UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Learning, Thinking and Decision Making

2627-2-E2006P008

Learning area

2: Psychosocial aspects underlying communication.

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Human cognition.
- Development of knowledge and beliefs.
- Psychological factors biasing human knowledge and its employment.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Applying what is known of human cognitive processes to the comprehension of common social and communication contexts.
- Devising debiasing methods for the correct communication of information.

Making judgments

- Develop critical reasoning skills, both through reflection and in-depth study of the theoretical content addressed during the course, and through analysis of how the processes of learning, reasoning and decision-making work in some communication dynamics.

Communication skills

- Develop the ability to communicate the psychological dynamics underlying individuals' learning, thinking

and decision-making in a clear and apprpriate manner.
- Develop the ability to discuss critically and consciously with interlocutors from different backgrounds.

Learning skills

- Acquire basic knowledge that provides a solid foundation for independent study, with a focus on the psychological basis of behaviour.

Contents

The course analyses, also with practical examples, the main empirical studies and theoretical models concerning learning, concept development, deductive and inductive reasoning, hypotheses testing, problem solving, and decision making.

Detailed program

- Learning.
- Concepts and categorisation.
- Reasoning, exploration and testing of hypotheses, problem solving.
- Decision making.

Prerequisites

None.

Teaching methods

All lessons will be in class.

Different teaching methods will be used:

1. Lessons. They will be used to: a) present and explain the contents; b) answers the questions and scrutinise the most complex topics; c) discuss together theoretical/methodological issues of particular interest. These lessons will make up (approximately) the 80% of the course (46 hours).
Approximately the 20% of the course (10 hours) will be used to work on assignments and discuss/comment together the results of these assigments. The aim of these assignments is trying to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired during the lessons to real cases of communication. For the assigments, students will work in group.

2. Short self-evaluation questionnaires. Every week, students will be asked to fill in a short questionnaire with multiple-choices questions on the topics presented during the last lectures. These questionnaires will NOT be evaluated. However, students will be able to self-evaluate their learning progresses. Filling the questionnaires is not mandatory, but encouraged.

Assignments are only for students who complete the course in active participation mode; self-evaluation questionnaires are mainly for students who complete the course in active participation mode.

The course is held in Italian.

Assessment methods

Written exam

Four computer-based open questions. Answers have a length of approximately 15 lines (maximum time for the exam: 50 minutes). Questions may be on both theoretical and empirical/methodological arguments that are part of the textbooks and reading materials (and independently of wether they have been discussed in class). Each question is evaluated with a scale that goes from 0 (unanswered question, or totally not consequential or patently wrong answer) to 7.5 (well-argued complete and correct answer). The sum of the scorse of the 4 questions gives the final grade of the exam or – if the grade is at least 18 – the starting grade of the optional oral exam. Honors (cum laude) is awarded in the following cases: a) the exam, which received a score of 30, is conducted in an excellent manner and is perfect in terms of the use of the discipline's specialized terminology; b) the final score exceeds 30.5 (see below regarding the assignment of any additional points for students who complete the course in active participation mode).

The grid below provides a general description of the correspondence between grades and exam quality:

- 30 with honors (cum laude): excellent performance, both in terms of knowledge and critical and expressive articulation;
- 30: outstanding performance, complete knowledge, well-articulated and correctly expressed;
- 27–29: good performance, thorough and satisfactory knowledge, substantially correct expression;
- 24–26: fair performance, knowledge present in the main areas but not exhaustive and not always correctly articulated;
- 21–23: sufficient performance, knowledge sometimes superficial, expression and articulation incomplete and not always appropriate;
- 18–21: barely sufficient performance, knowledge present but superficial; expression and articulation of content with significant gaps;
- < 18: insufficient performance, knowledge very incomplete or absent, lack of orientation in the subject.

For students completing the course in active participation mode (and that have obtained at least 18 in the written exam): Each practical exercise will be evaluated with a score from 0 to 2. Also active participation to the lessons will be evaluated with a score from 0 to 2. At the ends, the average score will be computed and this score will be summed to the grade obtained in the written exam. The score is rounded down for decimal of .5 or below and up for decimal of .6 or above). Note that this score is summed to the other scores only if the student obtain at least 18/30 in the written exam.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Cherubini P., Bricolo E., Reverberi C. (a cura di) (2021). *Psicologia generale* (nuova edizione). Milano: Raffaello Cortina.

Chapters covering the following topics: Learning, Concepts, Problem solving, Decision Making. In particular:

- Chapter 1 > only 1.1, 1.2, 1.4.

- Chapter 6 > the whole chapter except for: figure 6.1, box 6.2, box 6.5, paragraph 6.4.1; with regard to 6.4.2, only weighted deltaP and evidence integrarion should be considered.
- Chapter 7 > the whole chapter excep for: paragraph 7.3.3.2, paragraph 7.5.1.3, paragraph 7.5.2.1, paragraph 7.5.2.2, figure 7.2, figure 7.4, box 7.1, section 7.6.2.
- Chapter 8 > the whole chapter.
- Chapter 14 > only 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.5, 14.7, 14.9, 14.10, 14.12.

Note that the topics that are not explained in lectures, but are present in the indicated paragraphs of the textbook, are part of the exam programme.

Erasmus students can contact the teacher to agree upon an English bibliography and/or the possibility to make the exam in English.

Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES