Autism Spectrum Disorder PSYCH 397D – 3 credits MWF 11:15-12:05 Spring 2023

Instructor <PROF_FULL_NAME>, Ph.D.

Director, <u>Developmental Disabilities and Human Services</u> Program

Email <PROF_EMAIL>

Office hours Book a timeslot online: <LINK>

Course Description

This course will provide students with a broad overview of autism spectrum disorder across the lifespan. Students will be introduced to the history of autism as a diagnostic category and its reconceptualization within the neurodiversity movement. This course will review current understandings of the biological and environmental causes of autism as well as current methods of screening and assessment. This course will critically evaluate approaches to treatment and support within family, school and community settings. The lived experience of autistic children and adults at the intersection of other identities, including race, gender, and sexuality, will be discussed. Students will engage with empirical research as well as personal narratives throughout the course.

Course Objectives

- To understand historical changes in the definition and understanding of autism
- To understand the history of the neurodiversity movement and its impact on current understandings of disability
- To describe how autism is currently screened, assessed and diagnosed in the United States
- To understand disparities in access to screening, diagnosis, and supports for specific demographic groups, including adults, girls/women, and people of color
- To appreciate the lived experience of autistic children and adults with a variety of intersecting social identities
- To critically evaluate the philosophy and implementation of supports and interventions designed for autistic people
- To practice reading and critically evaluating empirical research on autism

Course Materials

Materials for this course include books, book chapters, empirical research articles, blogs and films. We will read *The Reason I Jump* in its entirely. We will read a significant number of chapters from *Unmasking Autism* and *We're not Broken*. These books are available in print and audio book format. Copies will be placed on reserve at the library.

- Higashida, N. (2013). *The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism*. Amazon, Audible, UMass library.

- Garcia, E. (2021). We're Not Broken: Changing the Autism Conversation. Amazon, Audible, UMass Library Reserves.
- Price, D. (2022). *Unmasking Autism: Discovering the New Faces of Neurodiversity*. Amazon, Audible, UMass Library Reserves.

Additional materials will be shared on Moodle (readings) and Echo360 (films). Materials may be substituted with sufficient notice.

Class Format

This course is designed for students who plan to attend in person, but of course some of you may need accommodations as a result of illness, family emergencies, or COVID-19 quarantine or illness. The class will be automatically recorded through Echo360. If you miss a class, you will be expected to watch it online on your own time. If any activities or discussions were completed during class time, these would be posted to the Moodle page. The class will be taught through a combination of lecture, activities, small group and whole class discussion.

Course Communication

If you don't find the answer to your question on the syllabus or Moodle, feel free to email the instructor or schedule a time to meet during office hours. You can expect a response within 2 business days (Monday - Friday, excluding holidays) during normal business hours (9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.).

Course Requirements

Requirement	Contribution to Final Grade
Attendance and participation	10%
Reading quizzes/discussion questions	20%
Empirical article 1	5%
Empirical article 2	15%
Reflections (5% x4)	20%
Exams (10% x3)	30%

Attendance and participation

Students are expected to come to class prepared to engage with the material. During class time, students will engage in small group and whole class activities and discussion. Students who do not feel comfortable speaking in front of the whole class may feel more comfortable participating in small group discussion. Students can also earn participation credit by writing some thoughts and reflections on a 3"x5" note card before leaving class (note cards will be provided). When not speaking, students are expected to give their full attention to the instructor or their classmates. Students who must complete the course materials online due to extenuating circumstances will

receive attendance credit by watching the recording of the class on Echo360. Participation will be based on completion of any asynchronous activities assigned on Moodle.

Reading quizzes/Discussion questions

For each of the assigned readings, students have the option to either a) complete a multiple-choice quiz on Moodle or b) write a question for discussion on Moodle. Students should complete either option before coming to the class for which the reading is assigned.

Quizzes. Each quiz will contain 5-10 multiple choice or true/false questions. You can repeat the quiz as many times as you would like. You must complete the quiz in one sitting, although it is not timed. You will see your score after your attempt, but correct responses will only be revealed after the due date. You will receive full credit for the quiz if you receive 80% or higher on your best attempt.

Discussion questions. For the discussion question option, students are expected to write at least 150 words on a Moodle discussion forum labeled for the reading. You should make it clear that you have read and thought critically about the material. You should articulate a question for discussion. These questions may be incorporated into discussion during class time.

