UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Philosophy of Communication in Spoken and Signed Languages

2627-2-E2007P013

Learning area

III. Learning area: Acquisition of socio-cultural contextual knowledge and skills aimed at interlinguistic and intercultural communication and mediation in the context of
deafness

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Origin and evolution of language and of communication
- Main theoretical and experimental approaches to verbal and non-verbal communication
- The importance of the concept of "intention" for communication
- Theoretical and experimental approaches to the study of literal meaning (semantics) and of non-literal meaning (pragmatics)

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding

- Being able to identify and distinguish communicative acts and informative behaviours
- Being able to distinguish explicit and implicit messages
- Being able to interpret communicative messages taking into consideration the multimodality in communication (linguistic, non-linguistic and non-verbal aspects)
- Being able to to reflect on, analyze, and manipulate language (metalinguistic awareness)

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 beliefs and behaviors.

Learning skills

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

Contents

The course is divided into two thematic modules. One module focuses on the fundamentals of communication: its essential characteristics and functions, its evolution, main views on communication, the concept of intention, nonverbal communication systems, communication of emotions. The second module focuses on the presentation and analysis of specific cases and experimental studies on spoken and signed communication, with special attention to the configuration that specific communicative phenomena (e.g., irony and metaphor) take in spoken and signed communication.

Detailed program

- What is communication? Dimensions and functions of communication, relationship between language and communication, the multicomponentiality of communication and communicative competence.
- To what extent has language evolved in our species to facilitate communication?
- The distinction between informational behavior and communicative act and the centrality of the concept of intentionality.
- Nonverbal communication: communicating through the face and body.
- The meaning of sentences beyond what is said: explicit and implicit speech acts and the speaker's meaning.
- What is said and what is communicated
- Pragmatics (speech acts, metaphor and irony) in spoken and signed languages

Prerequisites

It is assumed that students have already passed the exam of Linguistics of spoken and signed languages (mandatory exam of the first year), and therefore some notions related to language structure are taken for granted. Students who have not (yet) taken the Linguistics exam are encouraged to report any deficiencies to the teacher in order to arrange support activities.

For the academic year 2026/2027 it will not be possible to select this course as a single-course entry.
Exam not selectable from the study plan by students not enrolled in Interpretariato e Traduzione in Lingua dei Segni Italiana (LIS) e Lingua dei Segni Italiana Tattile (LIST) *(Italian Sign Language (LIS) and Tactile Italian Sign Language (LIST) Interpretation)*.

Teaching methods

The course has 42 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 reflect upon language (metalinguistic awareness). Indicatively, there will be 30 hours of in-person lecture-based classes and 12 hours of interactive lessons.
The course is taught in Italian.

Assessment methods

The exam is written and consists of multiple-choice and open-ended questions.
The questions are designed to assess students' actual mastery of both theoretical knowledge and the ability to analyze a real-world communication case.
There are no midterm exams.
The evaluation will not take form or style into account, but only the content. Specifically:
30 with honors: excellent performance, including critical reflection on the content
30: very good performance, comprehensive knowledge
27–29: good performance, comprehensive and satisfactory knowledge
24–26: fair performance, knowledge present on key points but not comprehensive
21–23: passing performance, knowledge present but sometimes superficial
18–21: barely passing performance, knowledge present but superficial
< 18: failing performance, knowledge absent or very incomplete, lack of understanding of the subject

Textbooks and Reading Materials

La bibliografia verrà indicata sul sito e-learning del corso.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION