

AUTISM STUDIES, MASTER OF AUTISM STUDIES - AUST AND SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY - SPPA, MASTER OF SCIENCE, DUAL DEGREE

Program Description

Speech language pathologists with expertise in autism are in great demand, and have the power to make a tremendous impact on the lives of people on the spectrum and their loved ones. The Master of Autism Studies and Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology dual degree program provides students with a unique opportunity to gain expertise in autism and become licensed and certified speech language pathologists while enjoying a savings of cost and time in comparison with what would be required if they pursued these degrees separately.

The Speech Language Pathology program prepares graduate students to make a difference in the world on a very personal level—they improve the lives of individuals, one person, one family, at a time. The program develops leadership in individuals who are educated in the liberal arts and who use their talents to help support children, families, the elderly, people with disabilities, and others in need. Our students realize their social responsibility first-hand by providing services to those in need. They think critically and creatively while responding with humanity. The Speech Language Pathology program fosters the development of lifelong learners who are adaptive and reflective clinicians, culturally sensitive, and empathetic to those in need.

The Master of Autism Studies program teaches students to examine autism from scientific, therapeutic, educational, and humanistic perspectives. Our students gain deep expertise in autism spectrum disorder by completing a curriculum in which every course focuses on autism. They also develop the skills needed to become leaders in the interprofessional field of autism services by completing rigorously interdisciplinary coursework and by exploring a broad range of evidence-based approaches to autism intervention. In addition to providing unparalleled interdisciplinary expertise in autism, the Master of Autism Studies is distinctive in the way it incorporates the voices of people on the spectrum into the curriculum as well as in the way it engages with the Catholic intellectual tradition and the mission of Saint Mary's College.

When combined, these programs give rise to a unique dual degree program that produces students who understand how autism affects the lives of individuals, families, and communities, who possess the professional expertise to be effective speech language pathologists, and who have the interprofessional perspective to be leaders in the field of autism services.

The dual degree program normally takes three years (nine consecutive terms) to complete. Coursework begins in the summer, with the majority of the Master of Autism Studies coursework being completed in the first year, and ends in the spring of the third year, with the majority of the Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology coursework being completed in the second and third years. Dual degree students are able to substitute AUST 535 Autism Research Design and Methods

for SLP 510 Research Methods in Speech-Language Pathology in the speech language pathology program, to substitute SLP 524 Autism Spectrum Disorders for AUST 560 Autism and Communication in the autism studies program, and to integrate their autism studies capstone project (AUST 700 Capstone) with their speech language pathology clinical externship (SLP 587 Advanced Clinical Practicum), all of which translates into savings of time and money equivalent to 9 credit hours. Because of the savings of time, students in the dual degree program have more time to devote to their clinical experiences and have more opportunities to work with people on the spectrum. The financial savings are built into the cohort pricing for the program.

Prerequisites

- Introduction to Communicative Disorders (recommended but not required)
- Anatomy & Physiology of the Speech and Hearing Mechanism
- Phonetics
- Speech & Hearing Sciences
- Introduction to Audiology
- Child Language Development
- Aural Rehabilitation
- Clinical Methods and Supervised Observation (recommended but not required)
- Statistics
- At least one course in the biological sciences, e.g., Introduction to Biology
- At least one course in the physical sciences, e.g., Introduction to Physics, Acoustics, etc.
- At least one course in the behavioral sciences, e.g., Developmental Psychology

Application Requirements

- All applicants must have a bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders, or related field, from a regionally accredited college or university, or the international equivalent. Please review the prerequisite section above for the list of required courses necessary to apply. The most competitive candidates typically have maintained at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA in undergraduate coursework. Experience with autism is also taken into account.
- Submission of a completed CSDCAS application.
- Official transcripts from every college or university attended (via CSDCAS)
- Three letters of recommendation from people familiar with the applicant's academic and/or professional abilities, focusing particularly on the potential for success.
- A personal statement that addresses reasons for pursuing the dual degree, professional objectives, and how Saint Mary's aligns with personal and professional goals.
- A brief video interview.

Applications for the summer term open in early August. Saint Mary's College uses the Communication Sciences and Disorders Centralized Application Service (CSDCAS) application system for the dual degree program. Applicants must complete the application form, submit the application fee for CSDCAS (no additional fee is collected by Saint Mary's), and provide all supporting documents through the CSDCAS application system. The application deadline is January 15.

Autism Studies, Master of Autism Studies and Speech Language Pathology, Master of Science, Dual Degree

Code	Title	Credits
AUST 500	Autistic Voices	3
AUST 510	Autism and the Human Person	3
AUST 520	A Biopsychosocial Understanding of the Autism Spectrum	3
AUST 530	Quantitative Methods in Autism Research	3
AUST 535	Autism Research Design and Methods ¹	3
AUST 540	Approaches to Autism Intervention	3
AUST 550	Occupational Therapy and Autism	3
AUST 570	Autism and Education	3
AUST 580	Social Policies and Social Services for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum and Their Families	3
AUST 611	Autism and Ethics	3
SLP 502	Assessment	3
SLP 503	Speech Sound Disorders	3
SLP 505	Early Childhood Language Disorders	3
SLP 506	Later Childhood Language Disorders	3
SLP 508	Adult Language Disorders I	3
SLP 509	Adult Language Disorders II	3
SLP 512	Neurology for Speech-Language Pathologists	3
SLP 516	Motor Speech Disorders	3
SLP 517	Fluency	3
SLP 518	Voice	3
SLP 520	Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)	3
SLP 521	Cleft Palate	3
SLP 522	Dysphagia	3
SLP 523	Multi-Cultural Populations: Communication Disorders Across Cultures	3
SLP 524	Autism Spectrum Disorders ¹	3
SLP 525	Counseling	3
SLP 584	Clinical Practicum: Proseminar	1
SLP 585	Clinical Practicum (taken twice)	1
SLP 586	Clinical Practicum	2
SLP 587	Advanced Clinical Practicum ²	5
SLP 698 or SLP 699 & SLP 699 & SLP 699		0-3
Total Credits		87-90

¹ Dual degree students are able to substitute AUST 535 Autism Research Design and Methods for SLP 510 Research Methods in Speech-Language Pathology in the speech language pathology program and to substitute SLP 524 Autism Spectrum Disorders for AUST 560 Autism and Communication in the autism studies program.

² Dual degree students are able to integrate their autism studies capstone project (AUST 700 Capstone) with their speech language pathology clinical externship (SLP 587 Advanced Clinical Practicum).

Student Learning Outcomes

Since students in the dual degree program complete all of the requirements for both the Master of Autism Studies and the Master of

Science in Speech Language Pathology, they meet all of the learning outcomes for both programs. See the Master of Autism Studies and Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology sections of the bulletin for more information on the respective programs' learning outcomes.

Program Director

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Faculty

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Autism Studies Courses

AUST 500 Autistic Voices (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.

Speech Language Pathology Courses

SLP 502 Assessment (3)

Course content involves principles of measurement concepts and qualitative and quantitative assessment in speech-language pathology.

SLP 503 Speech Sound Disorders (3)

Focus is on assessment, interventions, and instructional strategies for speech sound disorders among children without known organic impairments.

SLP 505 Early Childhood Language Disorders (3)

Students examine the nature, assessment, and treatment of language disorders in infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

SLP 506 Later Childhood Language Disorders (3)

Students learn about diagnostic issues and treatment approaches for the school-aged population. Special attention is given to language and literacy interventions aimed at improving phonological processing and oral and written language comprehension and expression.

SLP 508 Adult Language Disorders I (3)

Information regarding assessment and treatment of persons with acquired aphasia and communication disorders associated with right hemisphere lesions will be explored from neurological, pathophysiological, theoretical, and clinical perspectives.

SLP 509 Adult Language Disorders II (3)

Information provided related to understanding, assessing and treating acquired adult communication disorders associated with traumatic brain injury and dementia. Disorders will be explored from neurological, pathophysiological, theoretical, and clinical perspectives.

