UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Ecology of Psychological Development

2627-2-F5113P017

Learning area

Typical development and educational contexts.

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Theories and models of the ecology of development.
- The interactions between environmental and biological factors, the contributions of the behavioral genetics and the bioecological model.
- Social and cultural contexts of development and the effects of the media in the ecological perspective.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Integration of the bioecological model in the evaluation of the development trajectories and their problems.
- Guide for the strategies of intervention in the educational institutions, with special regard to early childhood and social disadvantage
- Competence in evaluating the problems of the effects of the media on children and adolescents.

Making judgment

- Acquisition of the ability to make independent and critical judgment in the evaluation of individuals and groups and to make intervention plans in the ecology of development field, also taking into account the principles of professional ethics.

Communication skills

- Acquisition of communication skills to interact effectively with various professionals from different cultural and scientific backgrounds, in order to facilitate teamwork and to clearly communicate the specific psychological contribution.

Learning skills

- Promote the ability to learn the new acquisitions in the national and international research field, as well as the ability to learn from the experience of various professionals like teachers and specialists of other disciplines.
- Promote the capacity to undertake advanced training courses in the ecology of development field.

Contents

In the general introduction the main theories of the ecology of development will be presented and discussed, beginning from Bronfenbrenners's theory to the last bioecological model. In the first part of the course the focus will be on the interactions between biological individual factors and environmental factors. The recent issues of the behavioral genetics which are more relevant to biological model will be analyzed, with their implications for cognitive and social development. In the second part of the course the focus will be on the relationships between social and cultural factors of environment and the processes of socialization, with specific regard to early childhood, to social disadvantage, and to the effects of the media on development.

Detailed program

- The basis of Bronfenbrenners' theory of ecological systems and the development of the bioecological model.
- Nature and nurture in the developmental processes.
- Relevant issues of the developmental genetics for the bioecological model.
- Origin and development of individual differences.
- The interactions between biological and environmental factors and their influences on cognitive and social development from early infancy to adolescence.
- Problems and risk factors of the development in the bioecological perspective.
- The new processes of socialization.
- Child care in early infancy.
- Socio-moral development in different environments.
- Social disadvantage and children's development in poverty.
- Effects of poverty on psychological development and interventions on educational inequalities.
- The influences of mass media on development: potentialities, risks and intervention perspectives.

Prerequisites

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

Teaching methods

In addition to the lectures and the slides, part of the teaching will take place through the presentation and the discussion of scientific articles and talks of invited researchers who present their studies concerning some issues of the course. The material (slides and the scientific articles) is made available on the e-learning site of the course. Students can deepen the knowledge of some course topics with a presentation and discussion of a scientific article. Lessons are held in Italian in person and include 22 2-hour frontal lessons and 6 2-hour interactive lessons.

Assessment methods

The evaluation of learning will be carried out through an oral examination aimed at verifying the specific knowledge of the main theoretical and methodological aspects of the issues expounded in the course. The answers to each question will be evaluated in terms of correctness of the answers, argumentative capacity, synthesis, ability to form links among the different areas, and the ability to read critically scientific texts. Moreover, the examination will take into account the comprehension of the implications of the bioecological perspective for the assessment of psychological development and for the interventions in the educational and social contexts. Participation in the optional activities (group presentation and discussions of scientific articles, etc.) proposed during the course contributes to the final evaluation.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Varin D.(2005). "Ecologia dello sviluppo e individualità". Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore; the mandatory parts of the book are: chapters 2, 4, 5 (till page 157), 6, 7 (from page 204).

Plomin, R., DeFries, J.C., Knopik, V.S., Neiderhiser, J.M. (2014). "Genetica del comportamento". Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore; chapters 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 12, 13, 19, 21.

The slides provided by the teachers will be part of the materials for the exam.

Further informations about other readings will be published on the e-learning website.

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.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING