COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor: Fred R. Volkmar M.D. – Irving B. Harris Professor; fred.volkmar@yale.edu

Teaching Fellow: Scott L. Jackson, Ph.D. – Clinical Instructor; scott.jackson@yale.edu

Dates: May 25th – June 26th

Course Description:
This course consists of lectures (3 per week – ONLINE) and two mandatory live online discussion groups (10:00-11:30 AM Tuesday/Thursday) focused on autism and related disorders of socialization. Autism is an early onset neurodevelopmental disorder impacting socialization, communication and learning. Current epidemiological data suggest a prevalence of approximately 1 individual with this disability per 68 (if it is broadly defined). This seminar brings together clinical practice and research within the context of a developmental psychopathology framework. The course will include material on major topics in etiology, diagnosis and assessment, treatment and advocacy, and social neuroscience methods and covers infancy to adulthood.

Readings:

Grading:
Course grades will be based on attendance and participation, response papers, a proposal for the final research paper and the final research paper itself (final paper weighted most heavily).

Response Papers:
Prior to each discussion day, students will prepare for our discussion by reflecting on the lectures/readings in a brief response paper. Students must submit a response by 6:00PM Eastern Standard Time the DAY BEFORE CLASS DISCUSSION. Response papers should be between 200-300 words. There may be a specific writing prompt some weeks, or they may be open-ended to give students a chance to raise issues of interest to them. All response papers should conclude with 1-3 questions that will be used to facilitate the discussion during seminars.

Final paper timeline:
Friday 6/12 - Proposal Due
Friday 6/19 - Last day to submit a draft
Friday 6/26 - Paper Due
**Final paper proposal:**
By the date specified (6/12), please submit a maximum 2-page Word document detailing plans for your final paper. It is essential that this proposal makes clear a thesis that will be advanced or question that will be addressed in your paper; straightforward summaries of the literature are not acceptable for the final paper, and we want to see your emerging thesis in this proposal. The Teaching Fellow will be available to help you decide upon a topic.

**Final paper:**
By the date specified (6/26), please submit a 10- to 15-page essay, double-spaced (not including references). The final paper must follow the proposal submitted mid-term. Use American Psychological Association (APA) format for your in-text citations and references. If you are unfamiliar with this format, refer to the "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association." Paper references must rely on peer-reviewed scientific journal articles. These papers should serve as a major source of information for your project.

**Papers will be evaluated in terms of:**

1. Quality of scholarly literature review (focus on scientific articles, sufficient depth and breadth, thoughtful analysis)

2. Clarity of thesis (cohesive, well-organized)

3. Formatting (references in APA format, double-spaced)

4. Mechanics of writing (thesis stated, introduction and conclusion, complete sentences, spelling, grammar)

5. Creativity is a bonus!

The instructors and teaching fellow are available to review drafts through one week prior to the final paper due date. In other words, it will not be possible to obtain feedback on paper drafts submitted after the date specified above.

**Academic Honesty:**
Any collaboration on written assignments is forbidden. Any plagiarism on written assignments will be associated with a failing grade on the assignment, possibly in the class, and serious disciplinary action. Please see Yale’s academic dishonesty policy for more details: [http://catalog.yale.edu/handbook-instructors-undergraduates-yale-college/teaching/academic-dishonesty/](http://catalog.yale.edu/handbook-instructors-undergraduates-yale-college/teaching/academic-dishonesty/)

**Class Schedule:**
The course will include live online seminar discussions twice a week (T/TH 10:00 – 11:30 EDT) to discuss course topics. The sessions will be led by course faculty and attendance is required.
# Unit 1: Week 1 (May 25th – May 29th)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture/Reading/Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY May 25th</strong></td>
<td>By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your first ‘response’ paper – see the section on submitting a response paper for more details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture 1: VOLKMAR – Overview of autism (80 minutes)</td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong>: Chapters 1 and 2 from <em>Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders</em> and additional chapters will be posted online from <em>A Practical Guide to Autism</em> (Volkmar &amp; Wiesner): Chapter 1 (What is Autism?) and Chapter 2 (What Causes Autism?)</td>
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<td><strong>Response Paper 1 and discussion questions</strong> (due by 6:00PM):</td>
<td>In 1 page tell us about yourself (major, year, interests, future goals, and why you are interested in autism). Any special reason for taking this course (e.g., a family member with autism). We will discuss papers on May 26th.</td>
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<td><strong>TUESDAY May 26th</strong></td>
<td><strong>ONLINE SEMINAR</strong> (10:00-11:30AM EST): Overview of course, discussion of logistics and of response papers.</td>
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<td><strong>WEDNESDAY May 27th</strong></td>
<td>By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your ‘response’ paper</td>
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<td>Lecture 2: TSATSANIS – Assessment (48 minutes)</td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong>: Chapter 3 from <em>Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders</em></td>
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<td><strong>Response Paper 2 and discussion questions</strong> (due by 6:00PM):</td>
<td>Discuss one difficulty in diagnosis and assessment of children with autism and our understanding of psychological factors in autism.</td>
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<td><strong>THURSDAY May 28th</strong></td>
<td><strong>ONLINE SEMINAR</strong> (10:00-11:30AM EST): Discussion of lecture and 2nd response paper, psychological processes and issues in diagnosis and psychological assessment in autism.</td>
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<td><strong>FRIDAY May 29th</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lecture 3</strong>: PAUL – Communication (1 hour 50 minutes)</td>
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<td><strong>Reading</strong>: Chapter 4 from <em>Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders</em></td>
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Unit 2: Week 2 (June 1st – June 5th)

MONDAY June 1st
By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your ‘response’ paper – see the section on submitting a response paper for more details.

Lecture 4: CHAWARSKA – Autism in Infants and Young Children (1 hour 14 mins)

Reading: A Practical Guide to Autism (Volkmar & Wiesner): Chapter 7 (Working with Young Children) – will be posted online.

Response paper 3 and discussion questions (due by 6:00PM):
In thinking about early diagnosis write about either the challenges of diagnosis or the pros/cons of early diagnosis – what do you see as major issues?

TUESDAY June 2nd
ONLINE SEMINAR (10:00-11:30AM EST):
Discussion of response papers, early diagnosis.

WEDNESDAY June 3rd
By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your ‘response’ paper.

Lecture 5: VOLKMAR – Changing Face of Autism (56 minutes)

Reading: Chapter 10 from Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders
Optional Reading: A Practical Guide to Autism (Volkmar & Wiesner): Chapter 8 (School Age Children) – will be posted online.

Response paper 4 and discussion questions (due by 6:00PM):
What do you think accounts for the apparent changes in outcome in autism?

THURSDAY June 4th
ONLINE SEMINAR (10:00-11:30AM EST):
Discussion of response papers, adult outcomes.

FRIDAY June 5th
Lecture 6: VOLKMAR – Overview of Model Programs (41 minutes)

Reading: Chapter 8 from Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders
Unit 3: Week 3 (June 8th – June 12th)

MONDAY June 8th
By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your ‘response’ paper – see the section on submitting a response paper for more details.

Lecture 7: POWERS – Behavioral Interventions (1 hour 20 minutes).


Response paper 5 and discussion questions (due by 6:00PM):
Discuss some aspect of similarity or difference in model program or some aspect of behavioral intervention in autism.

TUESDAY June 9th
ONLINE SEMINAR (10:00-11:30AM EST):
Discussion of response papers, model programs, behavioral interventions.

WEDNESDAY June 10th
By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your ‘response’ paper.

Lecture 8: MARTIN – Psychopharmacology (52 minutes)

Reading: Chapter 6 and 7 *Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders*

Response paper 6 and discussion questions (due by 6:00PM):
Pick one of the following to respond to:
(1) What are the pros/cons of drug treatments?

