# General Psychology and Developmental Psychology

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

The course aims to provide students with the basic notions of general psychology and developmental psychology.

With regard to *General Psychology*, it intends to provide an introductory overview of general psychology, with particular reference to the elements that characterise the discipline as a science, providing an overall picture of mental functions and exploring some of these; moreover, it seeks to explain the main applications of psychology in the educational and training field in relation to both the first years of the child's life and the subsequent phases of the life cycle.

At the end of the course, students will know the main areas of study and investigation of general psychology; understand the nature and functioning of the main psychological processes related to both the cognitive and emotional-motivational spheres; be able to recognise the methods used in the scientific research of general psychology; and be able to critically discuss the applications of a number of topics, concepts and psychological approaches to the educational and training environment in all phases of the life cycle.

With regard to *Developmental Psychology*, the course aims to introduce students to the main models of psychological development in childhood and adolescence; furthermore, the course will define the main stages of development for each topic and encourage students to understand the connections between course topics from a systemic perspective. Specific attention will be given to the development of psychological skills during early childhood (0-3 years), a period in which the foundations are laid for the development of the psychological skills that will characterise the individual for their entire life cycle.

At the end of the course, students will be able to understand the role of explanatory theories presented in relation to specific situations, as well as shape interpretative hypotheses on the basis of the various perspectives explored during lectures. In addition, students will be able to observe the trajectory of individual development in the different environments and identify any common factors or uniqueness, and integrate the results from the analysis of individual psychological development with hypotheses about educational work.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The General Psychology module will present the following topics: the origins of scientific psychology and its relationship with naive psychology; the main research methods; thinking, memory and learning; communication; motivation and emotions. Particular attention will be paid to the study of these processes in interactions with new technologies, starting from childhood, and their impact on the functioning of the individual.

The module on Developmental Psychology will explore psychological dimensions and topics within the various stages of typical development, with particular attention to early childhood from the perspective of the main theoretical models, from intersections with other fields of research and subsequent applicative setbacks. In particular, the study of developmental psychology will focus on the concept of change, whilst highlighting the explanatory theories for each topic as well as the main stages of development. Therefore, in this way, psychological development will be explored from a cognitive, emotional, social and communicative, moral perspective, as well as in relation to its close bond with motor development. The topics will be discussed in light of the importance inter-personal relationships, have for individual psychological development from a cognitive and an emotional perspective: particular emphasis will be placed on the ability to understand one’s own mind as well as that of others, as this skill plays a key role in daily social interaction and in relational dynamics.

***READING LIST***

For the General Psychology module, the study texts will be:

R.J. Gerrig-P.G. Zimbardo-L.M. Anolli-P.L. Baldi (ed. italiana a cura di P.L. Baldi), *Psicologia Generale*, Pearson Italia, Milano-Torino, 2018 (IInd edition) (the chapters to be studied are 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10).

G. Riva, *Nativi digitali. Crescere e apprendere nel mondo dei nuovi media*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2019.

The lecture articles and materials - made available online on Blackboard - are an integral part of the exam.

For the module on Developmental Psychology, students should study the following in preparation for the examination:

S. Caravita-L. Milani-D. Traficante (edited by), *Psicologia dello Sviluppo e dell’Educazione*, Il Mulino, Bologna. Study the first part only (from Chapters n.1 to n. 9), 2018.

I. Castelli-A. Marchetti- D. Massaro (edited by), *La competenza sociale nei bambini. Valutare e promuovere la Teoria della Mente in età prescolare e scolare*. Edizioni Junior, Parma, 2022.

Slides from the course and any other material will be avilable on the Blackboard platform.

***TEACHING METHOD***

For both modules the teaching method will be mainly lectures, integrated by some exercises carried out both individually and in small groups using material supplied by the lecturer.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

There will be a single examination for the whole course, for both modules.

It will be on all the material on the reading list, as indicated by the lecturer: particular attention will be placed on the definition of constructs, explanatory theories and stages of development of each theory presented. It will be an oral examination – preceded by a mid-term written test with closed-ended and multiple choice questions – and will assess: theoretical knowledge, ability to identify the research methods used in research, use of specialist vocabulary, ability to critically process any application of psychological concepts in educational environments. The interim written test and the oral examination must be carried out in the same exam session.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attendance.

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.