Empirical article 1

Students will select one empirical article from a list provided. Students will sign up for their preferred article on Moodle. Before drafting your summary and critique, you must read the article Avoiding Ableist Language: Suggestions for Autism Researchers (Bottema-Beutel et al., 2021). The summary and critique should address the following questions:

Background

- a. What background literature led to the formation of this study?
- b. What were the research questions/hypotheses?

- Methods

- a. What methods were used to collect data (e.g., survey, interview)?
- b. When and where did the research take place?
- c. Who was included in the sample?

- Results

- a. What were the key findings?
- b. Were the research hypotheses supported?

- Significance

- a. Do these findings have practical significance for the lives of autistic people?
- b. What additional questions do these findings raise for future research?

- Ableism

- a. Overall, did you find the authors used appropriate language (refer to Bottema-Beutel et al. study)?
- b. Did autistic people contribute to this study (e.g., authors, advisory group)?

c. How do you rate the overall goals and presentation of the study with respect to ableism?

- Citation

a. Please provide the citation for your article in APA style.

Students should upload their summary and critique as a Word document (a template is provided on Moodle) and their article as a PDF. Links to the article will not be accepted. During class time, you will share your summary and critique within a small group.

Empirical article 2

Students will select one empirical article from a list provided. Students will sign up for their preferred article on Moodle. These articles were written by autistic researchers. Students will evaluate the article using the same prompts as the first empirical article assignment. In addition, students will answer the following prompts:

- How did your experience writing this assignment differ from your first attempt?
- How do you think this study was impacted by an autistic author? Consider the topic, process, language used, interpretation of the results, etc.

Reflections

You will read one book and watch three films throughout the semester. For each, you will write a two-page reflection. You can make connections to course materials, personal experiences, work experiences, outside resources or topics covered in this or other courses, etc. It should be clear from reflection that you have read and thought critically about the material. You are welcome to share your personal reactions and opinions about the book or film. Papers should be Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spaced. Please do not put your name or ID on the papers as they are graded anonymously. Students can also choose to submit their reflection as audio/video through VoiceThread on Moodle. VoiceThread allows you to record a video/audio live or upload a pre-recorded video/audio. Submissions are expected to be roughly 6-8 minutes long. Each reflection is worth 5% of your final grade (20% total).

Exams

You will complete three exams throughout the semester. Each exam will cover the following topics:

- Exam 1 covers Introduction, History, Identity, Screening (2/6-3/10) due before class 3/20
- Exam 2 covers Diagnosis, Etiology, Co-Occurring Conditions (3/22-4/19) *due before* class 4/21
- Exam 3 covers Core Features, Supports and Interventions (4/24-5/15) *due before class* 5/17

Material covered includes lecture, discussion, media, activities, etc. Each exam will be composed of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions as well as essay prompts. There are no

time limits on the exams, but you are expected to finish it in one sitting. Exams are open book, so you can use your notes, books, and any other materials. You are expected to complete the exams on your own.

Once students have submitted their exams through Moodle, the class will come together to discuss the questions (dates are marked on the course calendar). Based on these discussions, students will submit a second version of the exam through Moodle within 5 days of the class discussion. The average score of your first and second attempt will be counted.

Grading

Final grades will be based on the following scale:

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93\% \le A
90\% \le A - < 93\%
87\% \le B + < 90\%
83\% \le B < 87\%
80\% \le B - < 83\%
77\% \le C + < 80\%
73\% \le C < 77\%
70\% \le C - < 73\%
67\% \le D + < 70\%
60\% \le D < 67\%
F < 60\%
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Grades will be posted on Moodle page. Please check occasionally for errors. Unless otherwise noted, grades will not be rounded or curved.

Class Policies

Late policy. 10% will be deducted for each day an assignment is late. If you submit your assignment one day late, your grade will drop from 90% to 80%, for example. If your assignment is over 5 days late, you can only receive up to half credit for that assignment. To receive any credit, late assignments must be submitted by the last day of classes in the semester. If you need an extension for any reason, please do not hesitate to email me.

Instructor absence. If I cannot attend class, students should plan to complete online, asynchronous materials. You will receive a message through the Moodle announcement forum with specific instructions.

Student absence. Students who cannot attend class live, in person are expected to make up the class online. This may include watching the Echo360 recording of the class, posting to a Moodle discussion forum, or completing other activities. The specific assignments will differ for each class, so check Moodle for specific expectations. This course is designed with live participation in mind, so students should only make use of the online option when needed.

Class cancellations. If the university cancels class, the class will either shift to Zoom or asynchronous online activities will be assigned. You will receive a message through the Moodle announcement forum with additional information.

Academic honesty: Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

Accommodations: The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. Students can notify me at *any* point during the semester about disability accommodations, however.

Diversity statement. In recognition and affirmation of the worth and dignity of all persons, the instructor of this class is dedicated to upholding the values of diversity and inclusion and to minimizing disparities in access to learning. All students who are willing to learn are equally welcome without regard to age, race, ethnicity, birthplace, sex, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or identity, socioeconomic status, political party or beliefs, or other group affiliation or personal characteristics. All students are likewise expected to accord each other the same level of respect, bearing in mind that becoming more respectful and inclusive is a journey rather than a destination. We will all have stumbling points along the way, including the instructor, and these are often valuable learning opportunities. If I ever say or do anything insensitive in this class, I sincerely welcome students to call me out or communicate their discomfort to me in person after class, during office hours, by email, or anonymously.

Names and pronouns. Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that they use for themselves. Students can indicate their chosen first name and their pronouns on SPIRE, which appear on class rosters. Please let me know what name and pronouns I should use for you if they are not on the roster. A student's chosen name and pronouns are to be respected at all times in the classroom.

Extra credit. Students can receive up to 2 points of extra credit by either: a) watching the film version of *The Reason I Jump* and writing a reflection, b) attending the *Autism Connections conference* or c) participating in SONA studies.

- a) For the film option, you should watch the film through the link provided on Moodle on your own time. You are encouraged to watch it with friends, partners, roommates, and family members! You should write a two-page reflection about the film (Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, 1" margins). What was similar or different about the portrayal of Naoki in the film vs. the book? How did the people portrayed in the field impact your understanding of the material covered in the book? You are welcome to share your personal reflection on the film overall (as well as the reactions of others you may have watched the film with). You will receive 2 points of extra credit for this option.
- b) Students have the option of attending the *Autism Connections* conference in Springfield, MA on April 27th. A virtual option is available to students. Registration for the in-person conference is due by 1/31. Students should indicate their preference to attend virtually by 4/15.

c) SONA:

There is an opportunity to earn bonus points for SONA credits in this course. SONA credits can be earned through participating in research studies or through an alternative assignment as described below. Each SONA credit will increase your course grade by 0.5 points on a 100 point scale. In this class, you can use a maximum of 4 SONA credits that will increase your course grade by a maximum of 2.0 points. In order to earn SONA credits and assign them to this course, you must register for a SONA account or login to your existing account. Instructions for accessing SONA are available here:

https://www.pbs.umass.edu/undergraduate/sona-and-research-participation/sona-instructions

Experiment participation: You are encouraged to earn SONA credits by participating in research studies. The ability of scientists to conduct human subjects research depends on volunteers like you. Much of the science that we are able to teach in psychology courses is based on participation of undergraduate students in research studies. To earn SONA credits for research participation:

- 1) Complete the mandatory brief survey the first time you login to SONA.
- 2) You are encouraged to participate in the study titled "Long Prescreen Spring 2023", which is only available until February 23rd at 2 pm. Participating in this online study may make you eligible for studies you would otherwise not know about.
- 3) Check for experiment availability frequently.
- 4) If you are interested in participating in a specific study, and you meet the eligibility requirements described in the study description, sign up.
- 5) Make a note of the time and specific location of the study. There will be reminders, but it is your responsibility to attend an experimental session that you signed up for.
- 6) After your participation, confirm that the researcher has assigned the correct number of SONA credits (1 credit for every 30 minutes of participation).

- 7) Assign your SONA credits to **PSYCH 397D: Autism Spectrum Disorder** with <PROF_FULL_NAME> listed as the instructor. There may be other classes with the same name but a different instructor, so be careful about selecting the correct one.
- 8) Experiments must be completed by May 17th at 11:59 pm, and must be assigned to this course by May 22nd at 4:00 pm in order to receive the bonus points.

Other ways to earn SONA credits: Some students are ineligible to participate in research (e.g., not yet 18-years-old) or choose not to participate in the research studies that are available. To earn SONA credits through an alternative activity:

- 1) Complete the mandatory brief survey the first time you login to SONA. Include the fact that you are unable or unwilling to participate in research studies when asked.
- 2) Check for the availability of ALTERNATIVE activities frequently. These will typically include attending an in-person research talk or participating in in-person research demonstrations similar to what you might do in a psychology class.
- 3) Make a note of the time and specific location of the alternative activity. There will be reminders, but it is your responsibility to attend the talk or session you signed up for.
- 4) After your participation, confirm that the correct number of SONA credits has been assigned (1 credit for every 30 minutes of participation).
- 5) Assign your SONA credits to **PSYCH 397D: Autism Spectrum Disorder** with <PROF_FULL_NAME> listed as the instructor. There may be other classes with the same name but a different instructor, so be careful about selecting the correct one.
- 6) Alternative activities must be completed by May 17th at 11:59 pm, and must be assigned to this course by May 22nd at 4:00 pm in order to receive the bonus points.

Regardless of how you earn your SONA credits, please make note of the following:

SONA credits will not show up on Moodle. You can confirm that you have earned credits and assigned them to this course in SONA. The instructor will be sent the number of SONA credits that you earned at the end of the semester and before submitting your final grade for the course.

Attend the sessions you sign up for. Some research costs a great deal of time and money once a session is scheduled regardless of whether the participant shows up or not.

- 1) If you, an experimenter, or a session organizer needs to cancel a session with at least 24 hours notice for any reason, no SONA credit will be assigned and no penalty will be assigned.
- 2) For online studies that can be completed at any time, if you sign up but fail to participate by the deadline, no SONA credit will be assigned and no penalty will be assigned (marked as excused).
- 3) For in-person sessions and sessions that require you to be online at a specified time, you must either cancel more than 24 hours before the scheduled time or arrive at the designated place within 10 minutes of the scheduled time. Otherwise, the experimenter or session organizer will assign an unexcused "no-show" regardless of the reason.
- 4) If you are assigned three unexcused "no-shows" in a semester you will be unable to sign up for any more experiments or alternatives. Further, you will not earn any bonus points for the SONA credits that you have already earned.

5) If you have a valid reason for missing the session and failing to provide 24-hour notice, email <EMAIL> within 48 hours with the reason and any supporting evidence. Your reason and history of other no-shows will be reviewed. When there is a valid reason, unexcused "no-shows" will be changed to excused absences, which will also reinstate your access to SONA and your previously earned SONA credits.

What if a disability prevents me from participating in research or the alternative? Students with disabilities that are registered with Disability Services can request an accommodation from their instructor if neither experiment participation nor the alternative can work. The student with the instructor cc'd can email <EMAIL> for an alternative assignment (e.g., written summary of research articles) that does fully accommodate the needs of the student.

What if there are not a sufficient number of experiments or alternatives that I am eligible for? If you are having any problems accessing SONA or SONA credit opportunities, please contact <EMAIL>. Neither the instructors nor the teaching assistants for this class will be able to help. However, the department will provide sufficient opportunities for you to earn SONA credits if you want them and address the issues you are having within the first 8 weeks of the semester.

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	2/6	2/8	2/10
	INTRODUCTION	INTRODUCTION	INTRODUCTION
	Introduction to the course	Introduction to autism	The autism "spectrum"
1	Course	Readings to complete before class:	Readings to complete before class: "Heterogeneity and
		Unmasking Autism, Ch. 1., "What is autism, really?"	clustering in autism"
		,	

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	2/13	2/15	2/17
	HISTORY Creation of the label	HISTORY Changes in classification	HISTORY Neurodiversity
	- ·		movement
	Readings to complete	Readings to complete	
	before class:	before class:	Readings to complete before class:
2	NeuroTribes, Ch. 4,	NeuroTribes, Ch. 10.,	
2	"Fascinating Peculiarities"	"Pandora's Box", pp. 381-414	"Historicizing Jim Sinclair's 'Don't Mourn for Us': A Cultural and Intellectual History of Neurodiversity's First Manifesto"
			"Don't Mourn for Us"
	2/20	2/22	2/24-Guest speaker Ariel Pliskin
	No class	IDENTITY	
		Autistic identity	IDENTITY
		development	Intersectional identities: Sexual orientation
3		Readings to complete	
		before class:	Readings to complete before class:
		Unmasking Autism, Ch.	
		2., "Who are the masked autistics?"	To be determined

