UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Developmental Psychology - 2

2627-1-E2403P006-T2

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 judgemets
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 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

Learning skills
The course provise some solid theorical bases and instruments concerning students' critical discussion and evaluation, to permit them to acquire the authonomy concerning the critical acquisition of new knowlege concerning developmental psychology.

Contents

We will analyze how the main approaches and classical theories of psychological development have answered the central questions of developmental psychology, with particular reference to the relationship between biological factors and experience and to Piaget's theory. We will illustrate the changes that occur in children's behavior and psychological functioning from conception to adolescence in the context of cognitive, emotional, affective, and social development. All these topics will be presented through reference to the most representative research on the various topics.

Detailed program

Main questions and theories of Developmental Psychology,
Prenatal and infant development of psychological and motor functioning
Main psychological acquisitions and changes in preschool age about the in cognitive, communicative, linguistic, social , emotional and affective processes,
The development of personal identity and Self
The Typical Developmental Trajectories of the psychological Functions
Main psychological acquisitions and changes in childhood, preadolescence and adolescence
Main methodological approaches in Developmental Psychology
Main authors and theories: Piaget, Vygotskij, Bruner

Prerequisites

Nothing specific.

Teaching methods

Didactic delivery – front lessons 90% and Interactive Delivery 10% of the entire amount of the course's hours.
In addition to frontal lectures, the course will offer guided discussions of video presentations. Slides and some psychological articles will be available to all students through the e-learning website.

Assessment methods

No mid-term tests are planned.
The exam is written with oral interview upon request. The written exam includes 31 multiple choice questions and 3 open questions. Multiple choice questions provide extensive evaluation of knowledge acquisition; open questions evaluate students' critical thinking on such knowledge.
The written exam consists of 31 multiple-choice questions and 3 open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions provide an extensive assessment of general knowledge; the open-ended questions assess the student's critical thinking on that knowledge.
The final grade is the average of the two types of tests. Any honors earned in the different parts of the test will be counted as 1 point each. If the final grade is 30, this will be specifically notified.
The final grade takes into account the overall score obtained in the different parts of the test, according to the following scale:

- 18: just enough knowledge, minimal application and interpretation skills;
- 19-22: sufficient knowledge of the main content, with some application uncertainties;
- 23-26: fair knowledge, good application skills with some inaccuracies;
- 27-30: solid knowledge, good mastery of techniques and critical skills;
- 30 with honors: fully adequate knowledge, complete mastery, excellent command of language.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

- Santrock, J.W. (2026). Psicologia dello sviluppo (5° ed.). McGraw Hill
- Murray, L. (2015). Le prime relazioni del bambino. Milano: CortinaMacchi Cassia V.- Quadrelli, E. (2003). Nati per apprendere. La mente del bambino nel primo anno di vita. Roma: Carocci.
- Macchi Cassia V., Valenza E., Simion F. (2012). Lo sviluppo della mente umana. Dalle teorie classiche ai nuovi orientamenti. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Macchi Cassia V.- Quadrelli, E. (2003). Nati per apprendere. La mente del bambino nel primo anno di vita. Roma: Carocci.
- lectures' slides, articles and teacher's handout.

Sustainable Development Goals