UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Forensic Psychopathology

2223-2-F5104P022-F5104P022M

Learning area

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding
• Mental capacity in litigation from the psychopathologic and neuropsychological perspectives
• Criteriology of scientific and technical psychological counseling in forensic settings
• Psychological theories, techniques, tools to be used in the legal field
• The contribution of neuroscience in the expert witness field

Applying knowledge and understanding
• Forensic issues in the diagnosis of psychopathological and neuropsychological conditions
• Assessment instruments (psychopathology and cognitive deficits) in forensic practice
• Type, content, and purpose of psychological technical consultant in criminal and civil cases
• Methodology and tools for assessing psychological, cognitive, and behavioral functioning for forensic purposes

Contents

The course offers a methodological and theoretical overview of forensic psychopathology and neuropsychology, including the recent contribution of neuroscience. Practical and theoretical issues characterizing the assessment of mental and cognitive functioning in the forensic context will be addressed.

Detailed program

• Types and contents of expert and court-appointed technical expertise in psychopathological and neuropsychological matters, with reference to the cornerstones of legal reasoning
• Diagnosis and theoretical models.
• Insanity, imputability and mental capacity
• Simulation of mental illness and cognitive deficits
• Psychodiagnostic and neuropsychological forensic instruments
• Neurobiological correlates of criminal behavior
• The persperctive of forensic neuroscience

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of clinical psychology and neuropsychology (including methods commonly used in cognitive neuroscience) is a prerequisite for course attendance.

Teaching methods

Lectures are given in Italian. In addition to classroom lectures, part of the teaching will be conducted through practical-clinical exercises on the specific topics of the course: discussion of forensic cases, exercises on forensic methodologies, seminars.

Useful study material (lecture handouts, national and international scientific articles), accompanied by directions to any further study texts, will be made available on the course e-learning site so that it can be used by non-attending students.

Assessment methods

The final examination is written, aimed at ascertaining the acquisition of the theoretical knowledge, with optional oral exam at the student’s request or at the request of the lecturer. The written test includes open-ended questions on the topics covered in class. The optional oral test consists of an interview on the topics covered in class. The evaluation criteria are: correctness of answers, comprehensive exposition and the ability to argue critically.

An in-progress written test on the topics covered during the course is planned to be organized as an in-depth study of a topic or analysis of a forensic case using the expert methodology covered in class.

International students (Erasmus program) may opt to answer the open question in English and to require to take the oral exam in English to supplement the written exam.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

- Sammicheli, L. La perizia psicologica. Prospettive e metodi in psicologia e psicopatologia forense, Il Mulino, 2019.

- Stracciari A., Bianchi A., Sartori G., Neuropsicologia forense, Il Mulino, 2010.
- Bolognini N., Zago S. La capacità di disporre per testamento. Valutazione clinica e quadro giuridico, Hogrefe, 2021.
- Volterra V., Psichiatria forense, criminologia ed etica psichiatrica, Elsevier, 2010.

Suggestions for English alternatives of textbooks upon request

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION