CLP 4990 SYLLABUS

Autism Spectrum Disorders

*Fully Online: Spring Semester 2012 (Term A, January 9 – May 5)*

THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA  Pensacola, Florida 32514

Professor:

- Dr. Carlene Thornton, Adjunct Faculty
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Course Description:

CLP 4990--**Autism Spectrum Disorders**--is a fully online course. Students who successfully complete the course will earn three hours credit. The class provides a comprehensive overview of autism spectrum disorders, diagnostic methods, and programs designed to assist individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders and their families, caretakers, and professionals who work with them. In recent years, the number of individuals identified with autism spectrum disorders has rapidly increased, leading to general concern about identifying possible causes and strategies to assist these individuals. Many research projects are currently being conducted to address these issues. Students are encouraged to seek out information available from both current and past research in addition to reading the information provided in the textbooks required for this course. In the process of completing assignments and participating in the discussion forum, students will have the opportunity to apply their critical thinking skills to controversial and problematic issues associated with the topic of autism spectrum disorders.

The general format for the class is online discussion and participation. There are specific written assignments relating to concepts and / or cases included in the course material. In addition to commenting on discussion forum topics each week, students will respond to "dropbox" questions on a weekly basis. There will also be a time-limited, open-book mid-term exam. The course requirements include one
research / critical thinking paper on an approved topic and two written assignments on autism spectrum disorder programs and services. (Note: Any student who is working with an autistic individual or who has direct interaction with a person with autism may choose to do a case study in lieu of one of the written assignments.)

The following textbooks are required for the course:


The following books are recommended for the course:


Note: Supplemental electronic reserve, website references, and online documents may also be utilized.

Topics and Student Learning Outcomes:

Class members will have the opportunity to acquire basic knowledge about the characteristics associated with autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and related developmental disorders. In addition, students will learn about the methods currently being used to identify individuals who are autistic or who may have other related developmental disorders. Intervention methods, educational programs, behavior management and strategies to facilitate social interaction will be discussed.
The following topics will be addressed:

- Historical development of research and treatment
- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) theories
- Symptoms of varying autism spectrum disorders, including Asperger’s Disorder
- Diagnostic methods required for the identification of autism spectrum disorders
- Assessment methods used to differentiate between autism and other developmental disorders
- Controversial issues in the identification and treatment of autistic individuals
- Public school programs for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders
- Interventions and behavior management strategies
- Special programs designed to assist autistic individuals in their social, cognitive, and /or language skills development
- Assisting individuals with ASD in the transition from adolescence into adulthood
- Organizations and / or programs available to assist families and caretakers.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, it is anticipated that the student will be able to

1) Discuss examples of past and current research on autism spectrum disorders
2) Develop a conceptual understanding of autism spectrum disorders and communicate that understanding in writing
3) Identify and differentiate between the various ASD disorders
4) Describe the symptoms and behaviors associated with autistic individuals
5) List and discuss the major assessment instruments and methods used in identifying ASD
6) Identify support groups and other services available to families and caretakers
7) Describe the role of public schools in providing appropriate educational programs for children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder
8) Discuss various ASD behavioral programs, interventions, and treatment programs currently available for children, teenagers, and young adults
9) Use critical thinking skills to identify those ASD programs that are most effective and explain the basis for that opinion.
Special Technology Utilized By Students

Required:

- Adobe Acrobat Reader:  
  http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

Available if Required:

- PowerPoint Viewer:
- Windows Media Player:
- Quicktime Player:
- Real Player:
    - Select the "Get RealPlayer - Free" option

Grading /Evaluation:

Student performance will be evaluated as follows:

Assignments:

- **Online Discussion Forum Participation** (100 points)
  - Weekly original comment on topic and responses to comments of classmates
- **Dropbox Questions** (100 points)
  - Weekly responses to two questions based on reading assignment(s)

**Mid-Term Exam** (100 points)  
*Time-limited online open-book exam*

- **Two Written Assignments on ASD Programs and Services** (50 points each)
- **One Research / Critical Thinking Paper** (100 points)
  - **Due** final week of the semester

