# General Psychology

## Prof. Stefania Balzarotti; Prof. Federica Biassoni; Prof. Alice Cancer; Prof. Paola Iannello

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

The course aimsto introduce the study of psychology and, specifically, to promote the understanding and theoretical exploration of the main areas of scientific psychology investigation. It also aims to highlight the fundamental characteristics of psychology as a scientific discipline.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

*Knowledge and understanding*

* know the theories and psychological models pertaining to the main areas of general psychology investigation
* know the operational basics of the main basic processes
* know and use a specific vocabulary pertaining to the constructs examined when expressing their acquired knowledge

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*

* read and understand scientific papers on the topics covered
* apply some of the models studied to the reading of cases and/or phenomena that require analysing

*Autonomous judging skills*

* think critically when comparing the different approaches investigated, and grasp their limits and differentiating features

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will explore the main investigative areas of general psychology: sensation and perception, states of consciousness, thinking, memory, learning, intelligence, language and communication, motivation, emotions. The course will analyse the theoretical perspectives and different research methods underlying the various schools of psychology. The course will be divided into the following work units:

Unit 0 - Psychology as a scientific discipline

**Module 1 (Prof. Balzarotti)**

Unit 1 - Sensation and perception

* The sensation
* Psychophysics
* Multisensory experiences
* Physical reality and phenomenal reality
* The perceptual constancies
* Object recognition
* Perception and action

Unit 2 - Attention and states of consciousness

* Main models of attention
* States of consciousness and their alterations

**Module 2 (Prof. Iannello)**

Unit 3 - Thinking

* Categorisation
* Formats of knowledge
* Reasoning
* Problem-solving
* Decision making

Unit 4 - Memory

* Systems and types
* Recalling
* Forgetting

**Module 3 (Prof. Cancer)**

Unit 5 - Learning

* Classical and operant conditioning
* Cognitive mechanisms of learning
* How to enhance learning

Unit 6 - Emotions

* Main theories on the emotional process
* Emotional expression and regulation

Unit 7 - Intelligence

* Theories of intelligence
* Assessment of intelligence
* Levels of intelligence
* Heritability of intelligence

**Module 4 (Prof. Biassoni)**

Unit 8 - Motivation

* Instincts and drives
* The hierarchy of needs
* Cognitive theories of motivation
* Types of motivation

Unit 9 - Communication and language

* The sign
* Communication and languages
* Main models on communication

Unit 10 - Well-being

* Positive psychology
* Subjective and psychological well-being
* Stress and coping

Unit 11 – Interconnections between units

***READING LIST***

1) R. Ciceri-R.S. Feldman-G. Amoretti, *Psicologia generale,* McGraw-Hill, Milan 4th edition, 2021 Chapters 2 and 12 are not to be studied.

2) L. Anolli (Ed.), *Psicologia generale. Fonti commentate su: emozione,* *percezione, pensiero, memoria*, Il Cisalpino, Milan, 1996. The following sections are to be studied: pp. 73-95; pp. 191-214; pp. 323-338; pp. 361-376.

3) One text chosen from the following:

A. Antonietti, *Pensare creativamente*. PsyPrint, New York, 2021 (acquistabile unicamente tramite Amazon).

P. Bressan, *Il colore della luna: come vediamo e perchè.* Editori Laterza, Bari, 2007.

N. Mammarella, *Psicologia della memoria positiva.* Franco Angeli Editore*,* Milano, 2011*.*

K. Oatley, *Breve storia delle emozioni.* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2007.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures on the principal topics, the reading and methodological analysis of significant research, and the critical study of the basic assumptions of various theoretical perspectives through dialectical comparison. Exercises aimed at helping students acquire the appropriate study method are also envisaged. An approach will be used that teaches students how to apply theoretical models to specific phenomena, analysing them and providing application examples.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam takes place in two parts, both compulsory for all students:

1. a written exam on the general part consisting of 60 multiple-choice questions referring to the manual (text 1 of the reading list). To be admitted to the oral exam, students must have passed the written exam;

2. an oral exam consisting of an interview on the contents of 11 units and on texts 2 and 3 and reading list. In the oral part, students are assessed on their ability to create links and identify applications in the topics explored.

The written exam assesses students' knowledge of the course contents, distinctions and key concepts, the authors, theories and models. The oral exam assesses students' abilities to orient themselves between topics and to rework their knowledge.

The 60 written exam questions will be of equal weight, each assigned the following mark: 0 in case of no answer or incorrect answer, +0.5 in case of a correct answer. The oral interview will be marked out of thirty, varying from 18 to 30 depending on the correctness and completeness of the student's answers. Specifically, the assessment will focus on the relevance, precision and completeness of the student's answers, their appropriate use of the specific terminology, the reasoned and coherent structuring of their discourse, and their ability to identify conceptual links and open questions.

 The final mark is out of thirty and is based 50% on the mark for the written exam and 50% on that for the oral interview.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Being introductory in nature, there are no prerequisites for attending the course.

At the end of each of modules 1, 2, 3 and 4, a test will be held that simulates the written exam questions; these tests provide students with the opportunity to self-check their preparedness and the adequacy of their study method.

On the Università Cattolica website, in the E-Learning area (Blackboard), students will be able to find all necessary information on the course and notes on the study tools. In addition, the presentations used in class will be made available from time to time.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

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.