



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

ID

VP27_DIP_PSI

Visiting Professor Program Academic year 2020/2021

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

TEACHING COMMITMENT: 12 hours

COURSE TITLE

Evolutionary Psychopathology

TEACHING PERIOD

2nd term

SCIENTIFIC AREA

Psychology

LANGUAGE USED TO TEACH

Italian

COURSE SUMMARY

The central premise of evolutionary psychology is that our present minds embody the deep historical past, having been shaped across millions of years by the changing demands of the human ecology. Tinbergen (1963) famously pointed out that any biological system can be explained in four ways; that is, from the standpoint of mechanism (What is the system like? How does it work?); that of ontogeny or development (How does the system change over the organism's life course?); that of phylogeny (What is the system's history? How has it changed through evolution, and how does it differ between related species?); and, finally, that of adaptation (Why did the system evolve into its present form? What evolutionary advantages did it provide?). The standard approach in psychology, medicine, and neuroscience is to focus almost exclusively on the proximate level of analysis. Evolutionary disciplines take the next logical step by asking questions about adaptation—which, as Darwin was the first to realize, ultimately reduce to questions about

reproduction. The goal of the course is to unpack the logic of natural selection and clarify the meaning of crucial terms such as fitness, adaptation, and maladaptation respect to Psychopathology.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 To introduce key biological concepts and provide a brief evolutionary overview of human behavior and development.
- 2 To zoom into the mind/brain and discuss the adaptive nature of psychological mechanisms.
- 3 To present the basics of life history theory, including the crucial concept of life history strategies and discuss how life history strategies organize human variation in personality, cognition, and neurobiology.
- 4 To discuss the main tenets of evolutionary psychopathology.

TUTORSHIP ACTIVITIES (IF APPLICABLE)

LAB ACTIVITIES (IF APPLICABLE)

ADDITIONAL COURSE

COURSE TITLE

Evolution

TEACHING PERIOD

2nd term

SCIENTIFIC AREA

Psychology

LANGUAGE USED TO TEACH

Italian

COURSE SUMMARY

The central premise of evolutionary psychology is that our present minds embody the deep historical past, having been shaped across millions of years by the changing demands of the human ecology. Tinbergen (1963) famously pointed out that any biological system can be explained in four ways; that is, from the standpoint of mechanism (What is the system like? How does it work?); that of ontogeny or development (How does the system change over the organism's life course?); that of phylogeny (What is the system's history? How has it changed through evolution, and how does it differ between related species?); and, finally, that of adaptation (Why did the system evolve into its present form? What evolutionary advantages did it provide?). The standard approach in psychology, medicine, and neuroscience is to focus almost exclusively on the proximate level of analysis. Evolutionary disciplines take the next logical step by asking questions about adaptation—which, as Darwin was the first to realize, ultimately reduce to questions about

reproduction. The goal of the course is to unpack the logic of natural selection and clarify the meaning of crucial terms such as fitness, adaptation, and maladaptation respect to Psychopathology.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1 To introduce key biological concepts and provides a brief evolutionary overview of human behavior and development.

2 To zoom in to the mind/brain and discuss the adaptive nature of psychological mechanisms.

3 To present the basics of life history theory, including the crucial concept of life history strategies and discuss how life history strategies organize human variation in personality, cognition, and neurobiology.

4 To discuss the main tenets of evolutionary psychopathology.

TUTORSHIP ACTIVITIES (IF APPLICABLE)

LAB ACTIVITIES (IF APPLICABLE)

OTHER ACTIVITIES BESIDES THE COURSE

VISITING PROFESSOR PROFILE

The candidate must have a curriculum consistent with the teaching activities provided for both courses in terms of publications and of the overall scientific CV.

CONTACT PERSON AT THE DEPARTMENT

Prof. Alessandro Zennaro

alessandro.zennaro@unito.it