EXED 610: Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorders

* Due to the fact that this is the second semester that this class is offered at WKU, the syllabus can be modified during the course. Items and information such as topic order and assignments are subject to change when needed, due to schedules, updating of information, new research, etc.

I. Instructor & Course Information

Instructor: Marty Boman, Ed.D. Assistant Professor Exceptional Education
Director of the Kelly Autism Program

Address: Western Kentucky University
1906 College Heights Blvd. #71030
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1030

Office: Tate Page Hall 357
Office Hours: 8:00-12:00 a.m. (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)
Phone: (270) 745-8833
E-mail: marty.boman@wku.edu

KAP: Kelly Autism Center
104 14th Street
Bowling Green, KY 42101
270-745-4527 or 270-745-8903
kellyautismprogram@wku.edu

Course: Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorders (EXED 610)
Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisite: Completed Master's Degree/Professor's consent

(This set of books will be used for all five courses. Books for the other courses in this program will be limited or lower in price.)

II. Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive review of ASD from the perspectives of various disciplines. Theories of causation, developmental aspects, descriptive and diagnostic characteristics, and legal and social issues are discussed.

Thirty hours of field experience is required at the Kelly Autism Program.
III. Course Rationale
This course will serve as an introduction to ASD, and will provide the most current research findings and best practices needed to gain a clear understanding of these individuals diagnosed with ASD.

Due to the students’ social, emotional, behavioral, communication, academic, and sensory needs, teachers are searching for strategies that they can implement. Currently, these teachers and administrators are contacting the WKU Kelly Autism Program (KAP) as they are searching for strategies that can be implemented with students with ASD. One of the main focuses of KAP is to serve individuals with autism and their families. In order for KAP to become a national model, the college must provide a high quality educational opportunity for teachers who work with these individuals. Research has shown that the majority of students diagnosed with ASD can improve with the correct interventions.

Justification for developing this proposed course also comes from local, state, and national prevalence factors that indicate a dramatic increase in individuals diagnosed with autism throughout the nation as well as in Kentucky. According to the Department of Education in the United States, for children ages 6-21, the number of students in Kentucky with autism served by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has increased to 1,845% from 38 in 1992-1993 to 739 in the academic year of 1999-2000. Several graduate students in various educational programs at WKU have expressed a need to increase their knowledge regarding the education of these individuals due to the increasing number of students they are experiencing in their classrooms. This class will be the foundation for the education they are requesting.

IV. Course Objectives:
The student will acquire these skills by the end of the course:
• Outline the history of ASD and how it developed
• Define the disorders included in this field, and identify the prevalence and major causal factors of the various disorders
• Describe the characteristics of individuals with ASD
• Explain how ASD is identified
• Discuss how students with ASD receive their education
• Implement recommended educational practices for students with ASD
• Summarize the perspectives and concerns of parents and families of students with ASD
• Identify issues and trends affecting the field of ASD

V. Course Outline:
• The nature of the disorder
• The extent of the disorder
• The history: Development of the field
• Screening and classification
• Evaluation for instruction
• Causal factors
• Biological factors
• Family factors
• School factors
  ❖ Academic
  ❖ Communication
  ❖ Behavioral and social
  ❖ Sensory issues
• Future projections
• Autism
• Asperger Syndrome
• Angelman
• Other PDD

Critical Student Performances: YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO UPLOAD YOUR ASD RESOURCE GUIDE TO THE ELECTRONIC PORTFOLIO SYSTEM OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES WEB PAGE. INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED ON THE COURSE SITE DURING THE SEMESTER.

VI. Knowledge & Skills Addressed
Upon completion of this course, the student will know (CEC Program Standards, 2002):
1. Models, theories, and philosophies that provide the basis for special education practice related to ASD (Common Core: Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education).
2. Variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures within society and the effect of the relationship among child, family, and schooling (Common Core: Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education).
3. Issues in definition and identification procedures for individuals with ASD including individuals from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (Common Core: Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education).
4. Assurances and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement (Common Core: Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education).
5. Rights and responsibilities of parents, students, teachers, and other professionals, and schools as they relate to individual learning needs (Common Core: Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education).
6. Articulate personal philosophy of special education regarding individuals with ASD including its relationship to/with regular education (Common Core: Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education).
7. Similarities and differences among the cognitive, physical, cultural, social, communication, sensory, and emotional needs of individuals with ASD and without exceptional learning needs (Common Core: Characteristics of Learners).
8. Effects an exceptional condition(s) may have on an individual’s and his/her family’s life (Common Core: Characteristics of Learners).

9. Educational implications of characteristics of various individuals diagnosed with ASD (Common Core: Characteristics of Learners).

10. Access information on various cognitive, communications, physical, cultural, social, communication, sensory, and emotional conditions of individuals with exceptional learning needs (Common Core: Characteristics of Learners).

VII. Course Dispositions Statement (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standards:
This course effectively addresses the following Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards:

Standard 1 Subject Matter
1.21 The teacher realizes that subject matter knowledge is not a fixed body of facts but is complex and ever evolving. S/he seeks to keep abreast of new ideas and understandings in the field.

Standard 2 Students Learning
2.21 The teacher appreciates individual variation within each area of development, shows respect for the diverse talents of all learners, and is committed to help them to develop self-confidence and competence.
2.22 The teacher is disposed to use students’ strengths as a basis for growth, and their errors as an opportunity for learning.

Standard 3 Diverse Learners
3.21 The teacher believes that all children can learn at high levels and persists in helping all children achieve success.
3.22 The teacher appreciates and values human diversity, shows respect for students’ varied talents and perspectives, and is committed to the pursuit of “individually configured excellence.”
3.23 The teacher respects students as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, talents, and interests.
3.24 The teacher is sensitive to community and cultural norms.
3.25 The teacher makes students feel valued for the potential as people, and helps them learn to value each other.

Standard 6 Communication
6.21 The teacher recognizes the power of language for fostering self-expression, identifying development, and learning.
6.22 The teacher values many ways in which people seek to communicate and encourages many modes of communication in the classroom.
6.23 The teacher is a thoughtful and responsive listener.
6.24 The teacher appreciates the cultural dimensions of communication, responds appropriately, and seeks to foster culturally sensitive communication by and among all students in the class.

Standard 7 Planning Instruction
7.21 The teacher values both long term and short term planning.
7.22 The teacher believes that plans must always be open to adjustment and revision based on student needs and changing circumstances.
7.23 The teacher values planning as a collegial activity.

Standard 9 Reflection and Professional Development
9.24 The teacher is committed to seeking out, developing, and continually refining practices that address the individual needs of students.

Standard 10 Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships
10.21 The teacher values and appreciates the importance of all aspects of a child’s experience.
10.22 The teacher is concerned about all aspects of the child’s well-being (cognitive, emotional, social and physical), and is alert to signs of difficulties.
10.24 The teacher is willing to consult with other adults regarding the education and well-being of her/his students.
10.25 The teacher is willing to work with other professionals to improve the overall learning environment for students.

Instructional Methods/Activities:
This course will include but is not limited to blackboard course site, group work, lab activities, presentations, online discussions and exams. Handouts may be distributed online on the blackboard course site, held on reserve at the ERC, or distributed through Course Information.

VIII. Course Policies & Procedures
It should be understood that this syllabus is an agreement between the professor and the students enrolled in the course. While the professor retains the right to alter course parameters (e.g., due dates) as she thinks necessary, her part of the agreement is to: (a) abide by the assignment point system and grading scale given herein, and (b) to provide ample time if a change in the specified assignments is necessary. By remaining enrolled in this course, students indicate their agreement to: (a) abide by the following course policies, and (b) refrain from pleading or negotiating with the professor for the purpose of trying to alter or escape the consequences of any given policy.
In other words, since you do not want me to change the established rules in ways that might go against you, do not attempt to change the rules in ways that might favor you but go against maintaining the order and integrity of the course. In the event that any student deviates from the letter or intent of the policies given, the professor also reserves the right to impose appropriate penalty upon the offending student (e.g., loss of points) that he sees fit.

1. LATE WORK
In order to receive full point credit, assignments must be turned in on the specified due date. Assignments more than 3 days late will not be accepted. The equivalent of one letter grade will be subtracted for each day an assignment is late. This adjustment will be performed after the initial grade is assigned.
2. ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES / GRADING CRITERIA
Grading criteria for assignments will be based on the requirements as described in the printed guidelines for each assignment. Each requirement’s point value will be weighted in accordance with its importance in meeting the main objective of the assignment, as stated in the guidelines. If students read assignment requirements and follow them carefully, they will make good grades. Students should make sure to ask any questions they may have regarding the guidelines for a particular assignment.

3. EXCUSES
Due to potential abuses of due dates and class participation requirements, allowable exemptions from late work and participation policies must be limited to the general categories of death, serious accident, and/or serious illness. Such circumstances will result in differential consideration of grading policies if they affect students, their immediate families, or both. Other excuses will not exempt students from the enforcement of late work and participation policies.

4. SCHEDULED EXAMS/COMPETENCY CHECKS
Students must complete competency checks on the dates scheduled by the professor. Failure to do so will result in alternate testing requirements. Students can only be exempted from this policy under circumstances as described in part 3 above (EXCUSES).

5. PLAGIARISM
To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one’s own is plagiarism. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. Taking content directly from a source without giving credit or using a passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is plagiarism (WKU Faculty Handbook, 16th ed., p. 59). Using word-for-word content from a source without indication that it is a direct quote is also plagiarism, even if the source is cited. Such a breach of policy will result in a grade of zero on the assignment containing the plagiarized material and may result in a grade of “F” for the final course grade.

6. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) cheating on tests of knowledge and failure to complete independent assignments without the direct aid of another present or past class member. Such breaches of policy will result in a grade of zero on the test or assignment in question and may result in a grade of “F” for the final course grade.

7. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT
Managing student technology is the sole responsibility of the student. The professor and/or WKU are not responsible for making sure that: (a) student word processing software is compatible with that used by the University; (b) student email software is
working properly and that students know how to use it (e.g., to send attachments to the professor); (c) Internet service providers’ equipment and software are installed and working properly in conjunction with student computers; (d) in the event that a student’s computer stops working properly or becomes totally inoperative, the student has another means by which he or she can successfully complete the course; and (e) any other student technology problem or issue gets successfully resolved. It should be understood that, even though periodic travel to a campus classroom may not be required, online courses require more dedication, self-motivation, organization, and planning than many face-to-face courses, and this in part implies that if a student cannot resolve any personal technology difficulties, his or her only workable solution may be to drop the course. You may call the Helpdesk at 270-745-7000 to check if they can help you with your problem. Please do not contact the professor.

Please note that working, compatible technology (hardware and software) are prerequisites to taking an online course. This includes PowerPoint software.

8. EMAIL COMMUNICATION
Due to the fact that: (a) it is often difficult to correctly interpret the intended tone of an email message; (b) it is often too easy to quickly zip off a rude email to someone without first finding out “the whole story” or thinking through the possible consequences of doing so; and (c) people sometimes will communicate things in an email that they would never say in a face-to-face conversation, students should take care to be polite, to-the-point, professional, and respectful in all email communication with the professor. In the case that inappropriate /disrespectful student email is received by the professor, she reserves the right to deduct points, delete it without answering questions or responding in any way, retain copies to be used as evidence in student disciplinary proceedings, or take any other appropriate action she sees fit.

9. DISCUSSION BOARD POSTINGS
When posting to the course discussion board, students should: (a) maintain confidentiality regarding schools, school personnel, students, and students’ families and (b) avoid negative evaluations/comments regarding others both in and outside of the course. In addition, students should maintain confidentiality regarding the postings of other students in the course. In other words, the discussion board is not a forum for complaints about the practices of schools and school personnel, neither is it a public forum intended for distribution to those not enrolled in the course. Rather than discussing what someone may be doing wrong in the classroom, use the course content to discuss what educators should do right in the same kind of situation. Deviations from these guidelines will not be tolerated.

10. BLACKBOARD COURSE SITE
You must become familiar with using the blackboard course site. If you do not know how to use it or if this is your first online course, you must find someone to show you how to use it—it is not difficult and you can catch on very easily. You cannot erase things on the Blackboard, only I can do that as the professor. I will
not accept lack of knowledge about online courses as an excuse for late assignments. There are a number of tutorials included for usage of Blackboard. You must have access to a reliable computer and internet connection. Be sure that you have a backup plan in case your computer crashes or other technology problems occur. There are computer labs on campus and most public schools and libraries.

11. HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS
ALL assignments must be turned in through the Assignment Feature of the course site (Except your ASD Resource Guide CD). To access this tool, go to tools on your main course site page and click on drop box under assignments. Documents you send to the dropbox must be saved to your computer in either Microsoft Word 2003 version or Rich Text Format (Some colleagues do not have 2007, and therefore cannot open your documents). To send a document through the drop box, you should click on Send on your dropbox screen, click on Browse and find the document from your computer you want to send and highlight it, and finally click open and then send. IF YOU CLICK ‘ADD’ IT WILL ONLY ADD THE DOCUMENT TO YOUR OWN DROPBOX, AND WILL NOT SEND TO ME. I will respond to you regarding points lost briefly via the Blackboard feature.

10. APA STYLE
All papers submitted in this course will be typed and formatted according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). **APA style will not be taught as a part of this course.** Students are individually responsible for obtaining and following APA style conventions, for part of the grade of each applicable assignment will be based upon the extent and accuracy to which these conventions are used. APA’s Publication Manual is on sale at the campus bookstore, and students may also wish to consult the web for information on citing electronic references: [http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html](http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html).

IX. Student Disability Services
Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS), room 220 Downing University Center. The OSDS telephone number is (270) 745-5004 V/TDD. 
Per university policy, please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

X. Grading/Evaluations/Assignments:
Grading Procedures
The course grade will be calculated as follows:
Introduction Paragraph 25 points
On-line Discussions—5 @ 25 points each 125 points
ASD Powerpoint Project 100 points
Article Reviews—3 @ 50 points each 150 points
ASD Resource Guide 150 points
Midterm exam 50 points
Final exam 50 points

TOTAL POINTS 650 POINTS

Grading Scale
A = 611-650 points 94-100%
B = 559-610 points 86-93%
C = 507-558 points 78-85%

ASSIGNMENTS/EVALUATIONS

Introduction Paragraph
During the first week of class, you will have an introduction paragraph due that will be posted to the discussion board so that your colleagues will get to know you. Please provide some information about yourself regarding what peaked your interest in obtaining your ASD certificate. Include in this paragraph your experience of working with individuals diagnosed with ASD.

Discussion Boards:
These topics and their due date will be posted on the Discussion board before the first day of class. Please check here immediately at the beginning of the course. Your posting should indicate that you have read the information from the text and are providing research based information.

ASD Powerpoint Project
This assignment will be posted to the Discussion Board so that your colleagues can have a copy to use when they need to do an in-service for their schools. Please save these to your computer for future reference. Each student will be required to do a thorough search regarding some aspect of ASD. There will be a rubric posted on the course site indicating in detail how you will be graded on this project.

Article Reviews
These will also be posted on the Discussion Board so that your colleagues have a copy to use when they need information regarding a particular topic. I do not expect you to read the entire two volumes—rather your colleagues will help you obtain all this important information. These should be AP style and no longer than two pages in length, double-spaced. Due dates will be posted on the Course site as well as the topics that you should focus on.
ASD Resource Guide
This assignment is your “Critical Performance” so needs to be posted to the College of Education website. Also this should be compiled on a CD and mailed or delivered to me for grading. Students will compile an ASD resource guide for their usage. The purpose is to have a resource guide for teachers, parents, or yourself when the need arises. You will add to this throughout the five courses. This 3-ring binder (I would recommend a 3 inch binder) should be divided into sections whereby you will be able to add more as needed. For this course, you should include the sections:
• The nature of the disorder
• Causes/influences of the disorder
• Evaluations
• Sensory issues
• Autism
• Asperger
• Other disorders included in ASD

A rubric will be posted for this as well.

Midterm and Final Exam
Exams will be turned in to the Assignment Feature on the course site. Your midterm and final exams will be posted on Course Information. You will be expected to include a statement verifying that you adhere to a professional honor code. Exams will be turned in through the digital dropbox on the blackboard site.

Please contact me at any time if you ever have any questions about the course!