





Psychology (PSYC) 478

Autism Spectrum Disorder (Revision 3)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode: [Individualized study online](#)  with [eText](#) 

Credits: 3

Areas of study: Arts or Social Science

Prerequisites: None

Precluded: PSYC 478 is a cross-listed course—a course available in two different disciplines—with [EDPY 478](#). PSYC 478 cannot be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for EDPY 478.

Challenge: PSYC 478 is not available for challenge.

Faculty: [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Overview

Psychology 478: Autism Spectrum Disorder is a three-credit, senior-level course that is designed to develop familiarity with a variety of topics related to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Issues related to etiology, diagnosis, characteristics of autism, and treatment models are presented.

Autism is an early-onset neurodevelopmental disorder. A person receives a diagnosis of ASD when they have a combination of atypical responses in categories relating to social interaction, communication, and restrictive and repetitive behaviours. Many people on the autism spectrum face significant challenges with daily living, relationship building and maintenance, emotion awareness and regulation, and both verbal and nonverbal communication. Many also have problems with motor coordination and fine motor control to produce speech or certain sequences of movements. Other areas of difficulty may include problems with sensory regulation, sleep, attention, and executive function abilities.

The overall goal of this course is to provide you with an understanding of ASD and best practices in treatment. Given that the prevalence of ASD (if broadly defined) is 1 in 50 children, professionals and para-professionals in a variety of fields will encounter children, youth, and adults with ASD. Having this foundational understanding of ASD will enhance your skills and build capacity for successful interactions and outcomes.

Outline

PSYC 478 comprises fourteen units:

- **Unit 1** – Overview
- **Unit 2** – Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)
- **Unit 3** – Working with Families
- **Unit 4** – Environmental Measures
- **Unit 5** – Applied Behaviour Analysis
- **Unit 6** – Communication
- **Unit 7** – Social Skills
- **Unit 8** – Daily Living Skills (DLSs)



- **Unit 9** – Academic Skills
- **Unit 10** – Play-Focused Interventions
- **Unit 11** – Technology
- **Unit 12** – Motor Considerations
- **Unit 13** – Sexuality
- **Unit 14** – Transitions

Learning outcomes


After completing PSYC 478, you should be able to do the following:

- Explain the characteristics, diagnosis, and theorized etiologies of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- Discuss evidence-based practices and the different interventions available for individuals with ASD to assess their efficacy.
- Describe the effect ASD can have in families throughout their lifespan, and identify ways to support the family.
- Describe functional behaviour analysis and how antecedents and consequences influence behaviour.
- Discuss common characteristics associated with ASD in the areas of communication, socialization, daily living, play, motor development, sexuality, and academics.
- Discuss the use of assistive technology for individuals with ASD.
- Describe evidence-based planning practices to promote successful transition to adulthood.


Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for PSYC 478, you must complete all the assignments, achieve a grade of at least 50% on each graded assignment, and achieve an overall composite course grade of at least **D (50 percent)** . The weighting of assignments is as follows:



Activity	Weight
Planning Activity	0%
Case Study	25%
Participation in the Discussion Forum (5 Topics)	20%
Reflective Journals (5)	55%
Total	100%

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#) .

Materials

Boutot, A. E. (2017). *Autism Spectrum Disorders: Foundations, characteristics, and effective strategies* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.  (eText)




eText

Registration in this course includes an electronic textbook. For more information on [electronic textbooks](#) , please refer to our [eText Initiative site](#) .

Other Resources

All other learning resources will be available online.

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 

[> Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 3, October 5, 2021

Updated January 15, 2024

View [previous revision](#) 
