



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Principi di Psicologia Sociale per il Web Design

2627-1-F9202P003-F9202P00302

Learning area

STUDY OF THE MEANS BY WHICH COMMUNICATION TAKES PLACE

Study of the ways in which communication takes place in digital contexts, with particular attention to the psychological and social processes that shape users' perception, interpretation, and behavior. This learning area addresses the principles of persuasion, social influence, credibility, trust, and attitude formation, applying them to the design of web interfaces and content. It also explores the main foundations of visual design — hierarchy, color, typography, composition, readability, and accessibility — as tools for guiding attention, facilitating understanding, and supporting effective and ethically aware digital communication.

Learning objectives

1. Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course, students will have developed a critical understanding of the psychological and social principles that influence web interface design, with a particular focus on social web environments and digitally mediated communication.

The course provides theoretical tools for analyzing online communication processes, while introducing the foundations of User-Centered Design, which places the user (rather than the website itself) at the center of the design process. Special attention is given to social influence mechanisms and the main theories of social psychology relevant to the persuasive and inclusive design of digital interfaces.

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

Students will be able to:

Critically evaluate the structure and composition of web interfaces through a psychosocial lens;

Design persuasive interfaces for the social web, drawing on theories of social influence and collective behavior;

Create web pages and interfaces, integrating theoretical knowledge with user-centered design practices;

Use digital design and prototyping tools, including moodboards, user personas, wireframes, and UI mockups created with basic use of Figma.

3. Making judgements

Students will develop the ability to critically assess design choices in digital environments, recognizing their communicative, relational, and ethical implications. They will be able to formulate independent and informed evaluations of interface proposals and suggest improvements based on psychosocial insights.

4. Communication skills

Students will be able to clearly present and justify their design choices, both orally and in writing, using appropriate technical language and relevant theoretical references. They will also be able to collaborate in teams and communicate effectively with non-specialist stakeholders in design-related contexts.

5. Learning skills

Students will develop the ability to learn autonomously, keeping pace with the rapid evolution of web technologies and theoretical frameworks. They will be able to integrate new digital tools and theoretical concepts into their design practice, maintaining a reflective and user-centered approach.

Contents

The module Principles of Social Psychology for Web Design aims to provide students with an integrated understanding of the website design and development process, combining theoretical, methodological, and applied aspects.

The course addresses the main concepts related to the design of hypertexts and web interfaces, with particular attention to usability, Interaction Design, User Experience, accessibility, information architecture, and visual communication. At the same time, it explores the main psychosocial theories relevant to the web and the social web, including social influence, persuasion, identity, trust, credibility, belonging, and online participation.

The module aims to develop students' ability to understand design as a form of communication capable of shaping users' perceptions, interpretations, and behaviors. To support the design component, students will acquire basic skills in the use of professional tools — e.g., Figma, through an e-learning video course — aimed at creating layouts, mockups, and digital prototypes.

Detailed program

- Fundamentals of usability, User Experience, and Interaction Design for the web, with attention to criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility, navigability, and user satisfaction in interacting with digital interfaces.
- Principles of social psychology applied to digital design, with reference to processes of persuasion, social influence, trust, credibility, identity, and user behavior in online contexts.
- Web interface design, through the organization of information architecture, the definition of content structure, and the development of wireframes, mockups, and prototypes oriented toward the user experience.
- Introduction to Figma for creating web layouts and prototypes, with the acquisition of basic skills in visual design, the construction of graphic components, and the development of interactive digital prototypes.

Prerequisites

The course is introductory and designed as a foundation-level module; therefore, no specific prior knowledge of web design, digital design, or psychology applied to the web is required.

Only a basic knowledge of operating systems is expected, particularly with regard to creating and managing files and folders, recognizing the main file extensions, and carrying out basic operations needed to organize digital materials.

A basic preliminary knowledge of Figma is welcome but not required, and may support the development of the final project. Similarly, some familiarity with the WordPress environment, especially the use of templates, as well as basic knowledge of HTML and CSS, may make it easier to access the course contents and complete the design activities.

Teaching methods

The teaching activities for this module include 14 in-person classes, devoted to both theoretical aspects and practical activities. These are complemented by a series of pre-recorded video courses, available online, focused on practical exercises with Figma and included in the overall course workload. Overall, the course amounts to 28 hours, corresponding to 4 ECTS credits.

During the classes, the active participation of students will be encouraged through classroom discussions, interactive activities, and group discussion sessions. This approach aims to stimulate critical thinking, foster direct engagement, and enable students to apply theoretical concepts to concrete cases and real design situations.

All teaching materials, including slides, scientific articles, audio recordings, and supplementary resources, will be made available on the course e-learning platform, in order to support independent study by non-attending students as well.

Taking classes is highly recommended.

Assessment methods

Learning goals verification includes an in-progress review aimed at setting the design concept for a web site UI. The design review is mandatory for all students.

Learning goals for this module will be evaluated through the development of a group design project (groups of 3 students to create a complete and navigable website, moodboard, wireframes and mockup) that is intended to verify the level attained in the design of graphical interfaces for the web with a particular look at the principles of social psychology

International students (erasmus) can take the exam in English.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Most of the topics covered in the course will be addressed through the slides presented during classes and selected book chapters made available on the e-learning platform. The teaching materials also include video tutorials on the use of Figma, aimed at supporting the practical activities and the development of the final project.

With regard to the use of WordPress and Figma, in addition to the activities carried out in class, students will be provided with online video tutorials and resources from the official documentation, useful for independently exploring technical and operational aspects in greater depth.

For the theoretical aspects related to web interface design, the following texts are recommended:

Recommended bibliography

Haffly C., Rizzon A. Photoshop per il web design. Apogeo.

Beaird J., Persuati C. Web design per creativi, grafici, sviluppatori. Apogeo.

Detailed information about any additional teaching materials will be published on the course e-learning page.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION
