



UNIVERSITÀ CUSANO

Teaching	Developmental Psychology
Level and course of study	Course of Study in Psychological Sciences and Techniques (L-24) AA 2024-25
Scientific Disciplinary Sector (SDS)	PSI/04 GSD 2024 11/PSIC-02 PSIC-02/A
Course year	1
Total number of credits	9
Propaedeutics	-
Professor	Micaela Capobianco Nickname: micaela.capobianco Email: micaela.capobianco@unicusano.it reception: check video conference calendar
Presentation	The course provides the student with basic knowledge on the acquisition processes in developmental age - in the period from conception to adolescence - with respect to the different psychological domains (motor, perceptual-sensory, cognitive, affective-emotional, communicative and language, social and moral). The developmental stages in the different domains will be illustrated critically, in the light of the main theoretical approaches in developmental age and from a mostly applicative perspective, linked to the prevention and early identification of risk conditions of socio-cognitive development, communicative-linguistic and gross and fine motor skills, which could evolve into various types of neurodevelopmental disorders: such as, for example, specific or primary disorders or autism spectrum disorders.
Course objectives	1. Basic knowledge of developmental psychology, with respect to the main developmental stages in the different cognitive domains and gradually acquire the use of specific terminology 2. Knowledge of the main theoretical models that explain the development of knowledge, developing a critical sense regarding the role and weight of different biological and environmental factors 3. Basic skills necessary to discriminate between individual variability, common developmental patterns in typical development, risk conditions and atypical development, with a view to prevention and early intervention. 4. Knowledge of the different investigation and evaluation methodologies used in the clinical and research fields to observe the acquisition processes and skills in different age groups 5. Know the most important strategies for strengthening and/or rehabilitating developmental skills in different age groups, in the family context (mother-child

	dyad), school and clinical context, with a view to early prevention and intervention.
Prerequisites	Prerequisites nothing. A knowledge of the basic concepts of general psychology is recommended
Expected learning outcomes	Knowledge and Comprehension abilities Knowledge and understanding At the end of the course, the student will have demonstrated a critical knowledge of the classic theoretical approaches that explain development processes, in comparison with more recent visions, considering the relationship between biological and environmental factors. They will know the main developmental stages common to all children with respect to the different socio-cognitive domains and will be able to understand and discriminate between typical development and variability, risk conditions and identification of atypical development. You will be able to learn the main observation and evaluation methodologies with respect to age groups and objectives in the clinical and/or research field. Through exemplary videos on the skills in the different stages of development and on the different investigation tools that can be used to observe and evaluate the development of the individual child. With E-tivities the student will acquire the ability to reason in application terms on the evaluation and intervention of developmental skills and to be able to make hypotheses on typical or atypical conditions in that age. Application of knowledge The student will be able to evaluate the child's development in different age groups in an integrated way, i.e. by identifying the processes of acquiring a skill through the observation and evaluation of another skill in development. The student will be able to make hypotheses and inferences on the typical, risky or atypical condition of a child at a given age and think critically about the most functional intervention strategies that can be applied in the family, educational or rehabilitation context, from a prevention perspective. and early intervention. The critical sense can also be applied in the context of understanding the main research in scientific literature. Ability to draw conclusions The student will be able to draw conclusions regarding the observation of main behaviors and skills in typical, at-risk and atypical development, in order to be able to early identify developmental profiles linked to neurodevelopmental disorders. Communication skills The student will learn to correctly express basic scientific concepts and to use specific terminology, peculiar aspects of developmental psychology. They will therefore be able to support conversations and structure written texts that refer to acquisition processes, individual differences and development patterns common to all children and development patterns compatible with specific or secondary developmental disorders.
Organization of the course	The course <u>is in Italian</u> and developed through pre-recorded audio-video lessons which, together with slides and handouts, make up the study materials available on the platform. Asynchronous self-assessment tests are then proposed which accompany the pre-recorded lessons and allow students to ascertain both their understanding and the level of knowledge acquired of the contents of each of the lessons. Scheduled web conference lessons are also available and take place during the teaching periods. Teaching also makes use of forums (virtual classrooms) and chats available on the platform which constitute an asynchronous discussion space where teachers and/or tutors identify the most significant themes and topics of teaching and interact with the enrolled students. The E-tivities contribute to the achievement of the training

Course contents

objectives as envisaged by the Dublin descriptors. The interactive teaching is carried out in the "virtual class" forum and includes two different activities, uploaded every two months. In the course materials section, you will find a file with specific instructions on carrying out the activities. Furthermore, on the platform there are some specific folders with example videos on the different topics relating to the different topics of the subject modules. These videos allow the student to practically observe a certain aspect of development, to critically discuss a specific theory or methodology and other topics discussed in the course slides and video lessons.

I. Presentation of the course: main objectives, definition of developmental psychology, reference age ranges. Basic concepts and scientific terminology. Synthetic description of the classical theoretical approaches, with respect to the relationship between "nature and culture", innate and environmental factors, in comparison with a more complex and multifactorial vision relating to the most recent theories. The investigation and study methodologies of developmental psychology are introduced. **II.** Methods of investigation in developmental psychology - behaviorist and innatist theories compared: how to describe changes as a function of age, advantages and limits between longitudinal designs and transversal designs. Quantitative research methods: the experiment, the "quasi-experimental" method and the "correlational" method. The methodology is based on the collection and analysis of spontaneous behavior, in the natural and structured context, the characteristics of interviews and questionnaires with the child and parents. The behaviorist theoretical approach (Skinner and Pavlov), maturationist-innatist (Gesell and Chomsky), psychoanalytic theory (Freud). The theory of learning by observation (Bandura). **III.** Theoretical approaches of an "organismic" nature. The relationship between individual and environment at the basis of the development of knowledge. The main characteristics and basic concepts of Jean Piaget's theory of stage-type cognitive development, intelligence as a biological adaptation. Jean Piaget's theory of stage-type cognitive development, from childhood to adolescence: developmental stages. The theory of socio-cognitive and historical-cultural development. **IV.** Physical and motor development. From prenatal development to birth and the newborn. What the newborn can do and neonatal reflexes. Definition, description and development of the different reflexes. Gross motor development (posture and walking) and fine motor development (manipulation and visual-motor integration). **V.** The evaluation of motor-practical and visuo-motor integration skills; the assessment of intelligence. Perception and sensation. The skills of the newborn and infant. **VI.** Communicative-linguistic development as a multimodal and integrated system, expression of the underlying socio-cognitive development. The appearance of intentional communication, dyadic and triadic interaction. Joint attention and the role of deixis and communicative gestures. Lexical development and the first combinations of two words in the first two years of age. Morphosyntactic development and discursive and narrative skills in preschool. **VII.** The development of the Theory of Mind, from the precursors to the transition from the Psychology of Desire to the Psychology of Belief and False Belief. The deficits in the Theory of Mind module, the assessment methods based on the observation of

	spontaneous behavior and the tasks proposed to children to assess the transition to false belief (around 4 years old). Teaching materials by the teacher. Example videos. VIII. Social and emotional development and affective relationships. Understanding of oneself and others and the stages of moral development by Piaget and Kohlberg. Developmental stages and theoretical approaches on the development of emotions. Johan Bowlby's attachment theory and the attachment styles identified by Mary Ainsworth. The paradigm of the "Strange Situation". The link between internal operating models and attachment style and subsequent social relationships. Teaching materials by the teacher. IX. Observation and evaluation of risk conditions. The early evaluation of developmental sequelae in order to identify risk conditions for socio-cognitive and communicative-linguistic development. Definition and observation of predictive indices and risk profiles correlated with the possible evolution of primary or secondary neurodevelopmental disorders. The neuropsychological profiles of some preschool and school-age children are illustrated and critically discussed with the psycho-educational implications and early intervention strategies, with a view to primary prevention and early intervention during developmental processes.
Materials to study	The student will have to prepare on the following text, studying <u>only parts I, II, III of text:</u> Developmental Psychology: Infancy and Childhood, 2015 Piccin-Nuova Libreria, 2015 -Fifth Canadian Edition ISBN 978-0-17-687397-4 (soft cover) ISBN 978-0-17-687607-4 (PDF) David R. Shaffer (University of Georgia), Katherine Kipp (University of Georgia), Eileen Wood (Wilfrid Laurier University), Teena Willoughby (Brock University), Kim P. Roberts, Alexandra Gottardo, Tobias Krettenauer, Joanne Lee, Nicky Newton - Giampaolo Nicolais (Curatore) <u>Text in Italian for clinical-applicative insights</u> Capobianco, M. (2015). Il linguaggio nei primi 3 anni di vita. Metodi e tecniche per la valutazione, la prevenzione e l'intervento. Franco Angeli, Roma.
Learning assessment methods	The exam consists of a written test with three open questions to answer which will concern the indicated programme. The written exam will take place during the in-person exam sessions on site, as scheduled.