

CDDS 218: SEMINAR IN AUTISM AND AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 3-unit graduate level course addresses the etiology, symptoms, assessment, and treatment of autism and other pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) as well as assessment and treatment utilizing augmentative and alternative communication systems for people with severe communicative disorders. In addition to the instructor's lectures, the seminar format includes additional readings, student presentations, in-class writing activities, and class discussion. This is a web-enhanced class, and students should refer to Blackboard to access reading material and other documents required for the class.

PREREQUISITES

This is a graduate level course open to students who have gained entrance to the master's program of study in the Department of Communicative Disorders and Deaf Studies.

PRIMARY LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, it is expected that students will be able to:

1. Describe specific characteristics of diagnoses falling under the umbrella term *pervasive development disorders* (PDDs)
2. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of professional issues and current trends in the diagnosis and treatment of autism and other PDDs
3. Distinguish between pseudo-scientific techniques and evidence-based techniques for the treatment of autism
4. Apply knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of students with autism in the public schools
5. Describe evidence-based practices for students with autism that are relevant to the contemporary conditions of schools (see Exhibit 1 for sample test questions)
6. Apply a full range of service delivery options, including general education, when devising treatment plans for children with autism, including family-centered, classroom-collaborative, and pull-out models for assessment and intervention (click here for Exhibit 1 for sample test questions)
7. Apply fundamental techniques of functional behavior analysis (FBA) to discover causes of undesirable behavior in children with autism (click here for Exhibit 2 for sample test questions)
8. Apply indirect techniques of response reduction to reduce undesirable behavior in children with autism
9. Make necessary modifications to standard assessment procedures and write appropriate target behaviors and treatment plans for children with autism and other PDDs (click here for Exhibit 3 for sample test questions)

10. Provide evidence-based treatment for speech and language disorders associated with autism and other PDDs
11. Describe in writing “red flags” for a possible diagnosis of autism in infants, toddlers, and preschoolers
12. Apply principles of family-centered service delivery in working with families of children who have been diagnosed with autism
13. Demonstrate knowledge of several well-researched systems of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)
14. Demonstrate knowledge of assistive technology, including low and high equipment and materials to facilitate communication, curriculum access, and skill development of students with disabilities (click here for Exhibit 4 for a group project regarding assessing for and intervening with AAC)
15. Demonstrate understanding of ethical issues involved with providing systems of AAC to individuals with severe communication disorders
16. Provide client-centered assessment for individuals with severe communication disorders who may benefit by systems of AAC
17. Apply family-centered and classroom-collaborative principles of assessment and treatment in addressing the needs of people with severe communicative disorders who may benefit from accessing a system of AAC.
18. Write target behaviors leading to accommodating the needs of AAC users in the classroom setting

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO PURCHASE FOR THIS COURSE:

Required texts:

Offit, P. A. (2008). *Autism’s false prophets: bad science, risky medicine, and the search for a cure.*

Beukelman, D. R., & Mirenda, P. (2005). *Augmentative & Alternative Communication: Supporting children & adults with complex communication needs.* Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes Publishing.

Hegde, M. N., & Maul, C. A. (2006). *Language disorders in children: An evidence-based approach to assessment and treatment.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon. (Chap. 13 & 15)

Additional readings are posted on Blackboard.

EXAMINATIONS AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

There will be the following opportunities to earn points toward your grade:

Midterm exam on autism	100 points
Final exam on AAC	100 points

Web-based analysis of AAC case study	50 points
Class participation	25 points
TOTAL	275 points

Midterm exam: The midterm exam will be on the unit for autism. The exam will consist of short answer questions, requiring students to write brief, well-constructed essays on several topics.

Final exam: The final exam will be on the unit for AAC, and will follow the same format as the midterm exam.

Web-based analysis of AAC case study: Several scenarios involving hypothetical clients, all with complex communication needs, will be posted on the Blackboard website for this class. Through a Discussion Board Forum, students will post an assessment plan, hypothetical results, and systems of augmentative and alternative communication that may be suitable for their assigned client. Further details will be provided in class.

Class participation: Discussion of the assigned readings will be a major component of this course. Students are **required** to participate in these discussions. A system will be in place to keep track of the extent of a student's participation. Further details will be provided in class.

GRADING

Regular attendance of this class is necessary in order to achieve a good grade.

It is expected that students will take exams on the day they are given. Make up exams will be given only in the event of documented serious and compelling reasons.

Grading will be based on percentage of total points achieved. A standard grading scale will be used to determine the final grade, as follows:

89.5 – 100%	A
79.5 – 89.49%	B
69.5 – 79.49%	C
59.5 – 69.49%	D
59.49% and less	F

CLASS SCHEDULE

Please refer to the class schedule for lecture topics and assigned readings for each session. Note that the class schedule is “tentative” and is therefore subject to change.

COURSE POLICIES & SAFETY ISSUES

Please be courteous. Conducting sideline conversations, using laptop computers for functions other than note taking, and arriving late or leaving early detract from the quality of the classroom atmosphere. Please turn cell phones, beepers, palm pilot alarms, and so forth OFF during class, or, if it is absolutely necessary that you be available for incoming calls, set options to either vibration or mute modes.

University policy regarding disruptive classroom behavior will be rigorously upheld in this class. University policy states:

The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. ... Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop and understanding of the community in which they live . . . Student conduct which disrupts the learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Students with Disabilities: Upon identifying themselves to the instructor and the university, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation. For more information, contact Services to Students with Disabilities in Madden Library 1049 (278-2811).

Cheating and Plagiarism: "Cheating is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. However, it is the intent of this definition that the term 'cheating' not be limited to examination situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means. Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of others by misrepresenting the material (i.e., their intellectual property) so used as one's own work." Penalties for cheating and plagiarism range from a 0 or F on a particular assignment, through an F for the course, to expulsion from the university. For more information on the University's

policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the Schedule of Courses (Legal Notices on Cheating and Plagiarism) or the University Catalog (Policies and Regulations)

It is important to note that, while collaboration among students for purposes of studying and further discussing concepts discussed in class is encouraged, students should submit writing assignments reflective of their own individual efforts. It is recognized that there is certain standard verbiage commonly used for the purposes of writing technical reports in our field. Students will not be penalized for using suggested standard verbiage.

Computers: "At California State University, Fresno, computers and communications links to remote resources are recognized as being integral to the education and research experience. Every student is required to have his/her own computer or have other personal access to a workstation (including a modem and a printer) with all the recommended software. The minimum and recommended standards for the workstations and software, which may vary by academic major, are updated periodically and are available from Information Technology Services (<http://www.csufresno.edu/ITS/>) or the University Bookstore. In the curriculum and class assignments, students are presumed to have 24-hour access to a computer workstation and the necessary communication links to the University's information resources."

**PLEASE SCROLL DOWN TO THE NEXT PAGE FOR THE
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the class • Review of characteristics of autism and other pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories regarding the etiology of autism 	<p>Ecker et al. (2009)</p> <p>Hegde & Maul (2006) pp. 387-407</p> <p>Offit (2008) Chap. 1, 2, & 3</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the SLP in the assessment and treatment of PDD • ASHA position statements • The SLP as primary diagnostician • The SLP as a multidisciplinary team member • Working with families and teachers 	<p>ASHA (2006a)</p> <p>ASHA (2006b)</p> <p>Offit (2008) Chap. 4, 5, & 6</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of autism • DSM criteria • Standardized testing • Client-specific measures • Receiving parent input 	<p>Hegde & Maul (2006) pp. 407-413</p> <p>Cosden et al. (2006)</p> <p>Offit (2008) Chap. 7 & 8</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment of autism • Ethical issues • Pseudoscience versus evidence-based treatment • A spectrum of approaches from tightly structured to loosely structured 	<p>Herbert, Sharp, & Gaudiano (2009)</p> <p>Goldstein H. (2002)</p>

