UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Developmental Psychology - 1

2627-1-E2403P006-T1

Learning area

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

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding
The course introduces students to the challenges related to explaining development and identifying the mechanisms of change. It provides a basic understanding of the main theories of psychological development and the changes in psychological functioning and behavior that characterize perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and social development from birth to adolescence.

Applying knowledge and understanding
The course addresses the challenges involved in understanding and explaining development.
It includes the acquisition of basic knowledge of changes in behavior and psychological functions across the life cycle.
It promotes the development of the ability to critically evaluate the explanations of development offered by different theories.

Making judgments
By presenting and discussing developmental phenomena and empirical research, students will gain the capacity to independently assess the strengths and weaknesses of various theoretical approaches to psychological development, and to critically interpret research findings. The examination method, comprising open-ended questions and, upon request, an oral interview, encourages the development of independent judgment and critical thinking in explaining developmental phenomena.

Communication skills
The course promotes the development of communication skills through in-class discussion of research examples and opportunities for students to practice answering open-ended questions on course topics. The exam includes open-ended questions that require the use of appropriate language and the ability to reason, argue, and create connections between acquired knowledge, skills also required during the oral exam, when requested

Learning skills
The course provides the theoretical tools to foster autonomous learning and continuous updating in the field of developmental psychology. Students are encouraged to critically reflect on issues related to explaining development and identifying mechanisms of change, to engage with scientific literature, and to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge

Contents

The course will examine how the main classical approaches and theories of developmental psychology have addressed its central questions, with particular focus on the relationship between biological factors and experience and on Piaget's theory. It will cover the changes occurring in children's behavior and psychological functioning from conception to adolescence, across cognitive, emotional, affective, and social development.

All topics will be presented through reference to the most representative research in each area.

Detailed program

- Defining development
- Core issues in developmental psychology
- Theories and methods in developmental psychology (Behaviorism, Constructivism, Cognitivism)
- Cognitive development
- Development of language and communication
- Affective and emotional development
- Social development
- Moral development

Prerequisites

Nothing specific.

Teaching methods

In addition to frontal lectures (80% of the teaching hours), the course offers guided discussions of video presentations (20%).

Assessment methods

The exam is written. It includes multiple choice questions and open questions. Multiple choice questions provide extensive evaluation of knowledge acquisition; open questions evaluate students' critical thinking on such knowledge.
Evaluation criteria are as follows:

- Multiple-choice questions: Accuracy of answers.
- Open-ended questions: Appropriateness of terminology, logical and formal organization of the text, ability to support claims, and capacity to identify connections between concepts.
  The final grade is based on the overall score obtained in the two parts of the written exam, according to the following scale:
- 18: barely sufficient knowledge, minimal argumentative skills
- 19–22: sufficient knowledge of fundamental contents, with poor or uncertain argumentation
- 23–26: fair knowledge, good argumentative skills with some inaccuracies
- 27–30: solid knowledge, good command of argumentation and critical thinking
- 30 cum laude: fully adequate knowledge, clear and comprehensive argumentation, excellent command of language

The course is though in Italian. Nevertheless, Erasmus students may contact the instructor to arrange the possibility of studying from an English-language bibliography and/or taking the exam in English.

No ongoing/midterm assessments are scheduled.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

1. Lecture slides.
   Further detailed information about the teaching materials will be posted on the course web page before classes start.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING