



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

### Filosofia della Mente, Logica e Lingue Naturali

2526-2-E2401P006

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#### Learning area

Cross-disciplinary knowledge

#### Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Distinctive features of human language that differentiate it from animal communication systems
- Main theories on the emergence and evolution of language
- Theoretical and experimental approaches to the relationship between language and thought

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding

- Ability to evaluate, summarize, and comment on theoretical debates
- Ability to critically read scientific articles
- Ability to identify lexical and grammatical ambiguities

Making judgements

Through classroom discussion and texts reading, students develop the ability to independently evaluate the interdisciplinary debate on the characteristics of human language that differentiate it from animal communication systems, on the main theories on the emergence and evolution of language, and on the relationship between language and thought. Critically analyzing theories on the origin and evolution of language, evaluating their assumptions, implications, and limitations is a central objective of the course.

Communication skills

The exam includes open-ended questions that require the use of appropriate language and the ability to clearly and coherently convey the debate across disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy of language, the study of animal cognition, and population genetics.

## Learning skills

The course provides a solid theoretical foundation that allows students to continue independently exploring interdisciplinary topics, with a view to pursuing more specialized courses or changing disciplines when choosing a master's degree program.

## 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 cognition.
- Language and categorization.

## Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites.

## Teaching methods

In addition to classroom lectures, part of the teaching will take place through the discussion of scientific articles, and audio-visual material (documentaries).

The material (slides and, when possible, scientific articles and videos) is made available on the e-learning site of the course, so that it can also be used by non-attending students.

## Assessment methods

The exam is written, and it comprises forced choice questions and open questions.

The forced choice questions aim at ascertaining the effective acquisition of theoretical notions; open questions 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 learnt.

Verification criteria and assessment thresholds:

30 with honors: excellent performance, both in terms of knowledge and critical and expressive articulation.

30: very good performance; comprehensive knowledge, well articulated and correctly expressed, with some critical insights.

27-29: good performance; comprehensive and satisfactory knowledge; essentially correct expression.

24-26: fair performance; knowledge present in the essential points, but not comprehensive and not always articulated correctly.

21-23: sufficient performance; knowledge present in a sometimes superficial way, but the general thread is understood.

18-21: barely sufficient performance; knowledge present but superficial; the thread is not understood consistently.

## **Textbooks and Reading Materials**

There is no textbook. The materials needed for the exam will all be uploaded to the elearning site of this class.

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

QUALITY EDUCATION | REDUCED INEQUALITIES

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