

Language, Policy and Health (A006761)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings in academic year 2027-2028

A (semester 1)

Dutch

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2027-2028

De Wilde, July

LW22

lecturer-in-charge

Toma, Sorana

GE39

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2027-2028

[Master of Arts in Language, Diversity and Policy](#)

crdts

5

offering

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Language diversity, multilingualism, language policy, conversation techniques, (in) equality, inclusion

Position of the course

In this course, students explore the complex role of language and communication in various aspects of the healthcare sector. Students acquire in-depth knowledge of concepts, theories and research methods from various disciplines, including intercultural communication, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, medical communication and medical sociology. This multidisciplinary approach provides students with a broad and critical framework for analysing and evaluating the complexity of language and other diversity variables in healthcare. The course combines theoretical insights with applied knowledge, with a particular focus on case studies, current issues and best practices.

Contents

This course is structured in three parts: (1) the fundamentals of communication in healthcare, (2) language use, diversity factors, access and quality, and (3) language policy in healthcare institutions.

The section on the fundamentals of communication in healthcare includes, amongst other things, an understanding of and critical approach to key concepts ('empowered patient' and 'shared decision-making'), conversation techniques (delivering bad news and interprofessional consultation), characteristics of patient-caregiver communication, and a multi-causal approach to (mis)communication. The student compares studies and practices in which cultural attitudes, person- and situation-specific factors, language proficiency and health literacy determine access to and the quality of care.

In the section on language use, diversity variables, access and quality, the student critically examines how language interacts with diversity variables such as ethnicity and socio-economic status, and what impact this has on health outcomes, quality of care and patient satisfaction. Students compare different forms of communication support (interpreting, digital technologies, written communication, multimodal meaning-making) and critically assess the preconditions for implementation.

In the third module on language policy in healthcare settings, students identify the determinants of language policy (language legislation, patients' rights, procedural factors, institutional factors), critically assess existing policy frameworks, and develop language policy proposals for specific healthcare contexts.

Initial competences

The core competencies expected of a graduate with a Bachelor's degree in a discipline related to the programme.

Final competences

- 1 The student has a good understanding of the interplay between language, other diversity factors and communication in relation to various aspects of healthcare, such as access to healthcare, health outcomes and patient satisfaction
- 2 The student is able to identify and critically assess the determinants and process-related factors of language policy in the healthcare sector.
- 3 The student is able to formulate evidence-based policy proposals and translate scientific findings into policy applications.
- 4 The student analyses sector-specific language policies and implementation strategies for different types of healthcare settings, taking into account digital technologies, legal and social factors.
- 5 The student conducts independent research into language and diversity issues in the healthcare sector and presents the results clearly and concisely.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures: course content is discussed in an interactive and question-driven manner, using case studies where possible. Students are occasionally required to prepare articles and case studies independently.

Seminars consist of presentations and/or group discussions, possibly involving guest speakers from the professional field.

Class recordings are made available to students with special status or students with a valid reason for absence.

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: Syllabus (cursus, artikels, casussen)

Indicative price: € 15

Optional: no

Available on Ufora : Yes

References

The reading list will be made available via the learning platform once the course begins.

Course content-related study coaching

By appointment, during breaks or after lessons.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Calculation of the examination mark

- continuous assessment: coursework, presentation and participation, i.e. 30% of the final mark;
- end-of-term assessment: written examination, i.e. 70% of the final mark.

Students must take part in and pass both components (term-based and non-term-based assessment) in order to pass the course.

Facilities for Working Students

Attendance is recommended in order to pass the course successfully.