles in a suicidal crisis. After completion of the course, students will be able to integrate this knowledge into their professional and personal life. | | |
| Learning outcomes of the course unit | Teaching and learning methods | Assessment methods |
| After completing the course, students will understand the main theories of suicidology and the modern understanding of suicidal behaviour. | Lectures, literature readings, discussions in the seminars, analysis of case vignettes, and presentation preparation. | Written exam, presentation in the seminar. |
| After completing the course, students will understand the main principles of suicide crisis intervention, prevention and postvention. | Lectures, literature readings, discussions in the seminars, analysis of case vignettes, and presentation preparation. | Written exam, presentation in the seminar. |
| After completing this course, students will be able to critically discuss and present a comprehensive understanding of suicidal behaviour and its prevention and will understand the application of this knowledge in their professional and personal life. | Lectures, literature readings, discussions in the seminars, analysis of case vignettes, and presentation preparation. | Written exam, presentation in the seminar. |

| Content | Contact hours | | | | | | | Individual work: time and assignments | |
|--|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| | Lectures | Tutorials | Seminars | Workshops | Laboratory work | Internship | Contact hours, total | Individual work | Tasks for individual work |
| 1. Introduction: the concept of suicide. History, philosophy of the concept of suicide. The concept of suicide in other disciplines. Concept of suicide, classification of suicidal behaviour, connections with other self-destructive behaviour. | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 8 | Readings and activities selected and recommended by the course lector. Preparation of a presentation on a chosen topic. |
| 2. Theories of Suicidology. The concept of suicide in different paradigms of psychology. | 4 | | 2 | | | | 6 | 32 | Readings and activities selected and recommended by the course lector. |
| 3. Risk factors for suicide: age, gender, mental disorders, harmful alcohol consumption, etc. Protective factors for suicide. Concept of suicide as a process. The importance of sociocultural environment: different cultural contexts, cultural trauma, sociocultural risk and protective factors. Attitudes toward suicide. | 2 | | 4 | | | | 6 | 32 | Readings and activities selected and recommended by the course lector. Preparation of a presentation on a chosen topic. |
| 4. Suicide prevention: basic principles, national and community-based strategies, evidence-based suicide prevention programs. | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 8 | Readings and activities selected and recommended by the course lector. Preparation of a presentation on a chosen topic. |
| 5. Suicide intervention: risk assessment and intervention methods. Collaborative Suicide Risk Management (CAMS System). Interventions after a suicide attempt. Principles of systematic support. | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 8 | Readings and activities selected and recommended by the course lector. Preparation of a presentation on a chosen topic. |
| 6. Suicide postvention. Helping people, bereaved by suicide, institutional crisis management principles after a suicide. | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 8 | Readings and activities selected and recommended by the course lector. Preparation of a presentation on a chosen topic. |
| 7. Societal impact of suicides, the topic of suicides in the media. | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 7 | Readings and activities selected and recommended by the course lector. Preparation of a presentation on a chosen topic. |
| Total | 16 | | 16 | | | | 32 | 103 | |

| Assessment strategy | Weight % | Deadline | Assessment criteria |
|---|----------|-------------------------|--|
| Presentation on a chosen topic in a seminar | 25 | Throughout the semester | Criteria for evaluating presentations prepared by students on a chosen topic from the suicidology field (the topic of the presentation must be approved by the course lector in advance): a clear presentation of the identified main ideas of the topic, logical structure and the consistency of the presentation. The presentation is graded in a 10-point system. It is obligatory to make a presentation during a seminar to be eligible to take an exam. |
| Active participation during seminars | 25 | Throughout the semester | Attendance to the seminars is mandatory, it is necessary to attend at least 75% of seminars. Those who do not fulfil the attendance criteria will be denied access to the exam. |
| Written exam | 50 | End of semester | The exam will consist of 15-25 questions from the material taught during the lectures and independently studied. Questions may be both closed and open and may have different weights. The total number of points is calculated and, based on the highest number of points scored in the group, is transformed into a grade of a 10-point system. |

| Author (-s) | Publishing year | Title | Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication | Publishing house or web link |
|--|-----------------|--|--|---|
| Required reading | | | | |
| Rory C. O'Connor & Jane Pirkis | 2016 | The International Handbook of Suicide Prevention | | John Wiley & Sons, Inc. |
| Edwin S. Shneidman | 1996 | The Suicidal Mind | | Oxford: Oxford University Press |
| Thomas Joiner | 2007 | Why People Die by Suicide? | | Harvard University Press |
| David A. Jobes | 2006 | Managing Suicidal Risk: A Collaborative Approach | | The Guilford Press |
| Jobes, D.A., Au, J.S. & Siegelman, A. | 2015 | Psychological Approaches to Suicide Treatment and Prevention | Current Treatment Options in Psychiatry, 2, 363–370 p. | https://doi.org/10.1007/s40501-015-0064-3 |
| John R. Jordan & Vanessa McGann | 2017 | Clinical work with suicide loss survivors: Implications of the U.S. postvention guidelines | Death Studies, 41(10), 659-672 p. | https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2017.1335553 |
| De Leo et al. | 2021 | International study of definitions of English-language terms for suicidal behaviours: a survey exploring preferred terminology | BMJ Open, 11, 1-10 p. | https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/11/2/e043409 |
| World Health Organization | 2018 | National suicide prevention strategies: progress, examples and indicators | | https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/279765/9789241515016-eng.pdf |
| Recommended reading | | | | |
| Sud. Jennifer White, Ian Marsh, Michael J. Kral, and Jonathan Morris | 2016 | Critical suicidology: transforming suicide research and prevention for the 21st century | | Vancouver: UBC Press |

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| Van Orden, K. A., Witte, T. K., Cukrowicz, K. C., Braithwaite, S. R., Selby, E. A., & Joiner, T. E., Jr. | 2010 | The interpersonal theory of suicide | Psychological Review, 117(2), 575–600 p. | https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018697 |
| Hjelmeland, Heidi & Knizek, Birthe | 2019 | The emperor's new clothes? A critical look at the interpersonal theory of suicide | Death Studies, 44, 1-11 p. | https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2018.1527796 |
| Øivind Ekeberg, Erlend Hem | 2020 | Why is the suicide rate not declining in Norway? | The Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association | https://tidsskriftet.no/en/node/57728/pdf |
| World Health Organization | 2014 | Preventing suicide: A global imperative | | https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564779 |
| Danutė Gailienė | 2015 | Suicides in Lithuania. Sociocultural Context | Lithuanian faces after transition: psychological consequences of cultural trauma, 198-216 p. | https://www.fsf.vu.lt/dokumentai/Projektai/LMT/Sunkios_traumos_Gailiene/Lithuanian_faces_after_transition_c_1.pdf |