

AUSP 4300/6300 Syllabus, Spring 2017

Autism: Communication and Socialization

Instructor: D. Kimbrough Oller, koller@memphis.edu, Holder of the Plough Chair of Excellence, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Dunn Hall 225: M, W 2:20-3:45 CRN: 25128

Course Description:

The course will cover the nature and origin of autism and related phenomena of social and communicative relations. Autism will be treated as a set of personal characteristics occupying one end of a continuum of communicative and social relationship styles and capabilities, a continuum along which we can all be situated. We will address both famous cases of presumed autism in individuals who have made major contributions to science, engineering, and other fields, and more common cases of autism, and its typical portrayal as a social communication disorder. We will especially consider autism as a developmental phenomenon and will provide up-to-date information about proposed causes, both genetic and environmental. The course will also provide a view of remarkable progress that has been made in treatment of autism as a disorder, especially when identification of the condition can be made early in life. There will be a few guest lectures TBA.

Learning Objectives. Following successful completion of this course:

1. Students will have awareness of the state-of-the-art in autism, both in terms of research and clinical application through lectures, readings, and class discussions.
2. Students will be prepared for additional work in human development as well as developmental disabilities.
3. Students with prior background in related fields will have acquired enhanced perspectives on autism and related phenomena of communication and socialization.

Readings:

Required text:

The Science and Fiction of Autism. Laura Schreibman, 2005, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Recommended readings:

NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity. Steve Silberman, 2015,

Avery, New York, NY

The Autistic Brain, Temple Grandin and Richard Panek, Mariner Books, 2014.

Other readings and videos or their locations will be posted in a folder called AutSpring2017, located in the UM Drive at /koller/AutSpring2017. There you will also find the updated Syllabus, which will include updates to the Course schedule and other course announcements and updates, and any additional special readings or other assignments. For access to these materials:

1. Login to the UM Drive site
2. Top left click Bookmarks, Manage Bookmarks
3. Far right click New Bookmark
4. A menu will appear with three lines
 - a. First line type Aut
 - b. Second line type a front slash, /
 - c. Third line type /koller/ AutSpring2017

From this point forward, when you login to the UM Drive, you will have a bookmark in the upper left called AUT. Just click on that and you should be in without going through steps 2-4.

1. The lectures will cover a great deal of the material that will be on the exams, but some will come from assigned readings.

Specific learning objectives for all students:

1. Students will acquire awareness of the state-of-the-art in autism, both in terms of research and clinical application through lectures, readings, and class discussions.
2. Students will be prepared for additional work in human development as well as developmental disabilities.
3. Students with prior background in related fields will acquire enhanced perspectives on autism and related phenomena of communication and socialization.

Specific learning objectives for students taking the course at the graduate level:

1. Graduate students will learn research techniques relevant to a specific area of autism selected by each student in consultation with the instructor.
2. Graduate students will learn to critique these research methods in consultation with the instructor.

All students will meet the educational objectives by:

1. Attending class
2. Participating in class discussions
3. Completing assignments
4. Passing examinations

Students taking the course at the graduate level will (in addition to the objectives for all students) meet the educational objectives by writing a paper addressing the research techniques selected for their evaluation and critique.

Grading: This class will be graded on the standard basis, A-F, but students wishing to take the course Pass-Fail may request it.

1. There will be 2 midterm exams (20% of course grade for each) and a final cumulative exam (50% of course grade for undergraduates, 25% for graduate students) in multiple choice and fill-in-the-blanks format.
2. Questions on the examinations will be based both on lectures and on assigned readings and viewings of video materials.
3. These are traditional exams. Before exams begin, notebooks and books must be closed and put away, and electronic devices (laptops, tablets, or phones) turned off and left off till after the exam is handed in.
4. Attendance will be taken each day of class. A student may miss two lecture sessions without penalty, but thereafter, 2% of the total grade will be deducted for each missed class.
5. Productive class participation in discussions will be rewarded at the end of the semester with extra credit up to 5% of the total grade. Having done the assigned readings will put students in a position to participate more effectively in class.
6. For graduate students, the paper, to be handed in by the last day of class at class time, will count for 25% of the grade.
7. No texts, receiving texts, phone calls or receiving phone calls during class—devices off please.

Concerning Disabilities of students please see: [Disabilities Provisions](#)

Concerning Academic and Classroom Misconduct please see: [Misconduct](#)

Classroom use of electronic devices

Your instructor places considerable emphasis on lectures and class participation. The goal is to have an interactive experience in class, one that could not be obtained through reading or pure electronic learning media.

In his opinion, laptops, tablets and smart phones are potentially very useful devices for taking and maintaining notes during class. But as indicated above, no phone calls, texting, reading of text messages, or web surfing are allowed during class, so it's best to disconnect from the internet, do not open text windows, and refuse any phone calls.

Communication with the instructor

Please ask questions about the substance of the course in class, rather than asking for clarifications by email. If you need clarification, it is likely others in the class do too, so don't be shy. Go ahead and ask for clarification. Email is generally a very inefficient method of teaching to a class.

Another approach if you would like to talk with me is to schedule a time during office hours. If necessary we can try to schedule a special time.