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	2/27	3/1	3/3
4	IDENTITY Intersectional identities: Race Readings to complete before class: We're not Broken, Ch. 8, "Say it Loud" "All the Weight of Our Dreams"	IDENTITY Intersectional identities: Gender Readings to complete before class: We're not Broken, Ch. 7, "Not Sure if You're a Boy or a Girl"	Discussion: The Reason I Jump Read the entire book The Reason I Jump before class Submit your reflection paper (or VoiceThread) for this book before class
5	SCREENING Screening Readings to complete before class: "Effectiveness of Screening in Early Intervention Settings to Improve Diagnosis of Autism and Reduce Health Disparities"	SCREENING Prevalence Readings to complete before class: "Prevalence and Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder Among Children Aged 8 Years — Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 11 Sites, United States, 2018"	Discussion: Best Kept Secret Watch Best Kept Secret before class Submit your reflection paper (or VoiceThread) for this film before class
Spring break	3/13 No class	3/15 No class	3/17 No class

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
6	3/20	3/22	3/24-Guest speaker Katrina Manegio
	Discussion: Exam 1	DIAGNOSIS Diagnosis in childhood	DIAGNOSIS Diagnostic tools
	Complete Exam 1 before class (you will have a window of several days in which to do this)	Readings to complete before class: "The Diagnostic Odyssey of Autism Spectrum Disorder"	Readings to complete before class: "Analysis of Race and Sex Bias in the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS-2)"
	3/27	3/29	3/31
7	DIAGNOSIS Disparities in childhood diagnosis Readings to complete before class: "Structural Inequalities in ASD Diagnosis and Services at the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender"	DIAGNOSIS Diagnosis in adulthood Readings to complete before class: "Diagnosis of autism in adulthood: A scoping review"	DIAGNOSIS Disparities in adulthood diagnosis Readings to complete before class: Autism in Heels, Ch. 1. "Backwards in Heels: My Story in Reverse"
8	4/3 Critical perspectives on autism research Readings to complete before class: "Research priorities of the autism community: A systematic review of key stakeholder perspectives" Due: Empirical article 1	ETIOLOGY Genetic and environmental predictors of autism Readings to complete before class: Worlds of Autism, Ch. 5, "Autism and Genetics: Profit, Risk and Bare Life"	ETIOLOGY Vaccines and autism Readings to complete before class: The Doctor Who Fooled the World, Ch. 5 "Child Four", Ch. 6 "A Moral Issue"

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	4/10	4/12	4/14
9	CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS Intellectual and developmental disabilities Readings to complete before class: "Intellectual disability and its relationship to autism spectrum disorders"	CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS Physical health Readings to complete before class: We're not Broken, Ch. 5, "Somebody Get me a Doctor"	Discussion: Autism in Love Watch Autism in Love before class. Submit your reflection paper (or VoiceThread) for this film before class
10	4/17 No class	4/19-Guest speaker Ariel Pliskin CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS Mental health Readings to complete before class: Unmasking Autism, Ch. 4, "The Cost of Masking"	<i>Discussion:</i> Exam 2 Complete Exam 2 before class (you will have a window of several days in which to do this)

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	4/24	4/26	4/28
	CORE FEATURES Social communication	CORE FEATURES Social communication	CORE FEATURES Repetitive behavior
	Readings to complete before class:	Readings to complete before class:	Readings to complete before class:
	"Capturing the complexity of autism: Applying a developmental cascades	"Neurodiversity and cross- cultural communication"	"The benefits of special interests in autism"
11	framework"	"Outcomes of real-world social interaction for autistic adults paired with autistic compared to typically developing	
		partners"	
		"Empirical Failures of the Claim That Autistic People Lack a Theory of Mind" p. 1-13"	
	5/1	5/3	5/5
	CORE FEATURES Repetitive behavior	CORE FEATURES Language	Discussion: It's not about Me
12	Readings to complete before class:	Readings to complete before class:	Watch It's not About Me before class.
	Thinking in Pictures, Ch. 3., "The Squeeze Machine"	"Rethinking language in autism"	Submit your reflection paper (or VoiceThread) for this film before class

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	5/8	5/10	5/12
13	SUPPORTS AND INTERVENTIONS Perspectives on interventions Readings to complete before class: "Neurodiversity and Autism Intervention: Reconciling Perspectives"	SUPPORTS AND INTERVENTIONS Behaviorist approaches Watch "Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and Positive Behavior Supports" before class Read "The mismeasure of	SUPPORTS AND INTERVENTIONS Relationship based approaches Watch "Relationship and Developmentally Based Approaches" before class Watch "Parent Perspective: Danielle"
	5/15	Misha" before class 5/17	before class
14	SUPPORTS AND INTERVENTIONS Complementary and alternative approaches To be determined	Discussion: Exam 3 Complete Exam 2 before class (you will have a window of several days in which to do this) Due: Empirical article 2	