

PBHL / PSY 359 | EMPOWERED: Mental Health and Inclusion for Modern Learners

**Volos, University of Thessaly
Summer 2026**

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the concept of "inclusive education" and links this with recent developments in the field of mental health. Inclusive education requires that all students, regardless of any challenges they may have, are placed in age-appropriate general education classes that are in their own neighborhood schools to receive high-quality instruction, interventions, and supports that enable them to meet success in the core curriculum. On the premise that the development of inclusive schooling is closely linked to the promotion of mental health and resilience for all learners, the course covers well-known psychological theories of learning and development and explores how these theoretical frameworks can be applied in educational settings to promote mental health, effective learning and ultimately genuine participation and inclusion. In this course "mental health" is approached through the perspective of a Special Education Department with the emphasis placed on creating an inclusion climate. In doing so, we aspire to present a comprehensive picture of what mental health is and how it is promoted for children and adolescents, as well as for teachers. Specific school-based interventions that focus either at the whole system or at the individual level to enhance mental health will also be presented. The Summer School culminates with highlighting empirically-based practices that contribute to building psychological resilience and support the well-being of all learners in inclusive educational contexts.

Course Approach

Course topics will be explored through short lectures delivered by the tutors followed by discussions and group work, which facilitate the students' active learning. Collaborative projects and class debates are also included in all sessions. All course topics will be supplemented by appropriate reading materials which will be made available to the students prior to commencing the course. In addition, learners will be asked from the very first lesson to reflect on their own experience of travelling in Greece, their immersion in the Greek culture and, specifically, its impact on their well-being and mental health. In so doing, the course aspires to offer an experiential combination of theory and practice.

The key academic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and researching will be developed through the interaction of the learners in small groups, but also in the plenary session with the facilitators. In addition, their diary entries, their exploration of the learning materials provided and their undertaking of follow-up structured activities will enable students to cultivate the skills of critical reflection. Finally, the scheduled short assignments require students to identify relevant academic sources and synthesizing this evidence, undertaking case studies, making oral presentations to the class, and completing written assignments.

Students will engage in collaborative tasks to develop knowledge and relevant skills (e.g. pair work, group projects, joint presentations). Whole-class activities such as role play and class debates are also planned to facilitate interaction among students and ultimately experiential learning. Finally, students will work individually on summative (end of course) assignments.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module/course students should be able to demonstrate the following skills:

Module Specific Skills: a systematic understanding of knowledge and critical awareness of international developments on inclusive education and mental health initiatives

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of key concepts of inclusion, disability, difference and diversity as well as some key psychological concepts such as "social competence", "emotional resilience" and psychological well-being.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of school-based interventions promoting mental health and, by extension fostering inclusive education.
- Demonstrate a critical awareness of the importance of working collaboratively within interdisciplinary teams to promote mental health and facilitate inclusive education.

Discipline Specific Skills:

- Critically explore the relationship between theory and practice
- Compare/contrast different perspectives on promoting mental health and inclusive education
- Handle relevant sources of literature and engage in current debates
- Construct organized, structured, critically reflective and analytic writing

Personal and Key Skills:

- critical and analytic thinking
- independent learning, self-management and organization
- oral and written communication skills
- the ability to locate and use learning resources
- information technology skills
- the ability to work in groups
- the ability to problem solve

Course Requirements

Students are expected to actively participate in all sessions of the course. Students are expected to read all materials distributed to them prior to commencing the course, and undertake all individual and group-based tasks, projects, and assignments during the course.

Class Field Work

All lectures will take place on site at the Department of Special Education of the University of Thessaly in Volos, Greece. These sessions will be combined with various field trips and excursions in the surrounding area with a view to linking theory and practice; specifically, the various theoretical perspectives covered in the sessions will be exemplified through visiting appropriate sites where associated interventions are applied.

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation is based on sufficient student participation and on a range of assessment tasks throughout the course. Such formative assessment includes a mix of presentations, group work activities and short written reflective accounts. Summative assessment at the end of the course is performed through the submission of 2000 words essay on a topic agreed with the tutors.

Final grade for this course will be based on the following distribution:

Percentages (and breakdowns) session):

- Attendance and Participation: 10% recorded in a class log
- Ongoing (formative) assessment: Mix of presentation and group activities (10%). Tutor and peer oral feedback
- Midcourse Assignment 1 (5th session): A 500 words summary of an inclusive development on the student's country of origin followed by a presentation to the group (20%). Tutor and peer oral feedback and grade.
- Midcourse Assignment 2 (10th session): A 1000 words summary (in pairs) of a mental health initiative on the grade.
- Final Assignment 3 (Final session): A 2000 words assignment representing a critical reflection on a topic agreed with the tutors (40%). Formal written tutor feedback and grade.

CYA Regulations and Accommodations

Attendance Policy

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Volos or during field study trips) as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons which result in absences should be reported immediately to the course instructors. Given the short duration of this summer course and its intensity, participation in all 15 sessions is compulsory.

Policy on Original Work

Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own original work. Any ideas taken from the work of others must be clearly identified as quotations, paraphrases, summaries, figures etc., and accurate internal citations and/or captions (for visuals) as well as an accompanying bibliography must be provided.

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted if this facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references, etc. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if devices are not used for class-related work.

Class Schedule

Class Day	Day/Date/Place	Activity
	Monday 22/6/2026 Volos	Arrivals
1	Tuesday 23/6/2026 Volos	<p>9.30-12.30 Session 1. Introduction to the course - Understanding Inclusive Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting with the course tutors and Familiarization with course materials and other available resources - Course requirements and agreeing on modes of working - Fundamental concepts of inclusive education (key concepts of inclusion, disability, difference and diversity in socio-political and historical contexts) - Stakeholders' attitudes towards inclusion (principals, teachers, students, parents) - Developing an inclusive school culture <p>Follow up reading: Sider, S., Ainscow, M., Carrington, S., Shields, C., Mavropoulou, S., Nepal, S., & Daw, K. (2024). Inclusive Education in England, Australia, the United States, and Canada: Quo Vadis? <i>Exceptionality Education International</i>, 34 (1), 55-72. https://doi.org/10.5206/eei.v34i1.16915 (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)</p>
2	Wednesday 24/6/2026 Volos	<p>9.30-12.30 Session 2. Implementing Systemic Inclusive Education Reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From Policy to Practice: implementing inclusion in schools - The development of inclusive pedagogies - Inclusive Education: a review of the evidence - The Current State of Inclusive Education: Contradictions and Concerns <p>Follow up reading: Van Mieghem, A., Verschueren, K., Petry, K., & Struyf, E. (2018). An analysis of research on inclusive education: a systematic search and meta review. <i>International Journal of Inclusive Education</i>, 24(6), 675-689. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1482012 (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)</p>
3	Thursday 25/6/2026 Volos	<p>Morning Volos Site Seeing (city museum, archaeological museum, and prehistorical sites) (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)</p> <p>15.00-18.00 Session 3. Developing an inclusive school climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting a sense of belonging and facilitating peer relationships - Nurturing close student-teacher relationships - Transforming classroom climate to accommodate students at risk of marginalization <p>Follow up reading: Subban, Bradford, B., Sharma, U., Loreman, T. Avramidis, E. Kullmann, H. Sahli Lozano, C., Romano, A., Woodcock, S. (2023). Does it really take a village to raise a child? Reflections on the need for collective responsibility in inclusive education. <i>European Journal of Special Needs Education</i>, 38(2), 291-302. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2022.2059632 Subban, P., Woodcock, S., Bradford, B., Romano, A., Sahli Lozano, C., Kullmann, H., Sharma, U., Loreman, T. & Avramidis, E. (2024). What does the village need to raise a child with additional needs? Thoughts on creating a framework to support collective inclusion. <i>Teachers and Teaching</i>, 30(5), 668-683 https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2024.2338398</p>

