PSYC S350E

Updated June 9, 2022

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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 3rd to August 4th

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 AM-11:30 AM EDT

Zoom Link: https://yale.zoom.us/j/94703190349

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 17th - Proposal Due
July 26th - Last day to submit a draft
August 4th - Paper Due by midnight (last day of course)

Final paper proposal:
By the date specified (7/17), 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 and Dr. Volkmar will be available to help you decide upon a topic and provide direction on where to begin your research. You can also schedule an individual meeting with Dr Volkmar to discuss your paper topic ideas or if you need help formulating an idea to start with.

Final paper:
By the date specified (8/4), 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/](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. Because this course is conducted remotely, all live class discussion sessions will be held across Zoom (the lecture videos on Canvas can be watched at your own pace before each class meeting). 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 (this will be incorporated into your participation grade). If this requirement poses an issue for you, please email Dr. Volkmar and the teaching fellow.
Unit 1: Week 1

Session # 1 MONDAY July 3rd

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.

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TUESDAY July 4th

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

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

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Session #2 WEDNESDAY July 5th

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, Optional Chapter 3 by Vivanti et al. from CUP 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.

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THURSDAY July 6th

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.

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Session #3 FRIDAY July 7th

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

Reading: Chapter 4 from Cambridge U. Press book

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Week 2

Session #4 MONDAY July 10th

1. 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 4 (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?

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TUESDAY July 11th

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

Discussion of response papers, early diagnosis.

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Session #5 WEDNESDAY July 12th

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)**

**Required Reading:** Chapters 6 and 7 – school age and adolescent and adults chapters from practical guide book.

**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?

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THURSDAY July 13th

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

Discussion of response papers, adult outcomes.

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Session #6 FRIDAY July 14th

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

**Reading:** Chapter 3 and 4 from Practical guide book

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Week 3

Session 7

MONDAY July 17th - 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.

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**TUESDAY July 18th**

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

Discussion of response papers, model programs, behavioral interventions.

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**Session 7 WEDNESDAY July 19th**

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 optional reading from Practical guide 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?

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**THURSDAY July 20th**

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

Discussion of response papers, drug treatments.
FRIDAY July 21st

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


Week 4

MONDAY July 24th

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:


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 25th

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

Discussion of response paper 7, the current state of evidence-based treatments for autism.
WEDNESDAY July 26th

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 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!

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Thursday July 27th

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

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

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FRIDAY July 28th

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 4th edition*, 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 July 31st

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


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 1st

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

Discussion of response papers, family and social policy issues.

WEDNESDAY August 2nd

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

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

THURSDAY August 3rd

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

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

FRIDAY August 4th Last Day of Class

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.*