Course description: From the UMass Lowell Graduate Catalogue: This course is designed to explore Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) in the developing person and in changing social contexts (e.g., family, school, employment) across development. An empirical and theoretical review of developmental transformations and reorganizations across the lifespan provides the basis for examining biological, social, psychological, and cultural contributions to the continuity and discontinuity of both adaptive and maladaptive processes over time as well as an analysis of individual and environmental risk and protective factors across development. Special attention is given to the changing competencies and challenges of developmental periods and their role in the assessment, display, meaning, and implications of ASDs from infancy through adulthood.

There will be a combination of lecture and seminar-type discussion with a heavy emphasis on student participation.

Objectives: By the completion of this course students will:

- Conduct a search of the scholarly literature for evidence based articles relevant to development and autism
- Identify the strengths and limitations of empirical evidence brought to bear on a research question relevant to development and autism and summarize findings in a literature review written in APA style and presented orally in class.
- Identify key aspects of the state of knowledge about autism in relation to definitions, prevalence, assessment, core interpersonal, cognitive, and neurological characteristics, and the interaction of these with social contexts and developmental challenges, demonstrating that knowledge on weekly quizzes.
- Engage in constructive conversations and criticisms of the literature with fellow students in the areas listed above.

Prerequisites. Graduate status required; previous coursework in development, research methods, and statistics strongly recommended.

Expectations: Students will come to class prepared to discuss weekly readings. They will be prepared to present research articles and final presentations without reading, prompted only by
notes. They will also be prepared to ask questions and discuss presentations of other students on days when they are not making presentations themselves. Discussions should be civil but lively, as we strive to challenge ideas and preconceived notions in light of empirical evidence. *Missing any one class is the equivalent of missing an entire week of classes*; students should do so only under extreme circumstances.

**Grades**

Final grades will be based on activities to include:

- Weekly open book, open notes quizzes on Blackboard; 10 points each (20%)
  - Quizzes on material covered on Thursday will be posted on Thursday 9:00 PM and be available until Sunday 11:59 PM each week from weeks 2-11.
  - All quizzes must be taken on time. No exceptions.
  - All quizzes may be taken twice; the higher of the two grades will be applied.
- Two weekly presentations of recent (date of publication: 2014+) empirical articles relevant to that week’s topic (20%)
- Weekly participation in class (10%)
- One mini-research review, probably 5 pages in length, consisting of a review of original empirical research—3 empirical articles—on a topic relevant to autism and development and approved by the instructor (10%). The primary purpose of this assignment is to prepare for the end of the semester research review; hence it is a “low stakes” but very important assignment.
- Research review on an approved topic written in APA style with a minimum of 12 references including eight empirical journal articles (30%)
- Presentation of the research review (10%)

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<th>Grade</th>
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The Graduate School does not allow for final grades of C- or D. See the catalogue for policy: [http://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/policies/Grading_Policies.htm](http://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/policies/Grading_Policies.htm)

**Academic Integrity**

All students are responsible for upholding standards of academic integrity, including producing their own original work for this course. Practices that violate this policy—whether intentional or not—include:

- Dual submission without prior permission
- Use of ideas from others’ work without properly citing the source for those ideas
Use of direct quotations from others’ work without indicating that it is a direct quotation and providing the appropriate citation

Getting assistance from others on tasks intended to be completed without it (e.g., quizzes, papers)

Providing assistance to others on tasks intended to be completed without it.

Any instance of integrity violations must be reported to the Office of the Provost. See the catalogue for more information: http://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/policies/academic_dishonesty.htm

All students will submit papers to Turnitin.com, which will scan for matches to others’ work. Students will be able to evaluate their papers using this tool and revise up until the due date to ensure that no accidental plagiarism occurs.

Note that instances of plagiarism or cheating will result in a 0 for that assignment.

Required Texts


E-book available through UML Library

Additional References


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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic and what to read before class</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>Overview and Expectations</td>
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<td>• Developmental Review</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>What is Autism</td>
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<td>• Frith: Chapt. 1-4</td>
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<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>Assessment &amp; Evidenced based Intervention</td>
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<td>• Handbook 2: Ch 24-28, 42</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>Theory of Mind, Social Cognition, Emotion</td>
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<td>• Handbook 1: Ch. 9, 14, 20</td>
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<td><em>Topic/references for mini-research review</em></td>
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<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Language &amp; IQ</td>
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<td>Central Coherence &amp; Executive Function</td>
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<td>• Kenworthy, et al., 2008</td>
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<td>Neurological Foundations</td>
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<td>• Handbook 1: Ch 5</td>
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<td>• Chambers &amp; Frye (2008)</td>
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<td>• Hutman et al. (2012)</td>
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<td>Family &amp; Adulthood</td>
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*Final papers due on Blackboard and to Turnitin.com no later than Thursday 12/20*