UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

# Communication Skills and Interpersonal Relation Management

**2627-2-F7504Q037**

## Aims

Effective communication and interpersonal skills are fundamental across all professional contexts and are particularly important in marine sciences, where interdisciplinary collaboration, fieldwork, international research projects, and interactions with a wide range of stakeholders are increasingly common. The ability to communicate scientific evidence clearly, collaborate within multidisciplinary teams, and adapt communication strategies to different audiences represents a key professional competence for future marine scientists.
This course aims to provide students with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to communicate effectively, build productive professional relationships, manage interpersonal conflicts, and work successfully within scientific teams. Particular attention is devoted to science communication, stakeholder engagement, intercultural communication, leadership, teamwork, and emotional intelligence.
Through the integration of theoretical lectures, case discussions, simulations and experiential activities, students will develop evidence-based communication skills that can be applied in research, professional and institutional settings.

Learning outcomes.

1. Knowledge and understanding. At the end of the course students will be able to: describe the main theories of interpersonal communication; understand psychological mechanisms underlying teamwork, leadership and interpersonal relationships; understand communication processes within multidisciplinary teams; recognise the importance of stakeholder engagement and intercultural communication in scientific and professional contexts; understand evidence-based approaches to conflict management, feedback and emotional intelligence.
2. Applying knowledge and understanding. Students will be able to: analyse communication processes within professional and scientific teams;
   apply evidence-based communication strategies to different professional situations; communicate scientific information effectively to different audiences; adapt communication styles according to stakeholders and intercultural contexts; apply structured feedback models; manage interpersonal conflicts using appropriate communication techniques.
3. Making judgements. Students will be able to critically analyse communication problems occurring in

professional environments, identify the psychological and interpersonal mechanisms involved, evaluate alternative communication strategies and select the most appropriate solutions according to the characteristics of the situation.
4. Communication skills. Students will develop the ability to communicate clearly and effectively within multidisciplinary teams, present scientific information appropriately to different audiences, participate constructively in collaborative discussions, provide effective feedback, and manage difficult interpersonal interactions.
5. Learning skills.Students will develop reflective skills regarding their own communication style, recognise personal strengths and areas for improvement, and acquire the ability to continue developing their interpersonal competencies throughout their professional careers.

## Contents

The course integrates theoretical knowledge with practical and experiential activities aimed at developing communication, relational and teamwork skills applicable to scientific and professional contexts.

## Detailed program

1. Group and Teamwork

- Group structure and dynamics
- Team development
- Sociograms and analysis of team roles
- Team effectiveness and collaboration

2. Leadership in Scientific Teams

- Leadership theories
- Situational Leadership
- Leadership styles
- Building trust and accountability
- Leadership within multidisciplinary research teams

3. Emotion Regulation

- Emotional awareness
- Emotion regulation strategies
- Mindfulness
- DBT skills applicable to teamwork and communication

4. Communication Theory

- Foundations of interpersonal communication
- Watzlawick's axioms
- Principles of effective communication
- Communicating scientific evidence to different audiences

5. Practical Communication Strategies

- Active listening
- Assertive communication
- Non-verbal communication
- Public speaking
- Scientific presentations
- Communication within multidisciplinary teams

6. Feedback Mechanisms

- Giving constructive feedback
- Receiving feedback
- Feedback culture
- Johari Window
- MACRO YES model

7. Conflict Management

- Sources of conflict
- Conflict resolution strategies
- Managing difficult conversations
- Collaborative problem solving

8. Psychological Mechanisms in Group Collaboration

- Relationship dynamics
- Personality differences
- Cooperation
- Trust within scientific teams

9. Empathy and Emotional Intelligence

- Emotional intelligence
- Empathy
- Perspective taking
- Managing interpersonal relationships
- Emotional competencies in professional environments

10. Stakeholder Engagement and Intercultural Communication

- Stakeholder engagement in scientific and environmental contexts
- Identifying and understanding stakeholders
- Communicating with different stakeholder groups
- Public engagement
- Intercultural communication

11. Stress, Burnout and Resilience

- Occupational stress
- Burnout
- Coping strategies
- Building resilience
- Promoting wellbeing within professional environments

## Prerequisites

No specific prerequisites are required.

## Teaching form

The course is delivered entirely in English and consists of 21 two-hour classes, in person, organised as follows:
-5 two-hour lectures performed as Didactic Delivery (DE) (12 hours);
-16 two-hour classes initially delivered through a short theoretical lecture (approximately 20–30 minutes), followed by activities based on Interactive Teaching (DI), including guided discussions, case analyses, role-playing, team-based learning and classroom exercises (30 hours).

The course combines theoretical knowledge with practical application through lectures, discussion of scientific literature, analysis of real-life case studies, small-group activities, role-playing exercises and structured classroom discussions. Interactive activities are designed to foster critical thinking, collaborative learning and the application of communication skills to realistic professional scenarios.

## Textbook and teaching resource

Teaching materials will include lecture slides, selected peer-reviewed scientific articles, additional readings and multimedia resources uploaded to the e-learning platform. Additional material may be provided throughout the course according to the topics discussed during the lectures.

## Semester

first term

## Assessment method

The final assessment consists of an individual written case analysis.
Students will analyse a realistic professional scenario involving communication, teamwork and interpersonal relationships in scientific or professional contexts.

The assessment is designed to evaluate the achievement of the learning outcomes described in the Dublin Descriptors, with particular reference to:
D1 – Knowledge and understanding: knowledge of the theoretical models of communication, teamwork, leadership, conflict management, science communication, stakeholder engagement and intercultural communication.
D2 – Applying knowledge and understanding: ability to apply theoretical concepts to the analysis of a professional case and propose evidence-based communication strategies.
D3 – Making judgements: ability to critically analyse communication processes, identify interpersonal and organisational issues, evaluate alternative approaches and justify proposed solutions.
D4 – Communication skills: ability to present the written analysis in a clear, coherent and well-structured manner, using appropriate scientific terminology.

D5 – Learning skills: ability to integrate different concepts, critically reflect on communication processes and transfer the acquired knowledge to novel professional situations.

No mid-term examinations are planned.

The final grade is expressed on a 30-point scale and will be based on the following criteria.

**Assessment below 18/30**
D1: The student demonstrates insufficient knowledge of the theoretical concepts discussed during the course.
D2: The student is unable to apply theoretical knowledge appropriately to the analysis of the proposed case study.
D3: The student does not critically analyse the communication scenario and is unable to justify the proposed communication strategies.
D4: The written analysis is unclear, poorly organised and does not use appropriate scientific terminology.
D5: The student demonstrates limited ability to integrate concepts or transfer the acquired knowledge to new professional situations.

**Assessment 18–22/30**
D1: The student demonstrates basic theoretical knowledge, although with some inaccuracies.
D2: The student applies theoretical concepts to the case study, but with partial integration of communication models.
D3: The student demonstrates basic critical reasoning, although some analyses remain superficial.
D4: The written analysis is generally clear and uses appropriate terminology, although with some inaccuracies.
D5: The student demonstrates a basic ability to connect the concepts addressed during the course.

**Assessment 23–27/30**
D1: The student demonstrates good and comprehensive theoretical knowledge.
D2: The student appropriately integrates different communication models in the analysis of the proposed case.
D3: The student critically analyses the communication scenario and proposes coherent evidence-based solutions.
D4: The written analysis is well organised, clearly presented and uses appropriate scientific language.
D5: The student demonstrates good ability to integrate concepts and apply acquired knowledge to professional situations.

**Assessment 28–30/30**
D1: The student demonstrates comprehensive, rigorous and in-depth theoretical knowledge.
D2: The student demonstrates an advanced ability to integrate different communication and psychological models in the analysis of the proposed case study.
D3: The student critically evaluates the communication scenario, proposes well-justified evidence-based interventions and supports them with sound analytical reasoning.
D4: The written analysis is exceptionally clear, coherent, well structured and demonstrates excellent command of scientific terminology.
D5: The student demonstrates advanced reflective skills, effectively integrating different concepts and transferring the acquired knowledge to novel and complex professional situations.

## Office hours

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## Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | GENDER EQUALITY | CLIMATE ACTION