4	Friday 26/6/2026 Volos	<p>9.30-12.30 Session 4. Promoting social participation in inclusive educational settings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluating the social outcomes of inclusive education: the current state of research - School-based Interventions to enhance peer acceptance and foster social participation - Promoting Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in educational settings <p>Follow up reading: Aroni, K., Toulia, A., Alves, S., Hassani, S., Heidrich, F., Franzen, K., Görel, G., Löper, M. F., Aguiar, T., Silveira- Maia, M., Sanches-Ferreira, M. , Hellmich, F., Schwab, S., & Avramidis, E. FRIEND-SHIP Intervention Program - the Handbook. Porto Polytechnic. https://doi.org/10.26537/20564 (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)</p>
	Saturday 27/6/2026	<p>Visit to Pelion areas, Hiking, water sports, Fishing on a boat ... Free day</p>
	Sunday 28/6/2026	Free day
5	Monday 29/6/2026 Volos	<p>9.30-12.30 Session 5. Student presentations and submission of a short account Assignment 1: A 500 words summary of an inclusive development on the student's country of origin followed by a presentation to the group (20%). Tutor and peer oral feedback and grade. (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly) Free evening and preparation for next morning departure</p>
6	Tuesday 30/6/2026 Trikala - Meteora	<p>Session 6. (Study visit) (Guest: Travel Guide Guest Lecturer) Transfer to Trikala which will be the base for excursions to Meteora, Meteora Monasteries / https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meteora In 1988 Meteora was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the wider area is part of the European ecological network NATURA 2000, as it has rare fauna and flora. In the monasteries of Meteora the concept of community is put into practice through participation and spirituality (https://meteora.com/el/monastiria-meteora/) The University of Thessaly cooperates closely with the Secondary Education Directorate of Trikala in the development and implementation of programs aimed at promoting the mental health of students. Lunch at Meteora (not provided) Dinner and night entertainment in Trikala (booking a restaurant etc) (not provided)</p>
7	Wednesday 1/7/2026 Volos	<p>Return to Volos (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly) 15.00 – 18.00 Session 7. Mapping the broad spectrum of mental health territory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental Health in the context of WHO – international comparisons - Studying and understanding mental health through texts from the World Health Organization - Mental health in ICD 10 and ICD 11 <p>Follow up reading: Tyrer, P. (2014). A comparison of DSM and ICD classifications of mental disorder. <i>Advances in Psychiatric Treatment</i>, 20(4), 280–285. https://doi.org/10.1192/apt.bp.113.011296</p>
8	Thursday 2/7/2026 Volos	<p>9.30 – 12.30 Session 8. Mental health in clinical diagnosis and broader research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental health in DSM-5 classifications (short overview) - Psychometric approach to mental health: mental health is what we measure? - An overview of the ways in which mental health is captured psychometrically in surveys <p>Follow up reading: https://www.cataloguementalhealth.ac.uk/?content=7 (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)</p>
9	Friday 3/7/2026 Volos	<p>9.30 – 12.30 Session 9. Mental Health in Educational & Counselling Psychology (part A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connecting the dots between the learning theories and the mental health approach in psychodynamic and person-centered psychological theories - Recommendations for future research on schooling and mental health issues - Implications for the field of counselling psychology <p>Follow up reading:</p>

		Burns, J. R., & Rapee, R. M. (2021). From barriers to implementation: Advancing universal mental health screening in schools. <i>Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools</i> , 31(2), 172-183. https://doi.org/10.1017/jgc.2021.17 (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)
	Saturday 4/7/2026 Volos	Free day
	Sunday 5/7/2026 Volos	Free day
10	Monday 6/7/2026 Volos	<p>9.30 – 12.30</p> <p>Session 10. Mental Health in Educational & Counselling Psychology (part B)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connecting the dots between the learning theories and the mental health approach in cognitive, behavior and social learning theories. - Recommendations for future research on schooling and mental health issues - Implications for the field of counselling psychology <p>Follow up reading: McAllister, M., Knight, B. A., & Withyman, C. (2017). Merging contemporary learning theory with mental health promotion to produce an effective schools-based program. <i>Nurse Education in Practice</i>, 25, 74-79. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2017.05.005 (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)</p>
	Tuesday 7/7/2026 Volos	Study day
11	Wednesday 8/7/2026 Volos	<p>9.30-12.30</p> <p>Session 11. Student presentations and submission of a short account</p> <p>Assignment 2 (in pairs): A 1000 words summary of a mental health initiative on the student's country of origin followed by a presentation to the group (20%). Tutor and peer oral feedback and grade.</p> <p>Discussion and Evaluation led by: Prof. Avramidis, Dr Roussi and Guest Professor, Dr Eleni Andreou</p> <p>Follow up reading: https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2011/01/poster (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)</p>
12	Thursday 9/7/2026 Volos	<p>9.30-12.30</p> <p>Session 12. Mental health interventions that strengthen the resilience of students exposed to bullying experiences (Guest Prof. Eleni Andreou)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bullying as a multilevel mental health problem - Antibullying initiatives in Greece - The Coping with Bullying program <p>Follow up reading: Roussi-Vergou, C., Andreou, E., Didaskalou, E., Slee, P., & Skrzypiec, G. (2018). Evaluating the "Coping with Bullying" program in Greek secondary schools: a repeated measure approach. In J. Gordon (Ed.), <i>Bullying Prevention and Intervention at School: Integrating Theory and Research into Best Practices</i> (pp. 95-118). Springer Publishing Company. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-95414-1 (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)</p>
	Friday 10/7/2026 Volos	Free day
	Saturday 11/7/2026 Volos	Free day
	Sunday 12/7/2026 Volos	Free day

<p>13</p>	<p>Monday 13/7/2026 Evia Island</p>	<p>Departure for Aedippos & evening session in Aedippos North Evia has been a place of thermal tourism and the practice of mental and physical well-being since ancient times. It was here in 2021 that the devastating fires that completely destroyed the pinewood paradises took place. A disaster with immeasurable consequences also for the mental health of the people - the University of Thessaly contributed to the humanitarian aid and had a contribution to the development of educational programs for the response and management of the Trauma in the student population. https://www.evima.gr/koinonia/to-kalokairi-tis-thlipsis-stin-evvoia-oi-megales-pyrkagies-pou-esvisan-ektaseis-apo-ton-charti/ The ERASE-S summer school (to assist educators to help students exposed to trauma) took place here in 2022 https://www.palmosev.gr/politismos/diorganosi-therinon-scholeion-gia-tin-diacheirisi-toy-traymatikoy-agchoys-summer-school-erase-s-greece-sti-limni-5-6-septemvrioy/ 17.00-20.00 (In Hotel Conference Room) Session 13. Working collaboratively with educators and school psychologists the experience of the networking between UTH and local education authorities (in Hotel conference room) (by Christina Roussi and Guests: Dr Eleni Andreou & PhD candidate Vasia Makrydaki) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do Greek schools deal with students' mental health issues? - School Life Counselor Supervision Workshops: case studies from a university collaboration with school professionals <p>Follow up reading: Shelemy, L., Harvey, K., & Waite, P. (2019). Supporting students' mental health in schools: what do teachers want and need? <i>Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties</i>, 24(1), 100–116. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2019.1582742</p> </p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Tuesday 14/7/2026 Evia</p>	<p>9.30-12.30 (In Hotel Conference Room) Session 14. Mental health interventions for children exposed to disasters and trauma (by Christina Roussi and Guests: Dr Eleni Andreou & PhDcan Vasia Makrydaki) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the physiology of stress - The stress factor in the human development - Educating students in understanding the stress mechanism <p>Follow up reading: Berger, R., Gelkopf, M., & Heineberg, Y. (2012). A teacher-delivered intervention for adolescents exposed to ongoing and intense traumatic war-related stress: a quasi-randomized controlled study. <i>The Journal of Adolescent Health: Official Publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine</i>, 51(5), 453-461. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.02.011</p> </p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Wednesday 15/7/2026 Volos</p>	<p>Return to Volos (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly) 15.00-18.00 Session 15. Post-traumatic growth (Guest Prof. Eleni Andreou) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-traumatic growth (PTG) refers to the positive psychological change that can occur as a result of struggling with a highly challenging or stressful life event. - In other words, instead of only experiencing negative effects from trauma, some individuals report personal growth, such as: a greater appreciation for life, improved relationships with others, a sense of increased personal strength, new possibilities or priorities in life, and spiritual or existential development. <p>Follow up reading: Henson, C., Truchot, D., & Canevello, A. (2021). What promotes post traumatic growth? A systematic review. <i>European Journal of Trauma & Dissociation</i>, 5(4), 100195. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejtd.2020.100195</p> </p>
<p>16</p>	<p>Thursday 16/7/2026 Volos</p>	<p>9.30-12.30 Session 16. Current approaches to mental health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of the most important scientific journals with direct reference to mental health - Search and organization of the themes developed over the last five years through titles - Drawing conclusions on where the scientific community's interest in mental health issues seems to be heading <p>Follow up reading:</p> </p>

