UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Motivational Processes and Decision Making

2324-2-F5106P021

Learning area

Social psychology, economic psychology and decision-making

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Basic knowledge of psychological processes, cognitive, emotional and motivational, in choice contexts
- The relationship between affect, motivational processes and decision making
- The main methodologies in the psychological study of decision
- Advanced knowledge on potentialities/limits of psychological research on decision in different applicative contexts (social, economic, organizational and health)

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Identifying the emotional and motivational aspects most involved in decision making
- Ability to critically analyze materials and research reports on decision making
- Knowing how to design and implement a scientific research project that investigates the relationship between emotions, motivation and decision making

Contents

The course aims to introduce students to the study of motivational and emotional processes involved in decision making. Main theoretical approaches in the field will be presented and large attention will be devoted to the

discussion of recent empirical studies investigating the role of motivation and emotion in decisional processes.

Students will be also involved in the development of a research project that will give them the opportunity to deepen the knowledge of some specific topics.

Detailed program

- Motivation - main classical theories and recent developments; role in decision making processes
- Motivated behavior: from decision to action
- The assessment of motivation: implicit and explicit techniques
- Emotions: main classical theories and recent developments; role in decision making processes
- The assessment of emotional experience (current, past and anticipated)
- Affect and information processing: emotion as a resource
- Affect, motivation and cognition in decision making processes
- The phases of a research project in the study of the decision

Prerequisites

Nothing specific. A good knowledge of the basis of General Psychology enables a more aware use of the course contents.

Teaching methods

Part of the teaching will take place through the discussion of scientific articles, and practical exercises on the course topics, individual and in small groups.

These methods aim to make the course contents more usable and to facilitate the acquisition of specific skills on the motivation and emotions assessment and on the design and implementation of an empirical study on decision making.

Students are given the further opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the course contents through the reading of specific papers and their presentation to the class, under the supervision of the teacher.

The material (slides and, when possible, tests/questionnaires and scientific articles) is made available on the e-learning site 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.

Assessment methods

The verification of learning will be carried out through an oral examination aimed at verifying the specific knowledge of the main contents of the course.

The evaluation criteria are: correctness of the answers, ability to argue, synthesize, create links, and the ability to critically analyze the phenomena. For this examination mode no mid-term assignments are graded.

During the course, students are given the opportunity to develop, during the lessons, a research project aimed at investigating the relationship between emotions, motivation and decision making. The research project can be developed individually or in small groups, on themes freely chosen by the student, under the supervision of the teacher. A written report on the research project must be prepared individually (project work).
For students involved in the research project there will be an evaluation of the written report and an oral exam aimed at deepening the contents of the report.
The evaluation criteria of the report are: completeness of the literature review, adequacy in the formulation of the research aims, correctness of the chosen methodologies, adequacy in the formulation of the expected results, formal quality. During the oral examination the student will have to present her/his work briefly. The evaluation criteria of this examination are: ability to present and argue, to create links and critical reading of the investigated phenomena.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

- Carmeci F.A., Misuraca R., Cardaci M. (2007). Emozioni e decisioni. In R. Misuraca, B. Fasolo, M. Cardaci (a cura di), I processi decisionali – Paradossi, sfide, supporti. Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 115-146.

- D'Addario, M. (2012) La decisione. In P. Cherubini (a cura di) Psicologia generale. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore, pp. 567-607.

- Graffeo M., Bonini N. (2012). Il ruolo dell'emozione nelle scelte economiche. In G. Bellelli, R. Di Schiena (a cura di), Decisioni ed emozioni. Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 107-125.

- Peters E., Lipkus I., Diefenbach M.A. (2006). The functions of affect in health communications and in the construction of health preferences. Journal of Communication, 56, 140-162.

- Steca, P. (2021). Le emozioni. In P. Cherubini, E. Bricolo e C. Reverberi (a cura di), Psicologia generale. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore, pp. 439-484.

- Steca, P. (2021). La motivazione. Fattori e processi. In P. Cherubini, E. Bricolo e C. Reverberi (a cura di), Psicologia generale. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore, pp. 485-530.

Detailed information about other materials will be published on the course webpage (e-learning website).

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING