UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Origins and Development of The Human Mind

2122-1-F5104P003

Learning area

PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING: MODELS AND METHODS FOR ASSESSMENT

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Theoretical and methodological approaches to the investigation of developmental change.
- Neuroconstrucitvism and Developmental cognitive neuroscience.
- Dynamic system theory and motor development.
- Developmental origins of social cognition and Theory of Mind.
- Implications for the understanding of atypical development.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Understanding and communicating the outcome of experimental research on infant cognitive abilities.
- Developing critical thinking skills that enable to identify theoretical implications of empirical evidence for the explanation of developmental change.
- Using acquired knowledge in the field of developmental psychology to design scientific research
- The ability to identify key factors to promote cognitive development.

Contents

Current theoretical models for the understanding of the origins and development of the human mind will be analysed, by showing how they explain motor and perceptual development as well as the development of memory

and the acquisition of knowledge within the social domain (face recognition, action understanding, Theory of Mind), the numerical domain and the domain of physics and object knowledge. These topics will be presented making reference to the most recent research in the field, and through critical discussion of their results.

Detailed program

- Grounding assumptions for a modern science of the development of the human mind.
- Neuroconstructivism and Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience.
- Biological predispositions as constraints on development

- Development of face recognition and processing of facial social traits.
- Theory of Mind in infancy.
- Dynamic system theory and the explanation of motor development

- The neuroconstructivist approach to atypical development.
- Early markers of atypical development.

Prerequisites

Knowledge of classical theories of psychological development, with specific reference to Piaget's theory and Cognitivism. Students who lack this knowledge will be provided with specific reference.

Teaching methods

Lessons will be held in presence, unless further COVID-19 related restrictions are imposed.

In addition to frontal lectures, the course will offer guided discussions, video presentations. Slides and scientific papers are made available to all students (even those who are not attending classes) through the e-learning website.

Assessment methods

The exam is written with oral interview upon request. The written exam includes multiple choice questions and open questions. Multiple choice questions provide extensive evaluation of knowledge acquisition; open questions evaluate students' critical thinking on such knowledge.

Students may ask to attend an oral interview, in addition to the written exam, on all the topics included in the Syllabus.

Evaluation criteria are as follows: response accuracy for multiple choice questions, adequacy of contents, formal organization and terminology for the answers to open questions.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Macchi Cassia V., Valenza E., Simion F. (2012). *Lo sviluppo della mente umana. Dalle teorie classiche ai nuovi orientamenti*. Bologna: Il Mulino (chapter: 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).

Valenza, E., Turati, C. (2019). Promuovere lo sviluppo della mente. Un approccio neurocostruttivista. Bologna: Il Mulino (all chapters, except chapter 1).

More specific information about reading materials will be posted on the e-learning webpage of the course.

Although this course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students, course material can also be available in English, and students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so.