UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Forensic Neuropsychology and Elements of Forensic Psychopathology

2526-2-F5108P030

Learning area

Models and techniques of intervention and rehabilitation.

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding
• Mental capacity in litigation from the psychopathologic and neuropsychological perspectives.
• Criteriology and methodology of scientific and technical psychological counseling in forensic settings.
• Psychological tools to be used in the legal field.
• The role of neuroscience in the expert witness field.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Typology, content, and purpose of forensic psychological investigation: how to conduct psychological technical consultation in criminal and civil cases.
- Know how to choose methods and tools for assessing psychological, cognitive and behavioral functioning for forensic purposes.

Making Judgements
Through classroom discussion of court cases, the course stimulates critical and autonomous elaboration of psycho-forensic methodology, developing divergent thinking skills to answer psychological questions inherent in nonclinical cases, thus promoting the ability to decline diagnostic reasoning depending on the scope of intervention.

Communication skills
Classroom exercises and the type of written exam, which involves critically arguing in response to open-ended

questions on the main topics of the course, aims to strengthen communication skills of complex concepts across different disclines, using appropriate scientific language adapted for communication to a diverse audience of professionals.

Learning skills
Classroom presentation of scientific evidence aims to stimulate autonomy in study and the ability to investigate topics in depth through critical and evidence-based selection for continuous updating of knowledge.

Contents

Psychological technical consulting in forensic science: prerogatives of neuropsychological and psychopathological assessment.
Methodology of psychoforensic examination.
Legal background for the purposes of technical psychological advice in civil and criminal contexts.

Detailed program

- Typology and content of expert opinion and technical advise in psychopathological and neuropsychological matters, with reference to the cornerstones of legal reasoning.
- Medico-legal concepts of insanity, imputability and capacity.
- The simulation of mental illness and cognitive deficits.
- Psychodiagnostic and neuropsychological testing in forensic settings.
- Neurobiological and genetic correlates of criminal behavior.
- The neuroscientific approach in the forensic field.

Prerequisites

A solid knowledge of the theoretical and methodological foundations of clinical psychopathology and neuropsychology and of the methods of cognitive neuroscience is essential to face the course content.
The legal part and the implications for the experts' assessment focus on the law in force in Italy.

Teaching methods

The course will mainly consist of frontal room lessons in Italian. Classroom lectures are supplemented by interactive discussions of forensic cases with group exercises and follow-up seminars.
During the course, in-depth material will be offered so that the content is also usable by non-frequent students/students.

Assessment methods

The final examination is written and consists of open questions on the topics covered in class. The assessment criteria are: the correctness of the answers to the questions, exhaustive exposition and the ability to argue critically. There is a written test on the way, organized as an in-depth study of a topic or analysis of a forensic case applying the methodology covered in class.
For international students (Erasmus Program), it will be possible to answer the written exam questions in English or arrange with the lecturer to take the oral exam in English.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Bolognini N. (2024), 'Manuale di neuropsicologia e psicopatologia forense', Il Mulino Editore
Optional follow-up book: Sammicheli, L. (2019), 'La perizia psicologica. Prospettive e metodi in psicologia e psicopatologia forense', Il Mulino Editore

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION