# Psychology of Diet and Lifestyles

## Prof. Patrizia Catellani

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

The course aims to promote understanding of the psychological dimensions (cognitive, emotional, value-based, social, and behavioural) involved in food and lifestyle choices and changes. In particular, the course focuses on the analysis of strategies aimed at supporting people on their path to health, well-being, and sustainability through tailored online communication.

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

*Knowledge and Understanding*

* Know the main theories of social psychology applied to promoting health, wellbeing, and sustainability.
* Understand the main research methods used in psychology to evaluate interventions to promote health and wellbeing.
* Be able to interpret the findings of psychological research in the area of promoting healthy eating and sustainable lifestyles.

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*

* Apply psychosocial theories and models to promote behaviour change through the use of different methods and technologies.

*Independent judgment*

* Apply their critical thinking skills to the various strategies and interventions used to influence dietary habits and lifestyles.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The first part of the course defines the field of social psychology of eating and analyses the processes and stages of food choices and the different psychological factors involved. The second part of the course looks at the most effective communication strategies to support the process of change towards wellbeing.

Unit 1 - Area of study

Unit 2 - The choice process and phases

Unit 3 **-** Cognitive factors

Unit 4 **-** Emotional factors

Unit 5 - Rules, identity, and values

Unit 6 - Habits and behaviour change

Unit 7 - Communicating about healthy eating

Unit 8 - Types of messages

Unit 9 - The characteristics of beneficiaries

Unit 10 - Digital communication and artificial intelligence

***READING LIST***

*For the option based on the content of the lectures*

* Lecture notes and other teaching material available on Blackboard.
* Reading of research articles available on Blackboard:

M. Milne-Ives-C. Lam-C. De Cock-M.H. Van Velthoven-E. Meinert, Mobile apps for health behavior change in physical activity, diet, drug and alcohol use, and mental health: Systematic review*. JMIR mHealth and uHealt*, *8*, e17046, 2020.

A. Kankanhalli-J. Shin-H. Oh, Mobile-Based interventions for dietary behavior change and health outcomes: Scoping review. *JMIR mHealth and uHealth*, *7*, 1-13, 2019.

Two research articles specifically related to the selected group work.

*For the option based on textbooks*

* P. Catellani-V. Carfora, *Psicologia Sociale dell’Alimentazione,* Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2022.
* Reading of research articles available on Blackboard:
* S.A. Wright-A.E. Schultz, Too gritty to indulge: Grit and indulgent food choices. *Journal of Business Research*, 139, 173-183, 2022.
* P.G. Hansen-M. Schilling-M.S. Malthesen, Nudging healthy and sustainable food choices: three randomized controlled field experiments using a vegetarian lunch-default as a normative signal. *Journal of Public Health*, 43, 392-397, 2019.
* S. Blondin-S. Attwood-D. Vennard-V. Mayneris, *Environmental messages promote plant-based food choices: An online restaurant menu study*. World Research Institute, 2022.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures, discussions based on empirical research, teaching material available online on Blackboard.

Students will be invited to participate in group work based on: a) reading two research articles; b) presenting them in popular form by using different tools, for example editing posts on Instagram.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Written examination. Students have the opportunity to choose between two different examination options.

Students choosing the *option based on the content of the lectures* will have to take a written examination based on the lecture notes, the teaching material available on Blackboard (focusing on the topics explained in the lectures) and their personal contribution to the group work carried out during the course. The examination consists of ten multiple-choice questions and four open questions. For each multiple-choice question, students will receive a mark from 0 (if the answer is wrong or no answer) to 1 (if the answer is correct). For each open question they receive a mark from 0 (if the answer is wrong or no answer) to 5 (if the answer is completely correct). One of the open questions relates to group work. The mark you receive for the answer to this question will be added to the mark obtained in the group work and will range from 0 (if the answer is wrong or no answer) to 5 (if the answer is completely correct). Student preparation is assessed on the basis of relevance, precision, and accuracy of answers and the appropriate use of specific terminology. The maximum mark of 30 cum laude (with distinction) will be awarded to those students who have demonstrated excellence in all course activities.

Students choosing the *textbook-based option* will be required to take a written examination based on the textbook and the research articles indicated in the reading list and available on Blackboard. It consists of ten multiple-choice questions and four open questions. The assessment criteria are the same as for the option based on the content of the lectures (see above).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students should have a basic knowledge of the theories and methods of social psychology.

Registered students can find further online teaching material for the course at the link *http://blackboard.unicatt.it*.

For more information, see the instructor's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or the Faculty noticeboard.

***STUDENT RECEPTION TIME AND PLACE***

Prof. Patrizia Catellani receives students on Thursdays from 11.30 to 12.30 (from January to September) and from 14.30 to 15.30 (from October to December) in the Department of Psychology (Dominicanum, third floor).