		<p>Wiedermann, C. J., Barbieri, V., Plagg, B., Marino, P., Piccoliori, G., & Engl, A. (2023). Fortifying the Foundations: A Comprehensive Approach to Enhancing Mental Health Support in Educational Policies Amidst Crises. <i>Healthcare (Basel, Switzerland)</i>, 11(10), 1423. https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11101423 Promoting Mental health and Wellbeing Among Students and Teachers in Educational Settings. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1155/PPC.si.798300 (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly)</p>
17	<p>Friday 17/7/2026 Volos</p>	<p>9.30-12.30 Session 17. Closing session The end of the journey, presenting and sharing reflective diaries kept throughout the course Discussions and Self-Reflections led by: Dr Avramidis, Dr Roussi and Guests Follow up reading: Wallin, P., & Adawi, T. (2017). The reflective diary as a method for the formative assessment of self-regulated learning. <i>European Journal of Engineering Education</i>, 43(4), 507-521. https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2017.1290585 https://ocnlondon.org.uk/centres/training-events/training-and-%20development/how-to-produce-a-reflective-learning-diary (Lunch provided at the University of Thessaly) 20.00 Reception at University of Thessaly</p>
	<p>Saturday 18/7/2026 Volos</p>	<p>Departures</p>

N.B.: The course schedule, in terms of subjects and readings, may be subject to change to benefit student learning and to keep up to date with current research.

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Lozman, T., Deppeler, K., & Harvey, D. (2010). *Inclusive Education. Supporting Diversity in the Classroom*. London: Routledge.

Mental health atlas 2020. (2021). World Health Organization. http://books.google.ie/books?id=D3hyEAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=mental+health+atlas&hl=&cd=2&source=gbs_api

Mitchell, D., & Sutherland, D. (2020). *What really works in special and inclusive education: Using evidence-based teaching strategies*. London: Routledge.

Norwich, B. (2023). *Addressing tensions and dilemmas in inclusive education: Resolving democratically*. Routledge.

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Roeser, R. W., Eccles, J. S., & Strobels, K. R. (1998). Linking the study of schooling and mental health: Selected issues and empirical illustrations at. *Educational psychologist*, 33(4), 153-176.

Roussi-Vergou, C., Andreou, E., Didaskalou, E., Sless, P., & Skrzypiec, G. (2018). "Coping with bullying" program in Greek secondary schools: An evaluation. *Bullying prevention and intervention at school: Integrating theory and research into best practices*, 95-118.

World Health Organization. (2017). *Inheriting a sustainable world? Atlas on children's health and the environment*. World Health Organization.