



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Psicologia della Cultura

2425-3-E1901R083

Course title

Psychology of culture

Topics and course structure

The aim of the course is to identify the key theoretical categories in making sense of culture - and its effects on basic psychological processes (i.e., cognition, emotion, communication). Overcoming the traditional nature-nurture dichotomy, the current co-evolutionary perspective between biology ("nature") and environment ("culture") will first be outlined. A number of diverse theoretical perspectives on the conceptualization of culture and its possible effects will then be sketched out, keeping in focus the ongoing transition from structure to process models in the modeling of culture dynamics (that is, from a view on culture as consensual, enduring, and context-general to perspectives that take culture to be more fragmented, fluctuating, and context-specific). Specific attention will be devoted to cultural learning, biculturalism and intercultural processes.

Bicultural individuals are those who, through enduring exposure to at least two cultures, have come to possess systems of meaning and practices of both cultures, and can therefore alternate and switch between them depending on the cultural cues available in the immediate context. Besides deepening how biculturals (individuals with a bicultural mind) show a better psychological adjustment to a variety of situations than monoculturals, the multi-bicultural mind approach, within the expert-novice dynamics of cultural transmission and appropriation, will supply an articulated milieu apt to address the "why" and "how" (besides only "what") questions and answers in the managing of educational challenges within and across cultures.

The course will be structured as follow:

Culture as a perspective on reality.

Culture as a distinctive feature of the human species (from an evolutionary and ontogenetic standpoint).

The pathways through which culture operates: culture as mediation, culture as meaning participation, cultural transmission and cultural appropriation (the expert-novice dynamics).

At the root of cultural diversities: why are there different cultures. Cultural diversities and their dynamic, relationship-

featured configuration.

How cultures shape cognitive processes (categorization processes, forms of reasoning), emotional processes (in generating emotional experiences, in expressing emotions through facial expressions, voice, and words, in action tendencies), pragmatic processes (from greetings to conversation management), social processes (in how negotiation is conducted, how cooperation takes place, and their impact on the quality of interpersonal relationships).

How cultures can be “translated” one into the other: requirements, unpacking processes, and educational opportunities.

Multiculturalisms, multicultural individuals and multicultural mind.

Fostering the education of a bicultural mind, bicultural mind in face-to-face contexts.

Objectives

The course targets the enhancement of the following:

- knowledge of the most relevant theoretical conceptualizations and methods of analysis of culture;
- application of theoretical knowledge on culture and of methods for its analysis to the domain of education and training;
- knowledge of benchmarks in designing educational activities for the management of intercultural processes;
- working knowledge in identifying and analyzing cultural phenomena in education and training domains;
- working knowledge in designing educational and training interventions aimed at fostering the appropriation of multiple cultural interpretative frames.

Methodologies

The course will be erogated both through traditional frontal teaching (50%) and through interactive lessons (50%). Interactive lessons will encompass role playing activities, dialogue, discussions, and small group exercises to promote communication, projectual, and problem-solving competencies.

The majority of the lessons will combine both interactive activities (either in large or small group), and frontal teaching.

When available, didactic materials will be uploaded on the e-laerning platform.

Online and offline teaching materials

Programme and references

Anolli, L. (2011). *La sfida della mente multiculturale. Nuove forme di convivenza*. Milano: Cortina.

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

Oral examination.

Criteria of evaluation are:

- a) Appropriateness of answers to oral questions;
- b) Ability to generate links between different arguments;
- c) Accuracy and adequacy of exposition;
- d) Ability to rethink critically the acquired knowledge and to apply them to education contexts.

Office hours

Thursday h. 11.00-13.00, previously fixed by mail at: olivia.realdon@unimib.it

Programme validity

Two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

REDUCED INEQUALITIES
