UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Psychology of Thinking, Decision Making and Comunication

2425-1-F5106P003

Learning area

FUNDAMENTALS AND RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PSYCHOLOGY

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

• promote the in-depth knowledge of cognitive psychological processes, with particular reference to the study of decision making, problem solving and communication;

• become familiar with the main normative and descriptive theories;

• understand the current scientific debate in the psychology of reasoning, decision making, problem solving and communication.

*Applying knowledge and understanding

· ability to critically evaluate the methodology used and the conclusions drawn from the main researches.

· ability to apply the models in natural settings

Contents

The course explores the cognitive processes related to the choice behavior and the systematic errors emerged in

decision-making tasks, risk prediction in relation to the dual process theories. The implications related to nudge theory will be addressed.
A Laboratory (2 cfu) on Psychorhetoric: the relationship between communication and psychology of thought is planned in which the main research that investigates the effect of communicative factors on reasoning and decision making will be illustrated. In this perspective, those reasoning and decision-making biases that seem to be the effect of rhetorical tricks, rather than the result of structural cognitive deficits, will be addressed in particular.
Half of the laboratory hours will be dedicated to lectures and half to group work.

Detailed program

LECTURES
· Comparison between different concepts of rationality.
· Normative and descriptive approaches. Comparing paradigms of psychology of thought (deductive, Bayesian)
· The Dual Process Theories: intuitive and analytic thinking
· Review of the main biases from various theoretical perspectives.
· Prospect Theory and the Heuristics and Biases Program
· Risk perception and comunication
. Nudge and Behavioural sciences
The course will examine researches conducted in the laboratory and in various applicative areas. Many examples and applications will be considered, concerning medical, economic, legal and public policy areas.

**Detailed program of the LABORATORY
LECTURES **

- Psychorhetoric: Relationship between communication and thought
- Problem solving and creativity
- The biases of probabilistic reasoning: errors or rhetorical artifices?
- Critical thinking beyond bias: drawing a conclusion and falsifying
- Decision making: inconsistency or choices functional to the context?

**Group (or individual) work: **

The lectures will be associated with a practical part, in the classroom, of design, conduction and presentation of a short experimental study on specific aspects of the topics addressed, to be agreed.

Prerequisites

The knowledge of the basis of Psychology of Thinking enables a more aware use of the course contents.

Anyway, the first lessons will be dedicated to the review of the main issues.

Teaching methods

Instructive teaching

Assessment methods

The verification of learning will be carried out through an oral examination aimed at verifying the specific knowledge of the main theoretical and experimental aspects of the course and laboratory and the argumentative and critical thinking of the student.

*Although this course is held in Italian, Erasmus students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Kahneman, D. (2020, Ed orig. 2011). *Pensieri lenti e veloci*. Milano: Mondadori (solo alcuni capitoli).

Thaler, R.H., Sunstein C.R. (2014, Ed orig. 2008). *Nudge. La spinta gentile*. *La nuova strategia per migliorare le nostre decisioni su denaro, salute, felicità.* Milano: Feltrinelli.

Reference text for the Laboratory: Macchi, L. (2024). La Psicoretorica. Dall'arte del dire alla forma del pensiero. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.

Sustainable Development Goals