Total possible points for course:  **500 points**
Letter grade equivalencies are as follows:

Percentage Range    Equivalent Letter Grade:
- 95 - 100            A
- 90 – 94             A-
- 87 – 89             B+
- 84 – 86             B
- 80 – 83             B-
- 77 – 79             C+
- 74 – 76             C
- 70 – 73             C-
- 67 – 69             D+
- 64 – 66             D
- 60 – 63             D-
- < 60                F

Note regarding Online Discussion and Dropbox Analyses:

- Regular participation in the assigned Discussion Forums and timely completion of the Dropbox answers are expected. If, in the judgment of the instructor, there is a failure on the part of a student to participate in the class online threaded discussions regularly, such behavior will have a detrimental effect upon the student's grade. For approval, the discussion post should be approximately three to five sentences in length, relevant to the weekly topic, clearly stated, and respectful of differing points of view. A minimum of one original post per week for the Discussion Forum is required for ten points credit. Students are encouraged to respond to other students' posts but additional points are not awarded for these comments.
- The Discussion Forum topic for the first week (Session1) will be Classmate Introductions. There will be no Dropbox questions for Session 1.
- Failure to submit answers to Dropbox questions prior to the Dropbox deadline each week will have a negative impact on the student’s grade. There will be two questions each week for a possible total of ten points.
- There will be no Dropbox or Discussion Forum assignments the week of the mid-term exam and the final week of the course.
- Students should utilize the weekly assignment grades and the written assignment grades as guidance from the instructor with respect to meeting class expectations.
Getting Started:

URL for eLearning log-in page: https://elearning.uwf.edu

The first week of the semester, go to the Content link of the course and access all Course Introduction and Management links (Welcome, Getting to Know Your Classmates, Course Schedule and Assignments, Syllabus, Orientation to Online Learning). After familiarizing yourself with that information, access the Session 1 link and read that information. Note: Remember to check your email frequently for messages from the instructor.

Expectations for Academic Conduct/Plagiarism Policy:

- As members of the University of West Florida, we commit ourselves to honesty. As we strive for excellence in performance, integrity—personal and institutional—is our most precious asset.
- Honesty in our academic work is vital, and we will not knowingly act in ways which erode that integrity.
- Accordingly, we pledge not to cheat, nor to tolerate cheating, nor to plagiarize the work of others.
- We pledge to share community resources in ways that are responsible and that comply with established policies of fairness. Cooperation and competition are means to high achievement and are encouraged. Indeed, cooperation is expected unless our directive is to individual performance.
- We will compete constructively and professionally for the purpose of stimulating high performance standards.
- Finally, we accept adherence to this set of expectations for academic conduct as a condition of membership in the UWF academic community.

Students are advised to access the plagiarism tutorial at the following link:

http://library.uwf.edu/tutorials/writing_skills/avoiding plagiarism.cfm

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students can access The Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Misconduct Policy at the UWF web site below and should familiarize themselves with the University of West Florida student rules, regulations, and expected behavior.

http://uwf.edu/osrr/
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

Students with special needs who require specific examination-related or other course-related accommodations should contact the Student Disability Resource Center. SDRC will provide the student with a letter for the instructor.

The Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) at the University of West Florida supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos and podcasts, please notify the instructor or the SDRC as soon as possible. You may contact the SDRC office by e-mail at sdrc@uwf.edu or by phone at (850) 474-2387. Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the individual. The Student Disability Resource Center web site address is http://uwf.edu/sdrc.

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Emergency Information and Course Continuity  In the case of severe weather or other emergency, the campus might be closed and classes cancelled. Official closures and delays are announced on the UWF website and broadcast on WUWF-FM.

Weather Emergency Information
WUWF-FM (88.1MHz) is the official information source for the University. Any pertinent information regarding closings, cancellations, and the re-opening of campus will be broadcast.

Emergency plans for the University of West Florida related to inclement weather are available on the following UWF web pages:
Information about hurricane preparedness plans is available on the UWF web site:  http://uwfemergency.org/hurricaneprep.cfm.
Information about other emergency procedures is available on the UWF web site:  http://uwfemergency.org/