# General Psychology

## Prof. Andrea Gaggioli

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of the course is to present students with an overview of the organising principles of human behaviour and mental processes. It will explore the cognitive emotional and communicational-relational skills that are particularly important when it comes to learning and education, participating in school and in professional environments and educational and careers guidance. There will be a particular focus on school welfare and processes of psychological and emotional empowerment that enable teachers to promote the personal growth and psycho-social well-being of students using an approach based on positive psychology.

By the end of the course students will:

* be able to explore the main psychological functions (feeling and perception, attention and knowledge, learning, abstract thinking, intelligence and language), the key models for developing personality and emotive and motivational components of human experience
* understand the role of experience – in terms of its cognitive, emotional and motivational dimensions – and in terms of learning processes
* be able to examine the main neuro-psychological processes involved in teaching and learning, with a particular focus on brain plasticity
* understand the emotional/affective and motivational aspects involved in the learning relationship
* be able to identify and promote the relevant “life skills” for education contexts and educational/careers guidance processes, focusing particularly on: emotional skills (self-awareness, the management of the emotions and stress management); relational skills (empathy, effective communication and effective relationships); cognitive skills (problem solving, decision making, critical thinking and creative thinking)
* recognise the nature and quality of interaction processes with a view to preventing unsuitable behaviours in interactions between peers and with the teacher and other adults, and facilitating positive interaction processes
* develop an awareness of the risk factors that can undermine teachers’ well-being at work and apply appropriate preventative and stress-management strategies

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into four main areas, each with a particular focus accompanied by practical exercises.

* Attention; learning and mnestic processes;
* The emotional/affective aspects of education;
* How to promote the acquisition of relevant life skills in different educational contexts and through dedicated career counselling initiatives: the approach offered by Positive Psychology and Integrated Positive Education.
* Professional well-being: risk factors that can affect the professional well-being of teachers and stress management.

***READING LIST***

Texts to be studied analytically (used for credit computation):

* + P.L. BALDI (a cura di), *Psicologia generale*. Pearson Italia, Milano-Torino, 2018 (capitoli: 1, 4, 5 e 6)\*
  + F. CRISTOFOLINI, A. GAGGIOLI, *La felicità si impara (anche) a scuola. Una guida all'educazione positiva integrata*, Pearson Academy, 2021.

Preparation of a text of your choice from:

* + CHIRICO A., GAGGIOLI A., *La Profonda Meraviglia: La Psicologia dei Momenti di Eternità*. Edizioni San Paolo, 2021.
  + CSIKSZENTMIHALYI M., Flow. Psicologia dell’esperienza ottimale. ROI Edizioni, 2021.
  + NORMAN DOIDGE (a cura di), *Il cervello infinito: storie di conquiste personali alle frontiere della neuroscienza*. Ponte alle Grazie, Milano, 2014.
  + DANIEL SIEGEL, *Diventare consapevoli. Una pratica di meditazione rivoluzionaria*, Raffaello Cortina, 2019.
  + MARTIN SELIGMAN, *Imparare l'ottimismo. Come cambiare la vita cambiando il pensiero*. Giunti, 2015

Supplementary materials available on the Blackboard platform (slides, handouts, articles, thematic insights).

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures, tutorials, discussions of scientific articles, seminars, studying certain topics in groups and (potentially) talks from visiting experts.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam designed to evaluate their knowledge and understanding of the exam topics. The oral exam will focus on the single-subject part of the course and on any additional material and/or background reading proposed during the course (accessible on Blackboard). The final mark will be based on the following: (i) accuracy of students’ answers; (ii) communication skills and ability to make effective, well-supported arguments during the exam; (iii) capacity for expressing information and arguments in their own words and contextualising what they have learned.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

1. The syllabus applies for attending and non-attending students alike.
2. The course material may be supplemented with handouts, scientific articles and other educational content, which may also be made available on the Blackboard platform.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.