

# AUTISM STUDIES (AUST)

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## **AUST 500 Gateway: Autistic Experiences (3)**

This course will help students to broaden and deepen their perspectives on the varied lives of autistic people. Through a combination of experiential learning and studying first-person accounts of life with autism, students will examine a diverse range of autistic lives and explore ways in which gender, culture and other factors impact life with autism.

## **AUST 510 Autism and Humanity (3)**

What can autism teach us about being human? And what can theories of human nature teach us about autism? In this course, we will build upon the exploration of autistic experiences undertaken in the gateway course, and begin to investigate ways in which our understanding of autism can both enrich and be enriched by a broader understanding of what it means to be human. Topics to be addressed might include: person first vs. identity first language; models of disability; neurodiversity, autistic identity and autistic culture; the history of autism; philosophical theories of human nature, society and culture; Catholic understandings of the human person, and/or Catholic social teaching. Prerequisite: AUST 500.

## **AUST 520 A Biopsychosocial Understanding of the Autism Spectrum (3)**

There has been a tremendously successful movement for autism awareness; however, the public's knowledge of the autism spectrum has not paralleled the public awareness campaign or the tremendous scientific progress we have made in understanding the autism spectrum. Moreover, there has been a vast amount of misinformation and folk science theories that have been promoted in the media. This course is designed to examine our scientific knowledge of the autism spectrum from multiple levels of analysis, including (but not limited to) biological, psychological, cultural, and cross-cultural research. We will critically examine the etiology, development, and diagnosis of ASD. We will view the ASD diagnosis in the context of the individual, family, community, and culture.

## **AUST 530 Quantitative Methods in Autism Research (3)**

Many scientific and therapeutic theories relevant to autism come from research that draws conclusions from statistical evidence. Therefore, it is important that people who seek to use such theories be both good consumers and good producers of data analytic techniques. This course will survey a variety of descriptive and inferential methods commonly found in autism research and study designs. Students will learn the theoretical and computational aspects of the techniques, perform them with appropriate computer software, and interpret the implications of the results. Special attention will be given to how statistical evidence has been used in published research studies on autism. Prerequisite: AUST 520.

## **AUST 535 Autism Research Design and Methods (3)**

This course will give students a broad overview of the research methods used to understand and support the developmental optimization of people with autism and their families. The course will emphasize the skills needed to critically evaluate research that provides the evidence base for applied work with people with autism. Methodologies to be discussed will include both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods within a variety of experimental, quasi-experimental and non-experimental designs. Prerequisite: AUST 520.

## **AUST 540 Approaches to Autism Intervention (3)**

Since Leo Kanner's and Hans Asperger's first clinical descriptions of autism, there have been numerous proposed theories and approaches to intervention. The search for a "cure" for autism has led to numerous ideas on how to improve the circumstances of individuals with ASD and their families. These approaches have varied greatly in terms of their theoretical underpinnings, approach to treatment, level of family involvement, empirical support, and ethics. This course is designed to explore historical and modern intervention approaches to ASD. The course will contain in depth evaluations of theoretical underpinnings of treatment models and practical workshops devoted to common intervention techniques. In this course, we will work as a class toward developing biopsychosocial understanding of ASD treatment, a model which values biological, individual, family, community, and cultural factors affecting treatment. Prerequisite: AUST 520.

## **AUST 550 Occupational Therapy and Autism (3)**

This course introduces students to resources occupational therapy can offer to individuals with autism spectrum disorder in the home, school, community and/or clinical environments. Topics to be discussed include: evaluation; occupational therapy interventions that address the physical, cognitive, psychosocial, sensory and other aspects of performance; and measurement of outcomes. Prerequisite: AUST 540.

## **AUST 560 Autism and Communication (3)**

This course provides students with an introduction to the development of communicative competence including linguistic domains of form (phonology, morphology, and syntax), content (semantics), and use (pragmatics). Social and emotional development and its impact on determining what is meaningful and relevant to learn while acquiring language will be emphasized. The course is designed to examine development and impairment of speech, language, and communication in individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and will focus on differential diagnosis, assessment, and evidence-based interventions within a family-centered approach. Prerequisite: AUST 540.

## **AUST 570 Autism and Education (3)**

This course is designed to introduce the student to education as an integral field in the interdisciplinary approach to assessment of and intervention for individuals with autism. The historical, philosophical, and legal aspects of providing instruction for students with autism will be examined. Evidence-based interventions will be studied with an emphasis on professional judgment about the appropriateness of interventions for individual students. The importance of collaborative planning, intervention, and assessment among the educator, student, family, administrators, and other professionals will be highlighted. Prerequisite: AUST 540.

## **AUST 580 Social Policies and Social Services for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum and Their Families (3)**

This course is designed to provide an overview of the various ways in which professional social workers may serve as an advocate and case coordinator for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families in settings such as schools, health care and residential care facilities, social service agencies, and advocacy organizations. This course will provide an opportunity to gain a working knowledge of evidence-based interventions, treatments and services, and government laws and social policies; such knowledge is critical in making appropriate referrals or coordinating services for families. In addition to focusing on the individuals affected by autism, special attention will be paid to the needs of the family and society. Some of the special topics to be explored are: autistic children in foster care, international and crosscultural perspectives on autism, rural communities, and interdisciplinary teamwork to support families.

## **AUST 597 Independent Study (1-3)**

**AUST 600 Practicum (3)**

Field experience observing and, when appropriate, working in an autism-related community placement under the supervision of program faculty and/or on-site staff. By permission of the autism studies program director only. May be repeated for credit.

**AUST 601 Research (3)**

Participation in autism-related research under the supervision of program faculty and/or other qualified professionals. By permission of the autism studies program director only. May be repeated for credit.

**AUST 611 Autism and Ethics (3)**

Beginning from the anthropology developed in "Autism and Humanity," this course examines ethical theories, ethical practices, and ethical problems relevant to autism spectrum disorder. Topics to be explored might include: happiness, family, friendship, and work in the lives of autistic people; the moral dimensions of laws, social policies, international conventions, and Catholic social teaching relevant to autism; medical ethics, professional ethics, and ethical issues related to treatment of ASD. Prerequisite: AUST 510.

**AUST 700 Capstone (3)**

Supervised preparation for completing the capstone requirement. The nature of the preparation will vary according to the nature of the capstone undertaken.