



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

DIPARTIMENTO
DI PSICOLOGIA
“RENZO CANESTRARI”

PhD Program in Psychology

La programmazione delle attività didattico-formative-scientifiche offerte dal Dipartimento di Psicologia “Renzo Canestrari” per il PhD in Psychology prevede:

A) Insegnamenti in “Academic writing and scientific dissemination in Psychology”

The publication process: Selecting journals and preparing submissions (Part 1) Scientometric Dilemma: Is H-Index Adequate for Assessing Scientific Validity of Academic’s Work? (Part 2)	Raffaella Nori (Part 1) Marco Fabbri (Part 2)	8	12.01.2026 (9-13) 13.01.2026 (9-13)	Bologna (Aula 2)
How to perform a peer review and write a response letter to reviewers	Silvia Moscatelli	8	15.01.2025 (9-13) 22.01.2025 (9-13)	Bologna (Aula 2)
Systematic reviews and meta-analyses: Guidelines and best practices	Elisabetta Crocetti	12	27.01.2026 (10-13; 14-17) 28.01.2026 (10-13; 14-17)	Cesena (Aula F)

General info on the course

The course requires mandatory attendance (students must attend at least 80% of the classes). In addition to attendance, individual study and the completion of a set of assignments are required. To complete the course and earn the corresponding credits, doctoral students must attend the classes and receive a positive evaluation for each required assignment. The final assessment will be pass/fail (no grade will be given).

Description of the modules

Module 1: The publication process: Selecting journals and preparing submissions – Prof. Raffaella Nori (Part 1)



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Students will learn the basic principles of the publication process.

First, the activity will introduce students to select a journal considering both Web of Science and Scimago ranking. Special attention will be given to predatory journals by providing guidance on recognising and avoiding publishing in them.

Second, students will be presented with examples of how to list authors, write an abstract and cover letters, and Highlight and reflect on potential peer reviewers.

Teaching methods

The activity will include brief lectures, discussions in the class, and practical activities.

Assessment methods

Besides actively participating in the discussion in class, the individual assignment that students will be required to complete consists in considering a journal for their research project, writing an abstract and a cover letter and identifying three potential reviewers. This mandatory work will be discussed with the teacher.

References

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition (2020).

Module 1: Scientometric Dilemma: Is H-Index Adequate for Assessing Scientific Validity of Academic's Work?– Prof. Marco Fabbri (Part 2)

Students will learn the main index (h-index) used to measure the productivity of scientists, and the impact of published work.

First, the activity will introduce the meaning and the origin of the h-index with its comparisons with existing indices. The presentation of advantages and disadvantages of h-index are presented. Starting to the presentation of the limit of h-index, alternative indices are presented given their reliability to assess scientific quantity and quality. This Part 2 serves as a comprehensive guide for seeking to understand the h-index, its significance in academia as well as its limitations. A brief presentation of most robust alternatives is also provided.

Teaching methods

The activity will include presentation of slides, discussions in the class, and practical activities.

Assessment methods

Besides actively participating in the discussion in class, the individual assignment that students will be required to complete consists in reflecting on the value and meaning of h-index comparing it to alternative indices. This mandatory work will be discussed with the teacher.

References

Hirsch, J. E. (2005). An index to quantify an individual's scientific research output. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 102(46), 16569–16572. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0507655102>.

Koltun V, Hafner D (2021) The h-index is no longer an effective correlate of scientific reputation. *PLoS ONE* 16(6): e0253397. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0253397>.



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Zhang C-T (2013) The h' Index, Effectively Improving the h-Index Based on the Citation Distribution. *PLoS ONE* 8(4): e59912. <https://doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0059912>.

Module 2: How to perform a peer review and write a response letter to reviewers – Prof.

Silvia Moscatelli

Students will learn the basic principles of peer review.

The activity will introduce students to the types of peer review and the ethical principles in the peer review process. Students will learn the main questions that peer review should (or might) address and how to write a review letter. They will then be presented with examples of cover letters and critically reflect on how to write a letter of response to reviewers' comments.

Teaching methods

The activity will include brief lectures, discussions in the class, and practical activities. Students will be presented with examples of peer reviews for different journals and will be asked to discuss and confront them during the class. Finally, students will be presented with examples of response letters and should discuss them.

Assessment methods

Besides actively participating in the discussion in class, students will be required to complete an individual assignment. The assignment consists in working as “reviewers” and commenting upon a manuscript. This mandatory work will be discussed with the teacher.

References

Students can find guidelines and suggestions at the following links:

<https://publicationethics.org/sites/default/files/ethicalguidelines-peer-reviewers-cope.pdf>

<https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2008/03/review>

<https://authorservices.wiley.com/Reviewers/journalreviewers/>

[how-to-perform-a-peer-review/step-by-stepguide-to-reviewing-a-manuscript.html](https://www.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/psp.1234)

Module 3: Systematic reviews and meta-analyses: Guidelines and best practices –

Prof. Elisabetta Crocetti

Tutor: Dr. Valeria Bacaro

Students will learn the knowledge and skills necessary to interpret and conduct systematic reviews and meta-analyses across various psychological research fields. The topics covered include:

- Introduction to meta-analysis and systematic reviews within the context of statistical reform
- Steps in conducting a systematic review with meta-analysis:
 - Defining the research question
 - Establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria
 - Searching for and selecting relevant literature



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- Preparing the coding protocol and meta-analytic database
- Calculating effect sizes for primary studies and overall effect sizes
- Assessing heterogeneity and exploring moderators
- Evaluating publication bias
- Guidelines for publishing systematic review and meta-analyses

Teaching methods

The activity will include lectures, discussions in the class, and practical activities.

Assessment methods

Besides actively participating in the discussion in class, the individual assignment that students will be required to complete consists in preparing a systematic review protocol for the pre-registration describing the rationale, hypothesis, and planned methods of the review. This mandatory work will be discussed with the teacher.

References

- Crocetti, E. (2016). Systematic reviews with meta-analysis: Why, when, and how? *Emerging Adulthood*, 4(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696815617076>
- Page, M. J., Moher, D., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., ... McKenzie, J. E. (2021). PRISMA 2020 explanation and elaboration: Updated guidance and exemplars for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372, n160. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n160>



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