(2) How might behavioral interventions and drug treatments be combined?

(3) How do we understand the role of other conditions in relation to autism, e.g., fragile x or other conditions?

THURSDAY June 11th
ONLINE SEMINAR (10:00-11:30AM EST):
Discussion of response papers, drug treatments.
FRIDAY June 12th

Lecture 9: REICHOW – Evidence Based Treatments in Autism (40 minutes)

Reading: Chapter 9 from *Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders*

Response paper 7 and discussion questions (due by 6:00PM):
Please pick one of the following to respond to:

1. What are the uses and limitations of evidence-based treatment approaches in autism?
2. Why are treatments studies so (comparatively) sparse?
3. How does work on evidence-based treatments inform practice guidelines?

NOTE: PAPER PROPOSAL DUE TODAY!

Unit 4: Week 4 (June 15th – June 19th)

MONDAY June 15th

By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your ‘response’ paper – see the section on submitting a response paper for more details.

Lecture 10: McPARTLAND – Social Brain and Brain Function in Autism (1 hours 10 Mins)


Response paper 8 and discussion questions (due by 6:00PM):
How does conceptualizing autism as a disorder of social brain development inform intervention approaches?

TUESDAY June 16th

ONLINE SEMINAR (10:00-11:30AM EST):
Discussion of response paper 7, the current state of evidence-based treatments for autism.
**WEDNESDAY June 17th**

By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your ‘response’ paper.

**Lecture 11: PELPHREY – Neuroimaging Studies in Autism (1 hour 10 minutes)**


**Response paper 9 and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):
Please pick one of the following to respond to:

1. How does the information presented in this lecture complement that in the previous one?

2. What do MRI studies tell us that is different than studies using EEG approaches, how does our understanding of the social brain in autism inform studies of normal development?

**THURSDAY June 18th**

**ONLINE SEMINAR (10:00-11:30AM EST):**
Discussion of response papers 8 and 9, social neuroscience, brain function and neuroimaging studies of autism.

**FRIDAY June 19th**

**Lecture 12: GUPTA – Genetics (55 minutes)**

**Reading:** Chapter 5 from *Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders*


**Response paper 10 and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):
Discuss some aspect of the genetics of autism, e.g., implications for understanding etiology, brain development, family planning, animal models in autism.

**NOTE: TODAY IS LAST DAY TO SUBMIT A DRAFT OF YOUR PAPER FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT BY INSTRUCTOR AND TEACHING FELLOW!**
MONDAY June 22
By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your ‘response’ paper – see the section on submitting a response paper for more details.

Lecture 13: SINGER – Parental Perspectives (52 minutes)

Reading: Chapter 19 (Managing Sibling and Family Issues)


Response paper 11 and discussion questions (due by 6:00PM):
Please pick one of the following to respond to:
(1) How does the current system of care benefit or detract from family involvement in treatment?
(2) What changes could we make in the current system to improve care?

TUESDAY June 23
ONLINE SEMINAR (10:00-11:30AM EST):
Discussion of response papers, family and social policy issues.

WEDNESDAY June 24
By the end of the day you should have watched the assigned lecture, done the reading, and written your ‘response’ paper.

Lecture 14: RUTT – Legal Rights of Children with Autism (1 hour 16 mins).


Response paper 12 and discussion questions (due by 6:00PM):
Discuss how the characteristics of autism can impact interactions with the legal system.

THURSDAY June 25
ONLINE SEMINAR (10:00-11:30AM EST):
Discussion of response papers, legal issue in autism, review of course.

FRIDAY June 26
Optional Lecture 15: VOLKMAR AND BROWN – College Students with Autism

NOTE: FINAL VERSION OF TERM PAPERS DUE BY MIDNIGHT – BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME IN THE COVER PAGE, TITLE, AND FILE NAME FOR THE PAPER. PDF OR WORD DOCUMENTS ARE ACCEPTED.