

COURSE SYLLABUS

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING

Degree in Psychology
C.U. Cardenal Cisneros
University of Alcalá

Academic year 2024/25
1st Year – 2nd Term

COURSE SYLLABUS

Name of the subject:	LEARNING PSYCHOLOGY
Code:	562005
Studies:	Degree in Psychology
Department and Area of knowledge:	Department of Education and Psychology
Character:	Basic training
ECTS credits:	6
Year and Term:	1st Year, 2nd Term
Lecturer:	Carmen Teresa Casares Guillen
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Language:	Spanish

1. INTRODUCTION

The Centro Universitario Cardenal Cisneros, affiliated to Universidad de Alcalá, guarantees that if face-to-face learning activities are total o partially canceled by health authorities, learning objectives will be achieved through online teaching methodologies and assessment. Face-to-face activities would start again as soon as permitted. The subject is associated with the Academic Skills Development program in the CUCC Undergraduate Degrees, specifically in bibliographic research and reading articles and books. Therefore, it includes activities that will be evaluated within the course and which are explained further on.

This subject is part of the basic training of the Degree in Psychology. It is taught in the first year because it relates to other preceding and subsequent subjects of the academic curriculum, as well as for being closely linked to psychologist profession.

It is included within the content of psychological processes, which is structured along the three first years of the degree. The objective is that the students acquire the knowledge and understand the structure and organisation of the human cognitive system, as well as the basic laws and principles of psychological processes, mainly from an experimental perspective. The contents are structured in subjects centred in one or several processes, from the most basic (1st term) to the most complex (4th and 5th terms); and in other basic subjects that contribute to the integrated knowledge of these processes (biological, evolutionary and social bases). Specifically, it is closely related to the subjects *Perception and Attention* (4th term), *The Psychology of Memory* (3rd term), *Motivation and Emotion* (1st term) and *The Psychology of Thought and Language* (5th term).

Prerequisites and Recommendations

It is important that the student knows from the beginning the dynamic and functioning of the subject (described in this syllabus) and takes this into consideration during the term. To succeed in the subject, a good work ethic is required throughout the term.

For this reason, it is important that the student gets involved and carries out the proposed activities and tasks regularly, as well as to dedicate the necessary time to master the contents of the subject. Therefore, the student should remember that his/her personal work should go beyond participation in class (see number of student working hours).

It is recommended that the student has basic computer skills, such as word processing and web surfing.

Subject description

This basic training subject consists of 6 ECTS credits taught in the second term of the first year of the Degree in Psychology. The aim is to provide the future psychologist the knowledge about the main learning processes: simple learning theories, such as habituation and sensitization, classical and instrumental conditioning and complex learning. The subject is taught in Spanish and a B2 level of Spanish is a requisite in order to take the subject. However, since it is part of the English Friendly program for international students, this syllabus, notes, activities, exams and tutorials will also be available in English.

2. COMPETENCES

Generic competences:

GC1. To acquire the knowledge and understand the principles of Psychology as a scientific discipline, including theory, methods and application fields, with the support of advanced textbooks and documentation incorporating cutting-edge knowledge in this field of study.

GC2. To apply this knowledge in the professional area, by elaborating and defending arguments, and by identifying, articulating and solving problems in the field of Psychology. In other words, to be prepared to work as a general psychologist and not as a specialist.

GC3. To be able to collect and interpret relevant data on human behaviour, at both individual and social levels and in different contexts, to express reasoned opinions of social, scientific or ethical nature in the psychological field.

GC4. To be able to convey information, ideas, problems and solutions about human behaviour to both general, and specialized, audiences.

GC5. To have developed the necessary skills to continue training in an independent manner, in order to follow Master studies, with the purpose to acquire an advanced training focused on academic, professional or research specialisation in the field of Psychology.

Specific competences:

SC1. To know and understand the functioning, characteristics, contributions and limitations of different theoretical models in Psychology.

SC2. To know and understand the basic laws and principles of the different psychological processes.

SC7. To know and understand diverse methods of assessment, diagnosis and psychological treatment in different applied fields of Psychology.

SC12. To identify, describe and measure the relevant characteristics of individuals' behaviour by using the methods, techniques and instruments of psychological assessment.

3. CONTENTS

MODULES	UNITS	Total (classes, credits or hours)		
		Theory	Practical Classes	Seminars
CONCEPTUAL BASIS. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES	Unit 1. Concept of learning. Historical perspective	2	2	3
LEARNING TYPES	Unit 2. Pre-associative learning.	4	2	
	Unit 3. Classical conditioning: fundamentals, principles and theories.	8	4	
	Unit 4. Instrumental conditioning.	10	4	
	Unit 5. Social learning: modelling techniques.	4	2	
	Unit 6. Learning of strategies and techniques.	2	1	

4.- TEACHING-LEARNING METHODOLOGY. FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES.

The lessons, corresponding to one third of ECTS credits, will be structured throughout the term in three different modalities: theoretical classes, practical classes and seminars.

Some learning sessions of this subject will be approached in an interdisciplinary manner with other subjects in the same term. Specifically, these activities will be carried out in the seminar hours.

- ✓ **Theoretical classes.** Different methodologies will be employed. Part of the theoretical contents will be provided and/or explained by the teacher, and others will be sought out and elaborated by the students. When requested by the teacher, students must attend class with the lesson prepared and the content will be commented on, debated or clarified in class. Theoretical self-learning activities are included in this modality.
- ✓ **Practical classes.** These will be done individually, or in groups, and guided by the teacher. Such activities will include case-studies, problem solving, analysis and discussion of documentary and audio-visual information (articles, videos, scientific documents), as well as the presentation of completed work.
- ✓ **Seminars.** Learning sessions following the problem-based learning method (PBL) will be held in an interdisciplinary manner with other subjects in the same term. The teacher will inform students about their implementation.

Two thirds of the ECTS credits of the subject will be dedicated to independent learning. This includes the time needed to complete the tasks and activities that will be turned in or presented in class, to study and to prepare for exams. To pass, it is paramount that the student uses this time to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

4.1. Credit distribution

Total number of hours (6 ECTS): 150	
Number of hours of classroom attendance 50:	30 hours of whole-group lessons
	15 hours of practical lessons
	3 hours of seminars
	2 hours of assessment tasks
Number of hours of independent learning 100:	100 hours

4.2. Methodological strategies, materials and resources

Teaching-learning methodology:

In class, the student will be engaged in an active and participative methodology.

Materials and resources

Students will be provided with didactic materials, which will include the basic theoretical content to study the different units of the subject. They will have access to the library and to computers to carry out research for their work.

5. ASSESSMENT: assessment criteria, report criteria and assessment procedures

Learning outcomes

For this subject a series of learning outcomes are established, as indicators of achievement of the following competences:

- The student understands the concept of psychological process, more specifically, the concept of the basic psychology of learning.
- The student knows the methods and techniques used to study this psychological process.
- The student understands and explains human behaviour integrating different perspectives.
- The student analyses and interprets research and publications on the subject.
- The student looks for and uses documentary sources relevant for the discipline.
- The student is able to apply the acquired knowledge for the correct interpretation of real life situations and clinical cases.
- The student cooperates with the others and contributes to a common project goal. He/she assumes individual responsibility within collective work.
- The student knows how to carry out empirical studies and research activities on basic psychological processes.

Assessment criteria:

Specific competences	Assessment criteria
SC1. To know and understand the functioning, characteristics, contributions and limitations of different theoretical models in Psychology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding of basic concepts related to the <i>Psychology of Learning</i>. Application of the contributions made by diverse schools and authors linked to psychology studied in the different contexts to theoretical and practical exercises.
SC2. To know and understand the basic laws and principles of the different psychological processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding of basic concepts related to the <i>Psychology of Learning</i>.
SC7. To know and understand diverse methods of assessment, diagnosis and psychological treatment in different applied fields of Psychology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and application of methods, techniques and instruments in psychological assessment to measure relevant characteristics of individual behaviours. Interest in learning and active participation.
SC12. To identify, describe and measure the relevant behavioural characteristics of individuals by using the methods, techniques and instruments of psychological assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and application of methods, techniques and instruments in psychological assessment to measure relevant characteristics of individual behaviours Understanding of the importance of the knowledge provided by psychology of learning and its implementation in the action planning within the psychological field.

Evaluation criteria

Criteria	%
Knowledge and understanding of basic concepts related to the <i>Psychology of Learning</i>	20
Knowledge and application of methods, techniques and instruments in psychological assessment to measure relevant characteristics of individual behaviours.	20
Understanding of the importance of the knowledge provided by the psychology of learning and its implementation in the action planning within the psychological field.	25
Application of the contributions made by the diverse schools and authors linked to psychology studied in the different contexts to theoretical and practical exercises.	25
Interest in learning and active participation.	10

Assessment procedure

The assessment procedure is based on the *Normativa reguladora de los procesos de evaluación de aprendizajes de la Universidad de Alcalá* (Regulatory policy of the assessment procedure of the University of Alcalá). This policy states, among others, the following rules:

1. This subject has an ordinary assessment period in May and an extraordinary one in June.
2. The ordinary assessment period employs continuous assessment.
3. If a student cannot commit to the continuous assessment within the ordinary assessment, he/she should formally request the final assessment from the teacher of the subject. This request will be submitted no later than the second week of classes, and it can be accepted or rejected by university management.
4. The extraordinary assessment period is intended for students who failed the ordinary one and will use the same evaluation criteria that was used in the ordinary assessment (continuous or final).
5. The characteristics of the continuous and final assessment for this subject are detailed in this course syllabus.
6. For more information about the assessment procedures, please see the following document: <https://www.uah.es/export/shared/es/conoce-la-uah/organizacion-y-gobierno/.galleries/Secretaria-General/Normativa-Evaluacion-Aprendizajes.pdf>

Continuous assessment. Ordinary and extraordinary assessment periods:

Assessment criteria	Instruments				%
	Seminars	Practices and activities	Final exam		
Knowledge and understanding of basic concepts related to the <i>Psychology of Learning</i> .			X		20
Knowledge and application of methods, techniques and instruments in psychological assessment to measure relevant characteristics of individual behaviours.	X	X	X		20
Understanding of the importance of the knowledge provided by the psychology of learning and its implementation in the action planning within the psychological field.	X	X	X		25
Application of the contributions made by the diverse schools and authors linked to psychology studied in the different contexts to theoretical and practical exercises.	X	X			25
Interest in learning and active participation.	X	X			10
TOTAL	15	45	40		100

Final assessment. Ordinary and extraordinary assessment periods:

Assessment criteria	Instruments		%
	Exam	Individual activities	
Knowledge and understanding of basic concepts.	X		25
Knowledge and application of methods, techniques and instruments in psychological assessment to measure relevant characteristics of individual behaviours.	X	X	25
Understanding of the importance of the knowledge provided by the psychology of learning and its implementation in the action planning within the psychological field.	X	X	25
Application of the contributions made by the diverse schools and authors linked to psychology studied in the different contexts to theoretical and practical exercises.	X	X	25
TOTAL	60	40	100

To pass the subject, the student must have demonstrated the learning of the desired competences listed in this course syllabus obtained through the different instruments established to measure them. As an essential requirement, the student should complete all of the assessment tasks detailed in the syllabus for both the continuous and final assessments, in either the ordinary or extraordinary assessment periods. Likewise, he/she should attend at least at 80% of the practical lessons and all of the seminars, and pass the final exam with a minimum score of 5.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Basic bibliography

VV.AA. (2014) *Psicología del aprendizaje*. UNED

This handbook was created as a basic text for the subject the *Psychology of Learning* in the Degree in Psychology. It consists of a teaching methodology that fosters the study of the subject in an autonomous manner.

Froufe, M (2011) *Psicología del aprendizaje: principios y aplicaciones conductuales*. EDICIONES PARANINFO, S.A.

This book addresses the main theoretical, empirical and applied developments of associative-behavioural learning of scientific psychology. It primarily analyzes the current Pavlovian conditioning processes, considering their behavioral origin and subsequent reinterpretation and cognitive development, at both theoretical and pragmatic levels.

De Vicente, F. (2010) *Psicología del aprendizaje. Síntesis*

This book provides an updated overview of the basic principles of learning and behaviour, as well as their applications in everyday life. To this end, it carries out a historical analysis showing how science has developed in this field and the experimental methods that were employed. Essential issues, such as non-associative learning, Pavlovian conditioning, instrumental conditioning, discriminatory learning and social learning, are also analyzed. The neural bases of learning are also addressed.

Ribes, I. (2002) (Coord) *Psicología del aprendizaje. Manual Moderno*

The concept of learning has been one of the central problems of psychology and multiple theories and research approaches have been constructed covering the main conceptual areas of this topic. One of the main approaches is behavioural methods, entirely based on empirical evidence, which have progressed over the years to include the latest advances in physiology and behavioural sciences. This text includes a broad description of the concepts, techniques and discoveries related to this concept, from the definition of the terms - a vital aspect for the science - to the influence of evolution and inheritance on the development of the nervous system and conduct. It also covers the most frequently used experimental methods and programs, language development and acquisition and other complex behaviours, and, as a pinnacle, the relationship between learning, intelligence and education.