UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Filosofia del Linguaggio

2526-1-E2006P002

Learning area

1: Linguistic and communicative processes and related cultural contexts.

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Mechanisms governing human language, and in particular the transmission of meaning.
- Distinction between explicit and implicit communication.
- Theoretical and experimental approaches to the relationship between language and thought (and culture).

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding.

- Ability to analyze real cases of communication, identifying explicitly conveyed content from implicitly conveyed content.
- Ability to recognize the persuasiveness of lingustic formulations.
- Ability to critically read scientific articles, and evaluate experimental studies.

Autonomy of judgment

- Development of the ability to judge the impact of specific linguistic formulations on decisions and behavior.
- Development of the ability to evaluate experimental methodologies and interpretations of data.

Communication skills

- Enhancement of the ability to communicate content clearly and effectively, taking into account the impact

that specific linguistic formulations can have on opinion formation and behavior adoption.
- Acquisition of awareness of how certain linguistic expressions may be perceived as offensive or discriminatory.

Learning skills

Development of the ability to pursue education independently, with critical awareness.

Contents

The first part of the course is dedicated to the relationship between language and communication, and in particular we will investigate how, during a conversational exchange, speakers can communicate much more than what they literally say. The second part of the course focusses on the relationship between language and thought: We will investigate if, and to what extent, speaking a certain language may impact on conceptualization and on behaviour.

Detailed program

- Language and communication
- Explicit and implicit
- Semantics and pragmatics
- Figurative language
- Language and thought
- Experimental studies that investigate whether particular linguistic expressions impact on thought in the following areas:
    1. Attributing stereotypically masculine/feminine properties to noun referents in languages that use morphological gender marking.
    2. Focusing on the "form" or on the "substance" of objects depending on the presence of count nouns / mass nouns in one's language.
    3. Perceiving or not perceiving color nuances depending on whether one's language has a more or less rich lexical repertoire for referring to colors.
    4. Strategies for spatial orientation depending on the linguistic expressions available in one's language.
    5. 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 case studies, exercises to apply theoretical notions to

practice, with the aim of encouraging students to critically process the proposed topics, and also use them to read reality. Indicatively, there will be 42 hours of in-person lecture-based classes and 14 hours of interactive lessons. The course is taught in Italian.

Assessment methods

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

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; exercises require to apply the theoretical notions taught during lessons to analyze conversational exchanges.

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.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

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

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.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES