



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### The Development of Emotional Competence

2526-2-E2401P145

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#### Learning area

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS USEFUL TO UNDERSTAND, PROMOTE AND CHANGE INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING

#### Learning objectives

##### *Knowledge and Understanding*

The course aims to provide an in-depth knowledge of the most important theoretical models explaining the emotional development of children, from early childhood through adolescence. Particular attention will be given to the role of family, school, and peers as key contexts for the development of emotional competence, as well as to the most recent scientific research findings on the topic.

##### *Applying Knowledge and Understanding*

By the end of the course, students will have developed the ability to critically reflect on the topics covered, making connections between different content areas and critically evaluating scientific evidence related to emotional development. They will be able to assess the quality of information and distinguish between empirical evidence and speculation. Students will also be able to use the technical language of developmental psychology, particularly in relation to individual-environment interactions in emotional development, and will have acquired the ability to apply specific tools for the assessment and evaluation of children's emotional competencies.

##### *Making Judgements*

Students demonstrate critical thinking skills with regard to major theoretical models of emotional development and the ability to independently assess the presented scientific evidence. They are capable of distinguishing between empirical data and theoretical speculation, and of consciously applying acquired tools and concepts to analyze

concrete cases concerning emotional competence development.

### *Communication Skills*

Students are able to clearly and coherently communicate concepts and findings related to emotional development, using appropriate technical language from developmental psychology. During film discussions and the preparation of presentations, they demonstrate effective interaction and communication skills with peers and instructors, conveying their ideas successfully in both specialist and general contexts.

### *Learning Skills*

Students show autonomy in managing their own educational path, selecting and integrating theoretical knowledge and practical tools also in view of further academic pursuits (e.g., thesis or master's programs). The course's methodological approach — including lectures, case analyses, and applied exercises — supports the development of active and conscious study strategies, enhancing the capacity for continuous and self-directed learning.

## **Contents**

Theories and models of emotional development

Emotional competence

Development of emotional expression

Development of understanding others' emotions

Development of emotional regulation

Individual differences and person–environment interactions in emotional development

Emotional education

Emotion socialization

Prosocial and antisocial behaviors

The role of new technologies in the development of emotional competence

Tools for assessing and evaluating emotional abilities in infancy, preschool age, school age, and adolescence

## **Detailed program**

The course focuses on emotional development, particularly the psychology of emotions, emotional competence, and emotional socialization, as well as the contribution of emotions to the social and relational development of the individual. It will cover the main theories on the topic, recent research findings, and the methodologies used. The primary contexts in which emotional and relational development takes place will be examined, with particular attention to the family, school settings, and peer relationships, including a focus on at-risk contexts such as bullying or social exclusion. The course will delve into aspects related to individual differences in person–environment interactions and the role these interactions play in shaping typical and atypical trajectories of emotional development. Tools for the assessment and evaluation of emotional competencies will be presented, along with intervention programs supporting socio-emotional development.

## **Prerequisites**

It is recommended to take this course after acquiring a solid foundation in the fundamentals and main theoretical frameworks of Developmental Psychology.

## **Teaching methods**

100% of the hours will be delivered through in-person lecture-based teaching. The lectures will be supplemented by the viewing and discussion of films that illustrate the course topics. Group exercises will be carried out to familiarize students with tools for detecting and assessing emotional competencies.

## **Assessment methods**

The exam consists of a written test, with an optional oral component. The written test includes multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. Upon request, students may also take an oral exam, in addition to the written test, covering all course topics.

The evaluation criteria are: accuracy of answers for the multiple-choice questions; adequacy of content, formal organization, and use of terminology for the open-ended questions.

## **Textbooks and Reading Materials**

- Lecture slides
- Barone, L. (2021). Emotions in Development: Typical and Atypical Pathways. Carocci Editore.

## **Sustainable Development Goals**

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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