**PSYC S350E**

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

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

**Teaching Fellow:** Luke Couch – luke.couch@yale.edu

**Dates: July 4th to August 5th**

**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:**  
The assigned text is: ***Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders, 3rd Edition*** (F. Volkmar, Editor) Cambridge University Press, 2019 and from **A Practical Guide to Autism, 2nd ed.** Volkmar and Wisner. I will post the required reading to canvas as PDF so you only need to get these books. The Cambridge Press book of more academic and scholarly and, as you can guess from the title, the practical guide is written more for parents and teachers.

Additional journal articles will be assigned as well. Chapters and articles will be posted on the course website as .pdf files (within the “Modules” section, on the “Instructions” page for each week) and students are expected to be up to date on the video lectures and related 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).

The grading will be broken down as follows: 20% for response papers, 20% for class attendance and participation, and 60% for the final paper.

**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. These should be emailed to the teaching fellow who will pull them together for Dr. Volkmar to use during the discussion times.

**Final paper timeline: IMPORTANT DATES!!**

**July 18th   - Proposal Due**

**July 29th - Last day to submit a draft**

**August 5 - Paper Due by midnight (last day of course**)

**Final paper proposal:**

By the date specified (7/18), 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 (8/5), 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 instructor 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/>

**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 (20% of your final grade). Because this will be a seminar style class, your active participation in class is required and vital to extracting the full value possible from the course. You will be expected to attend every live class session for the full duration unless you have made other arrangements with Dr. Volkmar. You are also expected to have your camera on for the duration of the meeting in order to better foster discussions and interactions with your classmates.

**Unit 1: Week 1)**

**MONDAY July 4th**

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.

**Lecture 1**: VOLKMAR – Overview of autism (80 minutes)

**Reading**: From Practical Guide read Chapter1, optional reading is Chapters 1 and 2 from the Cambridge Press book (intro to autism and chapter on on epidemiology) I will past these on canvas.

**Response Paper 1 and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):

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 July 8th.

**TUESDAY July 5th**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Overview of course, discussion of logistics and of response papers.

**WEDNESAY July 6th**

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

**Lecture 2**: TSATSANIS – Assessment (48 minutes)

**Reading**: Chapter 2 and 2 appendix from Practical guide book

**Response Paper 2 and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):

Discuss one difficulty in diagnosis and assessment of children with autism and our understanding of psychological factors in autism.

**THURSDAY July 7th**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Discussion of lecture and 2nd response paper, psychological processes and issues in diagnosis and psychological assessment in autism.

**FRIDAY July 8th**

**Lecture 3**: PAUL – Communication (1 hour 50 minutes)

**Reading**: Chapte4 from Cambridge U. Press book

**Unit 2: Week 2**

**MONDAY July 11th**

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 5 (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 July 12th**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Discussion of response papers, early diagnosis.

**WEDNESDAY July 13th**

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)

**Optional Reading:** Chapter 10 from Cambridge Press Book

**Response paper 4 and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):

What do you think accounts for the apparent changes in outcome in autism?

**THURSDAY July 14th**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Discussion of response papers, adult outcomes.

**FRIDAY July 15th**

**Lecture 6:** VOLKMAR – Overview of Model Programs (41 minutes)

**Reading**: Chapter 9 from Camburdge U press book.

**Unit 3: Week 3**

**MONDAY July 18th - Note Paper Proposals Due!!!!**

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).

**Reading**: Powers - Behavioral Assessment of Individuals with Autism (Chapter 28: *Handbook of Autism: 4th edition,* pp.695-736) – will be posted online.

**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 July 19th**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Discussion of response papers, model programs, behavioral interventions.

**WEDNESDAY July 20th**

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 7 from Cambridge U. Press book

**Response** **paper 6** **and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):

Pick one of the following to respond to:

* What are the pros/cons of drug treatments?
* How might behavioral interventions and drug treatments be combined?
* How do we understand the role of other conditions in relation to autism, e.g., fragile x or other conditions?

**THURSDAY July 21st**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Discussion of response papers, drug treatments.

**FRIDAY July 22th**

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

**Reading**: Reichow and Barton - Evidence based psychoeducational Interventions (Chapter 42: *Handbook of Autism 4th edition*, pp. 969-992). Will be posted on line.

**Unit 4: Week 4**

**MONDAY July 25th**

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:** McParland – Social Brain and Brain Function in Autism (1 hours 10 Mins)

**Readings**: McPartland, J., Wu, J., Bailey, C., Mayes, L., Schultz, R. & Klin, A. (2011). Atypical neural specialization for social percepts in autism spectrum disorder. *Social Neuroscience, 6(5-6),* 436-451.

McPartland, J. & Pelphrey, K. (2012). The implications of social neuroscience for social disability. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 42(6),* 1256-1262*.*

**Response** **paper 7** **and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):

Please pick one of the following to respond to:

* What are the uses and limitations of evidence-based treatment approaches in autism?
* Why are treatments studies so (comparatively) sparse?
* How does work on evidence-based treatments inform practice guidelines?
* How does conceptualizing autism as a disorder of social brain development inform intervention approaches?

**TUESDAY July 26th**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Discussion of response paper 7, the current state of evidence-based treatments for autism.

**WEDNESDAY July 27th**

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)

**Reading**: Voos, A. C., Pelphrey, K. A., Tirrell, J., Bolling, D. Z., Vander Wyk, B., Kaiser, M. D., ... & Ventola, P. (2013). [Neural mechanisms of improvements in social motivation after pivotal response treatment: two case studies.](http://childstudycenter.yale.edu/autism/class/339_174218_NeuralMechanismsofImprovementsinSocialMotivationAfterPivotalResponseTreatmentTwoCaseStudiesVoos2012JADD.pdf)*Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, *43*(1), 1-10. This will be posted on line.

**Response paper 8** **and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):

Please pick one of the following to respond to:

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

**1st. *NOTE: TODAY IS LAST DAY TO SUBMIT A DRAFT OF YOUR PAPER FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT BY INSTRUCTOR AND TEACHING FELLOW!***

**Thursday July 28th**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Discussion of response papers 8 and 9, social neuroscience, brain function and neuroimaging studies of autism.

**FRIDAY July 29th**

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

**Reading**: Chapter 5 from Cambridge U Press book

**Optional Reading:** Rutter and Thapar - Genetics of Autism Spectrum Disorders (Chapter 17: *Handbook of Autism 4thedition*, pp. 411-423). This will be posted on line.

**Response paper 9** **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.

**Unit 5: Week 5**

**MONDAY August 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 13**: SINGER – Parental Perspectives (52 minutes)

**Reading**: Chapter 15 from Practical Guide book

**Optional Reading**: Fiske, Pepa, & Harris - Supporting Parents, Siblings, and Grandparents of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Chapter 40: *Handbook of Autism 4th edition*).

**Response paper 10** **and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):

Please pick one of the following to respond to:

* How does the current system of care benefit or detract from family involvement in treatment?
* What changes could we make in the current system to improve care?

**TUESDAY August 2nd**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Discussion of response papers, family and social policy issues.

**WEDNESDAY August 3rd**

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).

**Reading**: Mayerson - Autism in the Courtroom (Chapter 45: *Handbook of Autism 4th edition,* pp. 1036-1050).

**Response paper 11** **and discussion questions** (due by 6:00PM):

Discuss how the characteristics of autism can impact interactions with the legal system.

**THURSDAY August 4th**

**ONLINE SEMINAR** (10:00-11:30AM EST):

Discussion of response papers, legal issue in autism, review of course.

**FRIDAY August 5th**

**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.*