

## SPLH 430/830: Communication in Autism (3 credits, online)

Spring 2021

University of Kansas

**Instructor Information:** Heather Fielding Gebhardt, M.A.

**Email:** [fielding.h@ku.edu](mailto:fielding.h@ku.edu)

**Preferred Reference:** Heather

**Pronouns:** She, her, hers

**Office Hours (Zoom):** Tuesday/Thursday from 10:30am to 11:30am  
& by appointment (a link to Zoom office hours will be provided  
on Blackboard).



### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Description

This course will provide you with an introduction to the characteristics and communication of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that is characterized by deficits in social communication and presence of restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests. As a speech-language pathologist, you are likely to work with individuals with ASD at some point in your career. This course will prepare you to do so by providing you with basic knowledge of the diagnostic criteria, identification, and assessment and intervention considerations of ASD, as well as strategies for partnering with families who have family members with ASD.

This course is one of several required courses for students pursuing an undergraduate certificate in Learning and Communication in Children with Autism. If you are interested in pursuing this undergraduate certificate, you can find out more information here: <https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/speech-language-hearing/learning-communication-children-autism-ugcert/#text> or by contacting your advisor.

#### About Me

I am a doctoral candidate in the Child Language Doctoral Program. My research focuses on the ways in which children with neurodevelopmental disorders (such as ASD and fragile X syndrome) interact with their parents and the effects that parents and children have on one another's development and well-being. I have experience working as a teaching assistant in a school for children with ASD.

#### Expectations

It is expected that you address any confusion regarding the syllabus at the beginning of the semester by emailing me ([fielding.h@ku.edu](mailto:fielding.h@ku.edu)). This syllabus should be your first resource to answer questions about the course schedule, requirements, policies, due dates, and assignments. As a student in this course, you are responsible for independently completing the assignments by the specified due date. If you are unable to complete an assignment by the due date, please contact me.

My role as your instructor is to facilitate your learning and provide you with the resources and activities that allow you to gain expertise in this material. Ultimately, you are responsible for what you get out of this course. However, I will guide you through the materials, act as a resource for your questions, and facilitate activities and assignments.

## Course Goals

This course is designed to meet the requirements of ASHA Knowledge Standards (2020) IV-C (Communication Disorders including Etiologies, Characteristics, and Developmental and Linguistic Correlates) and IV-D (Assessment and Intervention for Persons with Communication Disorders). At the end of this course, students will have a basic understanding of:

1. The history, prevalence, and etiology of ASD
2. The diagnostic features of ASD as well as common methods of diagnosis
3. The communication characteristics of individuals with ASD across the lifespan and across levels of ability
4. Assessment of communication in individuals with ASD
5. Evidence-based interventions for communication in individuals with ASD
6. Working with families of individuals with ASD and other stakeholders

## Asynchronous Course Pacing

This course is presented entirely online and asynchronously. For this course, asynchronous means that there are no pre-arranged online meeting times. There are deadlines for assignments, and it is expected that you complete the readings and assignments on a weekly basis. As this is a 3 credit course, it is expected that you dedicate ~9 hours of time per week to this course. However, as is the case in most courses, there will be some weeks that require more time than others. On average, you should be spending at least 9 hours per week on this course.

I will send a reminder email every Monday with the readings and assignments for that week as well as upcoming due dates. However, you will be most successful in this course if you keep track of the schedule on your own as well. All materials will be available at the start of the semester, so you can work ahead if you would like.

Open communication between instructors and students is extremely important, so if you have concerns about your schedule/ability to get things done by due dates, please contact me so we can figure out a plan for you to complete the coursework.

## COURSE MATERIALS

### Required Texts

Prelock, P.A. & McCauley, R. J. (2012). *Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders: Evidence-Based Intervention Strategies for Communication & Social Interactions*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. ISBN 13: 978-1-59857-053-3.

Prizant, B. M. (2015). *Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks. ISBN 13: 978-1-4767-7624-8.

**Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard (Bb).**

### Blackboard

As this is an entirely online course, Blackboard (Bb) will be heavily utilized. Announcements, additional readings and videos, assignments, and grades will all be posted on the Bb site. You can access this course's site at [courseware.ku.edu](https://courseware.ku.edu). If you are unfamiliar with Bb, please see this site for help: <https://blackboard.ku.edu/students/resources>. You can also contact me or your classmates.

**\*\*\*If you find that Bb is not loading properly in your browser, please try a different one. I find that Chrome does not always cooperate, but that Firefox or Internet Explorer are more reliable.**

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Readings and Videos

Each week there are assigned readings from your textbook(s) and/or additional resources on Bb as well as videos so you can see real-life examples. You will need to complete the list of readings and videos during the week it is assigned.

### Weekly Journals (14 total)

At the end of each week, you will complete a journal entry. The purpose of the journal entries is for you to reflect on what you have learned that week and to demonstrate the knowledge you have gained from the readings/videos. Each week there will be a prompt that should guide your journal entry, but you are also encouraged to discuss additional thoughts you had during the week. The journal entries are private, so only you and the instructor will be able to see your entries. The instructor will read your entries and may provide feedback or comments.

### Biweekly Assignments (6 total)

The purpose of the biweekly assignments is for you to delve deeply into a topic and engage with the materials in such a way that you can use this information in your clinical practice in the future. You should be able to keep these assignments and directly apply them to your future practice. For example, the Early Identification Guide will be a useful tool when you are working with families with young children. You will do three of these with a partner, and three on your own. The rubrics for these assignments will be posted on Bb.

**Solo Assignments:** Impact on Family (due 2/14)  
Early Identification Guide (due 3/7)  
Social Story (due 5/2)

**Partner Assignments:** Communication Assessment (due 3/21)  
Intervention Evaluation Guide (due 4/4)  
AAC Activity (due 4/18)

*\*\*Students enrolled in SPLH830 will only have 1 partner assignment, all others will be solo assignments.\*\**

**Midterm Paper** A book report and reflection based on Uniquely Human will serve as the midterm paper.

**Final Project** A final project will be due during finals week.

**Final Exam** There will be an online final exam during Finals week.

<b>Weekly Journal Entries (70 points)</b>	14 weeks x 5 points per week	70 points
<b>Assignments (180 points)</b>	1 (solo): Impact on the Family	30
	2 (solo): Early Identification Guide	30
	3 (partner): Communication Assessment	30
	4 (partner): Intervention Evaluation Guide	30
	5 (partner): AAC Activity	30
	6 (solo): Social Story	30
<b>Midterm Paper (50 points)</b>	Book Report and Reflection	50
<b>Final Project (50 points)</b>	Autism Navigator Guide	50
<b>Final Exam (50 points)</b>		50
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>400</b>

## Grading

Grades are based on your performance on the journal entries, assignments, the midterm paper, the final paper, and the final exam.

Letter Grade	Points	Quality of Achievement
A	≥ 375	Excellent
A -	360 – 374	
B +	345 – 359	Good
B	330 – 344	
B -	315 – 329	
C +	300 – 314	Fair
C	285 – 299	
C -	270 – 284	
D +	255 – 269	Poor
D	240 – 254	
F	< 240	Inadequate

## COURSE SCHEDULE OUTLINE

Week	Topic	Assignment(s)	Due Date (by 5pm CT)
1	What is ASD?	Weekly Journal	Feb 5 <sup>th</sup>
2	History, Prevalence, Respectful Reference	Weekly Journal	Feb 12 <sup>th</sup>
		<b>Solo Assignment:</b> Impact on the Family	Feb 14 <sup>th</sup>
3	Diagnosis: Criteria, Methods, Barriers, and the SLPs role	Weekly Journal	Feb 19 <sup>th</sup>
4	Early Identification & Communication Characteristics	Weekly Journal	Feb 26 <sup>th</sup>
5	Early Identification & Communication Characteristics	Weekly Journal	March 5 <sup>th</sup>
		<b>Solo Assignment:</b> Early Identification Guide	March 7 <sup>th</sup>
6	Identification & Characteristics in Adolescents and Adults	Weekly Journal	March 12 <sup>th</sup>
		<b>Midterm Paper</b> (book report and reflection)	March 14 <sup>th</sup>
7	Communication Assessment	Weekly Journal	March 19 <sup>th</sup>
8	Intro to Intervention	Weekly Journal	March 26 <sup>th</sup>
		<b>Partner Assignment:</b> Communication Assessment	March 28 <sup>th</sup>
9	PECS	Weekly Journal	April 2 <sup>nd</sup>
		<b>Partner Assignment:</b> Intervention Evaluation Guide	April 4 <sup>th</sup>
10	SCERTS	Weekly Journal	April 9 <sup>th</sup>
11	AAC	Weekly Journal	April 16 <sup>th</sup>
12	PMII and Community-Based	Weekly Journal	April 23 <sup>rd</sup>
		<b>Partner Assignment:</b> AAC Activity	April 25 <sup>th</sup>
13	Social Stories	Weekly Journal	April 30 <sup>th</sup>
		<b>Solo Assignment:</b> Social Story Activity	May 2 <sup>nd</sup>
14	DIR/Floortime	Weekly Journal	May 7 <sup>th</sup>
15	Finals Week	<b>Final Exam</b>	May 14 <sup>th</sup>
		<b>Final Project</b> (Autism Navigator guide)	May 14 <sup>th</sup>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### Accommodations

The Academic Achievement and Access Center (AAAC) coordinates academic accommodations and services for all eligible KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted the AAAC, please do so as soon as possible. They are located at 22 Strong Hall and their phone number is 785-864-4046 (V/TTY). Information about their services can be found at [www.access.ku.edu/academic-accommodations](http://www.access.ku.edu/academic-accommodations). Please contact me privately regarding your needs for this course.

### Nondiscrimination

The University of Kansas prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, disability, status as a veteran, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, retaliation, gender identity, gender expression, and genetic information in the University's programs and activities. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator at [IOA@ku.edu](mailto:IOA@ku.edu) with any inquiries.

### Religious Observances

Should the examination and/or assignment schedule for this course conflict with your mandated religious observance, please contact me at the beginning of the semester so we can schedule a make-up or alternate due date at a mutually acceptable time. Students are responsible for initiating discussion with the instructor to reach a mutually acceptable solution.

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This is an inclusive course. At KU, administrators, faculty, and staff are committed to the creation and maintenance of inclusive learning environments. These are places of learning where you will be treated with respects and dignity and where all individuals are provided equitable opportunity to participate, contribute, and succeed. The department of Speech-Language-Hearing adheres to the College's statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Cultural and linguistic diversity are central to the field of speech-language-pathology and an integral part of clinical practice as an SLP or audiologist. As a department, we strive to create a learning environment where differences are valued and respected, and all students have an equitable opportunity for success. We believe that all students benefit from training and experiences that will help them learn, lead, and serve in an increasingly diverse society, so we are committed to enhancing the training we provide around cultural and linguistic diversity.

In SPLH 430, all students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, Veteran status, citizenship status, nationality and other diverse identities that we each bring to class.

Your success at KU and beyond is enhanced by the innovation and creativity of thought that inclusive learning environments facilitate. The success of an inclusive learning environment relies on the participation, support, and understanding of you and your peers. We encourage you to speak up and share your views, but also understand that you are doing so in a learning environment in which we all are expected to engage respectfully and with regard to the dignity of all others.

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact me or Student Affairs for support ([studentaffairs@ku.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@ku.edu)).

Other resources you may find helpful:

Student Emergency Assistance Fund: <https://studentaffairs.ku.edu/emergency-assistance-students>

Free Legal Services for Students: [www.legalservices.ku.edu](http://www.legalservices.ku.edu)

## **Academic Misconduct**

Students are expected to observe all University guidelines pertaining to academic misconduct. As stated in the University Senate Rules and Regulations (2.6.1): “Academic misconduct by a student shall include, but not be limited to, disruption of classes; threatening an instructor or fellow student in an academic setting; giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on examinations or in the preparation of notebooks, themes, reports or their assignments; knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work; unauthorized changing of grades; unauthorized use of University approvals or forging of signatures; falsification of research results; plagiarizing of another’s work; violation of regulations or ethical codes for treatment of human and animal subjects; or otherwise acting dishonestly in research.” Academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with all University rules and regulations.

## **Intellectual Property Policy**

Course materials prepared by the instructor, including content of lectures and review sessions, are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recordings presented by the instructor for this online course are the property of the instructor and should not be distributed, transferred, or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course. The video and audio recordings are only to be used by students who are enrolled in the course.

## **Writing Center**

Should you need feedback, sounding boards, or other people to help coach you in the writing process, the Writing Center is an excellent resource. The Writing Center is a place for productive talk about writing, with trained peer consultants to help you brainstorm, draft, and revise your writing projects. The KU Writing Center is a free service for KU undergraduate and graduate students, where trained peer consultants work with writers of all levels and abilities. You can work one-on-one with a writing consultant on any course assignment or writing project—essays, research papers, presentations, application essays, and more—at any point of completeness or incompleteness. They are located in Anschutz Library and can be reached at [writing@ku.edu](mailto:writing@ku.edu) or 785-864-2399, or by visiting [www.writing.ku.edu](http://www.writing.ku.edu).

## **Medical Crises, Counseling and Psychological Services, and COVID-19**

In the case of a documented medical crisis, either personal or that of a friend or relative, whether related to COVID-19 or not, it is the student’s responsibility to initiate discussion with the instructor. Together, we will come to a mutually agreeable method for making up missed coursework.

It is not unusual to experience distress during times of uncertainty and stress. If you notice signs of distress in yourself (for a list of examples, visit [www.caps.ku.edu/coping-covid](http://www.caps.ku.edu/coping-covid)), reach out to friends, family, and/or your instructor. Continue practicing self-help and coping techniques (<https://flexteaching.ku.edu/self-care-examples>). CAPS staff are available at 785-864-2277 or on the second floor of the Watkins Memorial Health Center.

Given the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, I aim to provide you with flexibility and transparency throughout the course as it pertains to your experiences with the pandemic. Please contact me if you need support. In this global pandemic, we are all facing unprecedented situations. It is okay not to be okay. If you tell me you are having trouble, I will not judge you or think less of you. I hope you will extend me the same grace. Some ground rules:

- You never owe me personal information about your health (mental or physical), or anything else.
- You are always welcome to talk to me about things you might be going through.
- If I can’t help you, I will try to direct you to KU resources for assistance.
- If you need extra help, please just ask! I will listen and work with you.