SLP 510 Research Methods in Speech-Language Pathology (3)

Course content focuses on the speech-language pathologist's role as clinical researcher and presents the need for science to inform clinical practice. Students read and critically analyze existing research within speech-language pathology and review common research designs and data analysis techniques. Students are required to design and complete a collaborative research project.

SLP 512 Neurology for Speech-Language Pathologists (3)

Course offering provides information related to basic structures and functions of the human neurological system with emphasis on human communication processes and related functions.

SLP 516 Motor Speech Disorders (3)

Information related to understanding, assessing and treating motor speech disorders (e.g., dysarthrias and apraxia of speech) in children and adults.

SLP 517 Fluency (3)

Study the behaviors, causative and maintenance factors, diagnosis, and treatment of fluency disorders.

SLP 518 Voice (3)

A theoretical and applied study of human voice anatomy and physiology and diagnosis and treatment of vocal disorders. This course covers the anatomy and physiology underlying normal voice production, the functional and organic disorders of voice, diagnostic procedures including clinical evaluation and standardized assessments, psychological interviewing principles and counseling of clients with voice disorders and the principles and techniques of voice therapy for children and adults.

SLP 520 Augmentative and Alternative Communication (3)

The primary purpose of this course is to teach students why, when, and how augmentative and alternative communication and related assistive technology can be used to aid individuals with complex communication needs (e.g., individuals with severe physical impairments, sensory impairments, severe communication disorders, etc.) The impact of cognitive, educational, physical, psychosocial, and linguistic aspects of human behavior on AAC use, characteristics of AAC, AAC assessment and intervention, and AAC research issues and needs will be addressed. The course will enable students to more effectively meet the needs of persons with severe communication disorders.

SLP 521 Cleft Palate (3)

A study of the effects of craniofacial anomalies on speech development with particular attention to the effects of clefts of the lip and/or palate. Focus is on assessment and treatment of speech, resonance and velopharyngeal dysfunction. Management of associated feeding problems in this population is also discussed.

SLP 522 Dysphagia (3)

Designed to provide information related to understanding and assessing normal swallowing and understanding the etiology, assessment, and treatment of individuals with feeding/swallowing disorders.

SLP 523 Multi-Cultural Populations: Communication Disorders Across Cultures (3)

This course examines how diversity offers major challenges and opportunities in the workplace and in the larger society. We will focus on competencies in the form of awareness, understanding and skills that maximize resources and empower individuals and groups with a wide variety of interests, talents, and cultural backgrounds. In today's global environment, college graduates and employees are expected to collaborate with others as members of socially diverse teams, groups, organizations, and communities. The SLP is one of these professions who need to be actively engaged in the assessment and intervention of speech and language development in the culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) individuals. This course will dispel the myths about dual language development and the students will obtain the information that is required to properly support young bilingual children and their families as future professionals. The topics will include the need for CLD children continuous, consistent, rich exposure to both languages, typical stages of second-language acquisition, the ways to identify language delay that is the result of an actual disorder, code mixing, the assessment strategies of CLD students, and the intervention plans. This course will also expose students to the background, values/beliefs, and language issues of CLD populations.

SLP 524 Autism Spectrum Disorders (3)

Students are provided an introduction to characteristics and communication of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including recommended practices/framework for assessment and facilitation of communication for individuals with ASD.

SLP 525 Counseling (3)

Examines the role of speech-language pathologists in the provision of various forms of counseling to individuals with communication disorders and their families.

SLP 584 Clinical Practicum: Proseminar (1)

The emphasis of this class is to prepare the student for clinical practicum, laying the foundation for both onsite and offsite placements. Documentation, ethics, intervention, and evaluation techniques are all taught with the assistance of second-year mentors and the clinical supervisor. Class time is used to teach fundamentals and expose students to a variety of professionals working in the field that will describe various placement sites.

