UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Motivational Processes and Decision Making

2627-2-F5112P020

Learning area

Social psychology, economic psychology and decision-making

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Basic knowledge of psychological processes, cognitive, emotional and motivational, in choice contexts
- The relationship between affect, motivational processes and decision making
- The main methodologies in the psychological study of decision
- Advanced knowledge on potentialities/limits of psychological research on decision in different applicative contexts (social, economic, organizational and health)

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Identifying the emotional and motivational aspects most involved in decision making
- Ability to critically analyze materials and research reports on decision making
- Knowing how to design and implement a scientific research project that investigates the relationship between emotions, motivation and decision making

Making judgements

- The course aims to develop - through group acitivities, discussion of experiments and the development of a research project - the ability to analyse scientific research on decision making, reasoning in critical way about the tools used, the design followed and the results obtained.

Communication skills

- The course promotes the ability to describe, explain and comment the theories learned and the results of the research reported in the relevant literature not only during the exam but throughout the whole course and in front of the class (through group activities and the development of a research project).

Learning skills

- The active participation in the classroom activities, the development of a research project, and the critical reflection on the topics of the course, will improve the ability to study in a largely self-directed or autonomous manner.

Contents

The course aims to introduce students to the study of motivational and emotional processes involved in decision making. Main theoretical approaches in the field will be presented and large attention will be devoted to the discussion of recent empirical studies investigating the role of motivation and emotion in decisional processes.

Students will be also involved in the development of a research project that will give them the opportunity to deepen the knowledge of some specific topics.

Detailed program

- Motivation: recent developments; role in decision making processes
- Emotions: recent developments; role in decision making processes
- The assessment of motivation and emotional experience
- Affect and information processing: emotion as a resource
- Affect, motivation and cognition in decision making processes
- Case studies: affect and health, affect and purchase decisions
- The phases of a research project in the study of the decision

Prerequisites

Nothing specific. A good knowledge of the basis of General Psychology enables a more aware use of the course contents.

Teaching methods

Two different teaching methods:
8 DE (content delivery) lessons in presence
20 DI (interactive teaching) lessons in presence with group activities (discussions of experiments, literature and project works).

The material (slides and, when possible, tests/questionnaires and scientific articles) is made available on the e-learning site of the course.

Although this course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students, course material can also be available in English, and students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so.

Assessment methods

The verification of learning will be carried out through an oral examination aimed at verifying the specific knowledge of the main contents of the course.
The evaluation criteria are: correctness of the answers, ability to argue, synthesize, create links, and the ability to critically analyze the phenomena. For this examination mode no mid-term assignments are graded.

During the course, students are given the opportunity to develop, during the lessons, a research project aimed at investigating the relationship between emotions, motivation and decision making. The research project can be developed individually or in small groups, on themes freely chosen by the student, under the supervision of the teacher. Students will give an oral presentation of the project. A written report on the research project must be prepared individually (project work).
For students involved in the development of a research project an ad hoc examination will be offered. This will consist in:

- an evaluation of the presentation (40% of final grade)
- an evaluation and of the project work (50% of final grade)
- an oral exam (10% of final grade) aimed at deepening the contents of the report.
  The evaluation criteria of the report are: completeness of the literature review, adequacy in the formulation of the research aims, correctness of the chosen methodologies, adequacy in the formulation of the expected results, formal quality. During the oral examination the student will have to present her/his work briefly. The evaluation criteria of this examination are: ability to present and argue, to create links and critical reading of the investigated phenomena.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

- Carmeci, F.A., Misuraca, R., Cardaci, M. (2007). Emozioni e decisioni. In R. Misuraca, B. Fasolo, M. Cardaci (a cura di), I processi decisionali – Paradossi, sfide, supporti. Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 115-146.
- D'Addario, M. (2012) La decisione. In P. Cherubini (a cura di) Psicologia generale. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore, pp. 567-607.
- Graffeo, M., Bonini, N. (2012). Il ruolo dell'emozione nelle scelte economiche. In G. Bellelli, R. Di Schiena (a cura di), Decisioni ed emozioni. Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 107-125.
- Lerner, J.S., Li, Y., Valdesolo, P., Kassam, K.S. (2015) Emotion and decision making. Annual Review of Psychology, 66:799-823. doi: 10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115043. Epub 2014 Sep 22. PMID: 25251484.
- Peters, E., Lipkus, I., Diefenbach, M.A. (2006). The functions of affect in health communications and in the construction of health preferences. Journal of Communication, 56, 140-162.
- Steca, P. (2021). Le emozioni. In P. Cherubini, E. Bricolo e C. Reverberi (a cura di), Psicologia generale. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore, pp. 439-484.
- Steca, P. (2021). La motivazione. Fattori e processi. In P. Cherubini, E. Bricolo e C. Reverberi (a cura di), Psicologia generale. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore, pp. 485-530.
- Zeelenberg, M., Nelissen, R. M. A., & Pieters, R. (2008). Emotion, motivation and decision making: A feeling is for doing approach. Intuition in judgment and decision making, 173-190.
- SLIDE DEL CORSO

Detailed information about other materials will be published on the course webpage (e-learning website).

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING