



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

### Filosofia della Mente, Logica e Lingue Naturali

2425-2-E2401P006

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#### Learning area

Learning area no. 3. Inter-disciplinary knowledge

#### Learning objectives

##### *Knowledge and understanding*

- Distinctive features of human language and animal communication systems
- Principal theories about the origin and evolution of language
- Theoretical and experimental approaches to the relationship between language and thought

##### *Applying knowledge and understanding*

- Assessment, synthesis and critical evaluation of theoretical debates
- Critical reading of scientific articles
- Identification of lexical and structural ambiguities

#### Contents

This class adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the debate about the origin and evolution of language, and its relationship with thought, with notions of evolutionary biology, philosophy of mind and of language, and linguistics.

## Detailed program

- The distinctive features of human language.
- Animal communication systems.
- Homo sapiens and other human species.
- The evolution of language.
- The parameters of language variation.
- Language and its relationship with biology and society.
- Language and thought
- Experimental studies that investigate whether particular linguistic expressions impact on thought in the following areas:
  - Attributing stereotypically masculine/feminine properties to noun referents in languages that use morphological gender marking
  - Focusing on the "form" or on the "substance" of objects depending on the presence of count nouns / mass nouns in one's language
  - Perceiving or not perceiving color nuances depending on whether one's language has a more or less rich lexical repertoire for referring to colors
  - Strategies for spatial orientation depending on the linguistic expressions available in one's language
  - Temporal conception depending on the type of spatial metaphors used to refer to time

## Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites.

## Teaching methods

The course has 56 hours of lectures, which will be delivered mainly as in-person lecture-based classes (transmission of content). During lectures, students are encouraged to participate actively. Some topics of the course will be covered with interactive activities such as discussion of experimental paradigms and interpretation of results, stimulating the class to think about possible criticisms or alternative interpretations of the data. Indicatively, there will be 48 hours of in-person lecture-based classes and 8 hours of interactive lessons. The course is taught in Italian.

## Assessment methods

The exam is written, with multiple choice questions and open questions. The oral exam is upon students' request.

The forced choice questions aim at ascertaining the effective acquisition of theoretical notions; open questions (and oral exam) require the ability to assess, synthesize and evaluate theoretical debates, and to critically read scientific articles.

The evaluation criteria are the correctness of the answers, the ability to argue, synthesize, create links, and critically read what was learned.

Upon student's request, the exam can be completed with an oral examination, on all the course topics.

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

## **Textbooks and Reading Materials**

Teaching resources will be indicated on the e-learning page.

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## **Sustainable Development Goals**

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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