SLP 585 Clinical Practicum (1)

The student is assigned on campus with 2-3 clients, increasing throughout the course of the semester as need arises or the student is off campus 3 days per week. The increase in credit hours reflects the increased clinical load that the student can expect to take on. On average the student will spend 10-20 hours per week in clinical practicum. This course is repeatable twice.

SLP 586 Clinical Practicum (2)

Students in the class will all be assigned to an off campus placement. Some students will remain on campus for the first 3-4 weeks and will serve as mentors to 1st years. The mentors are assigned up to 4 clients and 4 first-year students. They will participate in co-evaluation and treatment of the clients and provide support to the student in the clinic. After their students have taken over the care of the client, the 586 student will proceed to his/her fieldwork site. Students will be off campus 3 days per week for 20 or more hours per week. The seat time component will be divided between in class participation and online instruction, since students can be placed up to an hour away and are not always able to come back to campus after a day in the field.

SLP 587 Advanced Clinical Practicum (6)

Student will be off campus 30 or more hours per week involved in direct client care for a minimum of 14 weeks. Depending on the preferences of the student, the clinical need, and the site placements, students will be placed either in one site for the full semester or two sites for 8-10 weeks each (typically school and medical). Students are aware that participation in two site placements may result in them having to continue at their site placement for a few weeks after graduation, but will not impact their ability to finish the program on time. All requirements for grading and clinical clock hours are anticipated to be met prior to graduation.

SLP 597 Independent Study (1-5)**SLP 698 Comprehensive Examination (0)**

Second year students are required to complete comprehensive examinations in order to qualify for graduation. These are waived if the student successfully completes a thesis. The purpose of these examinations is to evaluate each student's knowledge of concepts, content, procedures and terminology from their graduate studies as well as their ability to apply this knowledge. These examinations are designed to be summative in nature and to address the nine knowledge/skill areas identified by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.

SLP 699 Thesis (1)

A thesis is intended to acquaint the student with research methodology. It is expected that original research or replication of a research project will be undertaken. Students who select the thesis option must identify an advisor that they believe will provide the best guidance in the pursuit of their objectives.

Degree Plan

The following degree plan shows the sequence of courses dual degree students take to complete the three-year program.

Course	Title	Credits
First Year		
First Semester		
AUST 500	Autistic Voices	3
AUST 520	A Biopsychosocial Understanding of the Autism Spectrum	3
Credits		6
Second Semester		
AUST 510	Autism and Humanity	3
AUST 530	Quantitative Methods in Autism Research	3
AUST 535	Autism Research Design and Methods	3
AUST 540	Approaches to Autism Intervention	3
Credits		12

Third Semester

AUST 550	Occupational Therapy and Autism	3
AUST 570	Autism and Education	3
AUST 580	Social Policies and Social Services for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum and Their Families	3
AUST 611	Autism and Ethics	3
Credits		12

Second Year**First Semester**

SLP 524	Autism Spectrum Disorders	3
Credits		3

Second Semester

SLP 502	Assessment	3
SLP 503	Speech Sound Disorders	3
SLP 505	Early Childhood Language Disorders	3
SLP 512	Neurology for Speech-Language Pathologists	3
SLP 523	Multi-Cultural Populations: Communication Disorders Across Cultures	1.5
SLP 584	Clinical Practicum: Proseminar	1
Credits		14.5

Third Semester

SLP 506	Later Childhood Language Disorders	3
SLP 508	Adult Language Disorders I	3
SLP 516	Motor Speech Disorders	3
SLP 585	Clinical Practicum	3
Credits		12

Third Year**First Semester**

SLP 517	Fluency	3
SLP 518	Voice	2
SLP 520	Augmentative and Alternative Communication	2
SLP 521	Cleft Palate	2
SLP 585	Clinical Practicum	3
Credits		12

Second Semester

SLP 509	Adult Language Disorders II	3
SLP 522	Dysphagia	3
SLP 525	Counseling	3
SLP 586	Clinical Practicum	2
Credits		11

Third Semester

SLP 587	Advanced Clinical Practicum	6
Credits		6
Total Credits		88.5