**Research methods in psychology**

Prof. Semira Tagliabue

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

The course aims to provide students with basic knowledge about the scientific research process. In particular, the critical points of the reading and planning of psychological research will be taken into consideration with particular attention to the research cycle, research questions, ethics, and research communication. Special attention will be dedicated to the problems related to the topic of measurement in psychology and the use of psychological variables.

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

* know and understand the fundamental principles of the research process as they relate to answering research questions in psychology; the issues related to measurement in psychology, measurement validity and ethics.

APPLYING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

* recognize the difference between scientific and non-scientific communication, and the different types of scientific communication
* being able to read an article identifying relevant information
* identify properly the research claims and constructs within a research paper
* classify variables according to their scale of measurement.

MAKING JUDGEMENTS

* identify reliable resources
* evaluate the coherence between the construct chosen and the measurement/instrument used
* make judgements about whether a specific research respects ethical principles
* make decisions about which type of scientific communication is more suitable to present findings in specific contexts.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will aim to cover the principal features of scientific method, measurement, and communication.

Unit 1: Psychology as a scientific discipline

* 1.1 Knowledge methods
* 1.2 Scientific and non-scientific communication
* 1.3 Reliability of scientific and non-scientific communication

Unit 2: Scientific method

* 2.1 Theory
* 2.2 Research cycle
* 2.3 Thinking like a researcher
* 2.4 Science in contexts

Unit 3: The communication of research in psychology

* 3.1 Looking for and selecting research papers
* 3.2 Sections of a scientific paper
* 3.3 Types of communication
* 3.4 Scientific Writing style: APA style

Unit 4: Research aims and claims

* 4.1 Research questions
* 4.2 Hypotheses
* 4.3 Research goals and claims

Unit 5: Measuring psychological constructs

* 3.1 Concepts and constructs
* 3.2 Operationalization
* 3.3 Manipulated and measured variables
* 3.4 Scales of measurement
* 3.5 Instruments
* 3.6 Reliability and validity

Unit 6: The ethics of research

* 4.1 Historical roots
* 4.2 Risk/benefit ratio
* 4.3 Codes of Ethic
* 4.4 Ethical principles
  + Informed consent
  + Deception
  + Debriefing

***READING LIST***

J. J. Shaughnessy – E. B. Shaughnessy – J. B. Zechmeister,*Research methods in psychology,* McGrawHill, 2015 chapters:1, 2, 3, 13.

“*Research methods in psychology: materials*” EDUCatt, 2023.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lecture - Exercises

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The assessment will consist of two parts:

1. Written essay: students will be requested to produce an essay evaluating (answering to open questions) and critically commenting scientific article assigned by the teacher.
2. Oral interview about knowledge of contents of all the units (three open questions).

In the essay, students must demonstrate that they know information, distinctions, and key concepts of each unit and that they can apply their knowledge to provide a thoughtful comment. Through the oral interview they will have to demonstrate that they know how to orient themselves between the themes and the basic issues discussed during the course, and that they understand them.

The final mark takes 80% of the written essay (maximum score 25) and 20% of the oral interview (maximum score 6).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

***Prerequisites***

The student need a basic knowledge about the concepts of logic and mathematics (algebraic operations).

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.

***Reception***

Prof. Semira Tagliabue receives students by appointment via e-mail: *semira.tagliabue@unicatt.it*.