		Hegde & Maul (2006) pp.413-419 Offit (2008) Chap. 9 & 10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment of autism continued 	Horner et al. (2002) Offit (2008) Chap. 11 & Epilogue
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment of autism continued 	Iovannone et al. (2003)
	MIDTERM EXAM	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) • ASHA position statements 	Beukelman & Mirenda (2005), Chapter 1 ASHA (2004) ASHA (2005)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical issues in assessing and treating clients who minimally or nonverbal • Working with families and teachers 	Beukelman & Mirenda (2005), Chapters 5 & 14, and Chapter 11, pp. 323-326 Maul et al. (2007)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing clients who are nonverbal or minimally verbal • Criterion-referenced instruments • Client-specific observations • Taking input from families and teachers • Taking an ecological inventory 	Beukelman & Mirenda (2005), Chapters 6 & 7 Schlosser & Wendt (2008)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment cont. 	Calculator (2009)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devising treatment plans incorporating systems of AAC • Making accommodations for AAC users in the classroom setting • Writing appropriate target behaviors • Monitoring student progress 	<p>Beukelman & Mirenda (2005), Chapters 8, 9, & 10</p> <p>Dada & Alant (2009)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment incorporating AAC continued • Discussion of web-based assignment scenarios 	Lund & Light (2006)
	FINAL EXAM	

EXHIBIT 1: Sample short-answer exam questions

1. Describe the various settings in which service delivery for children with autism might take place, and also describe the dynamics of collaboration between classroom teachers and designated instructional personnel (such as speech-language pathologists) in each setting.

2. Draw the continuum of treatment methods for children with autism discussed in class from most tightly structured to most loosely structured.

3. Describe principles of discrete trial training.

4. What criticisms could (and have) been made regarding discrete trial training?

5. Describe principles of the TEACCH method.

6. What criticisms could (and have) been made regarding TEACCH?

Exhibit #2: Exam questions regarding functional behavior analysis (FBA)

1. What are the basic principles of functional behavior analysis (FBA)?
2. If you are conducting an FBA, what are you looking for?
3. What are possible functions of an undesirable behavior?
4. Describe a specific technique for reducing an undesirable behavior that is maintained by task avoidance.
5. Describe and give examples of the applications of the following indirect methods of reducing undesirable behaviors:
 - a. Differential reinforcement of alternative behavior (DRA)
 - b. Differential reinforcement of other behavior (DRO)
 - c. Differential reinforcement of incompatible behavior (DRI)
 - d. Differential reinforcement of low rates of responding (DRL)

EXHIBIT 3: Sample exam questions on assessing children with autism

1. Describe a child-specific assessment procedure for determining a nonverbal child's communication skills for requesting.
2. Describe a child-specific assessment procedure for determining a nonverbal child's level of literacy skills.
3. Select a pragmatic language behavior children with autism have difficulty with and describe a child-specific procedure for assessing that pragmatic language behavior.

EXHIBIT 4: AAC Case Study Group Assignment

Susie, age 7

- Diagnosed with Down Syndrome
- Minimally verbal
- Mainstreamed in a regular education 1st grade classroom with an aide
- Susie is a social, outgoing little girl, but has behavioral difficulties (e.g., inappropriate attempts to establish a communicative interaction, refusal to comply with her teachers' directions, etc.)
- Parents are hesitant to try any form of AAC, because they are afraid it would arrest her oral language development

(1) Write a description of the diagnostic features of your client's condition; include expected characteristics of speech and language. The paper should be no more than 3 double-spaced pages, not including title page and references.

(2) Write an assessment plan for this client; give the rationale for each assessment procedure you will perform.

(3) Write a diagnostic report inventing assessment results that are consistent with speech and language characteristics of the disorder given.

(4) Write a treatment plan for exploration of AAC systems that might be suitable for the client

(5) Include supplemental material (e.g., pulled from the internet or from commercial catalogs) to illustrate AAC possibilities

(6) Place all material into a report folder, in the above order. Include a title page that lists all members of the team, and the part of the assignment each member performed.