

PSYD20H3Y - Current Topics in Developmental Psychology
Class Syllabus

Instructor: Anna Grivas Matejka

Contact Info: email: anna.grivas@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: By Appointment

Time and Location: Tuesdays, 6:00pm to 8:00pm in BV 363. Classes begin Tuesday May 5, 2009 and end Tuesday July 28, 2009.

Course Description: This course will include an intensive examination of selected issues and research problems among the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) population. Topics will range from issues in the clinical and research domains to those in the media and court rooms. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions and student presentations.

Weekly Schedule:

<u>WEEK #</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</u>	<u>MANDATORY READINGS</u>
Week 1	May 5/09.	1. Review Course Syllabus. 2. Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders	- Familiarize students with course topics, objectives, assignments and grading procedures - Understand the DSM-IV categorization of ASD and general clinical presentation	
Week 2	May 12/09.	Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders Continued	- Review the history of ASD and the main theoretical orientations to understand ASD	1. Mesibov et al (2009) 2. Levy, F. (2007)
Week 3	May 19/09.	Epidemiology	- Compare the various theories which explain the rise in ASD and analyze the scientific evidence for each theory -examine the influence of the media and how the public understands the rise in ASD	1. Liptak, S. G., et al (2008) 2. Wing, L. & Potter, D. (2002)
Week 4	May 26/09.	Screening and Early Identification of ASD	- Understand the benefits of early identification and the current strengths and weaknesses of early	1. Crane, J. L. & Winsler, A. (2009) 2. Robins, D. L. &

			screening tools and procedures	Dumont-Mathieu, T. M (2006) 3. Williams J., & Brayne, C. (2006)
Week 5	June 2/09.	Group Presentation #1	- To be determined by Group #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined by Group #1
Week 6	June 9/09.	Immunizations and ASD	<p>- Critically analyze the original and current research and discuss the risk (if any) with immunizations</p> <p>- Assess the legal proceedings and media coverage and how they have affected the use of vaccines at the population level</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Wakefield, A.J., et al (1998) Baker, J. (2008) Taylor, B. (2006)
Week 7	June 16/09.	Group Presentation #2	- To be determined by Group #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined by Group #2
Week 8	June 23/09.	Genetics	<p>- Review the current literature examining a genetic link with ASD</p> <p>- Examine the pros/cons of identifying the genes involved in ASD</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Losh M., et al (2008)
Week 9	June 30/09.	Group Presentation #3	- To be determined by Group #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined by Group #3
Week 10	July 7/09.	Behaviour Interventions	<p>- Discuss the main behavioral interventions in ASD and their effectiveness</p> <p>- Examine court proceedings in North America that changed the course of interventions in ASD</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lovass, O. (1987) Rogers, S., & Vismara, L.A. (2008)
Week 11	July 14/09.	Group Presentation #4	- To be determined by Group #4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined by Group #4
Week 12	July 21/09.	Research Presentations	N/A	N/A
Week 13	July 28/09.	Research Presentations	N/A	N/A

Course Evaluation:

20% Class Discussion and Focus Questions

40% Group Presentation

40% Research Proposal (20% oral presentation, 20% paper)

Description of Assignments:

1. Class Discussion and Focus Questions (20%)

Each week students will receive a set of questions to guide them while completing the required readings. During class time students will be divided into groups to discuss the articles in general and the focus questions. Then as a large group the class will discuss the articles and the focus questions. At the end of the class session each group will submit their written responses to the focus questions. The completion of the written portion of the focus questions will comprise their "Class Discussion and Focus Questions" grade.

2. Group Presentation (40%)

Groups will expand on the previous week's topic and facilitate the class discussion for one class. Groups will choose 2-3 new articles for the class to read and focus the discussion around the articles.

Groups may choose to present:

- opposing arguments on a specific topic and conduct a debate
- review the scientific findings pertaining to their chosen topic
- compare and contrast different theoretical orientations in a specific area of interest

Each group must submit the learning objectives and required readings to the class **two weeks** before their presentation day.

The grade will be allocated as follows:

- Content (20%) - Is the content covered relevant? Was the content covered thoroughly? Was the content analyzed and interpreted well? Was the group knowledgeable about the content?
- Presentation Style (20%) – What the group well organized? Was the class discussion facilitated well? Was their time managed well? Was the presentation original and engaging?

3. Research Presentation (40%)

Students will work in pairs to complete a research proposal on a specific topic of their choice which expands on the literature reviewed in class. Students will submit a written proposal and give an oral presentation to the class.

- a. **Written Proposal (20%):** Students will submit a written research proposal between 10-12 pages in length. The reference list is NOT included in the page limit. The proposal will consist of two sections and are described below:

The first sections of the proposal will include a *background* section which will briefly review some of the literature pertaining to their chosen topic. This review should prepare the reader to understand why the current research proposal is interesting, relevant and contributes to the body of literature which currently exists. The background section should answer the following questions:

- i. What is the overall problem?
- ii. What do we already know about this problem?
- iii. What are some of the issues that still need to be addressed?

The second section of the proposal should include a *Purpose, Experimental Design and Hypothesis* Section:

- iv. Purpose: What is the specific purpose of your research? (In other words what do you aim to do? Or what are your research questions?)
- v. Experimental Design: How do you plan to do this? Who are your participants? What are you measuring? How will you measure it?
- vi. Hypothesis: What do you think the outcome will be?

- b. **Oral Presentation (20%):** Students will briefly present their research presentation to the class. Students will have 15 minutes to present the various sections of their proposal. At the end of the proposal the class will have 5 minutes to ask the group questions about their proposal.

Accessibility:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the *AccessAbility* Services Office as soon as possible. I will work with you and *AccessAbility* Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential. The UTSC *AccessAbility* Services staff (located in S302) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (416) 287-7560 or ability@utsc.utoronto.ca.