



SPED 540—Assessment and Interventions for Social Communication Impairments

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. April Haas, BCBA-D, LBA-TX; Adjunct Professor

Office Location: Remote

Office Hours: By appointment

Office Fax: 903.886.5510

University Email Address: April.Haas@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Virtual Office Hours (VOH) through D2L or University Email.

Communication Response Time:

Using VOH through D2L = within 48 hours Monday – Friday, weekends and holidays may take up to 48 hours;

Using University Email = within 72 hours Monday – Friday, weekends and holidays may take longer.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required Readings:

Choose **one** of the following (you will write about this book and how it connects to the other content you have learned in the course—make sure it is something you are interested in reading):

ANY book written by Temple Grandin (except those she wrote about animal science—make sure it is one of her autism-related books). Some good books which I have read and recommend include:

--*Thinking in Pictures*

--*The Way I See It*

--*The Autistic Brain*

Higas, N. (2007). *The reason I jump: The inner voice of a thirteen-year-old boy with autism*. Random House Trade Paperback. ISBN-10: 081298515X; ISBN-13: 978-0812985153

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Maurice, C. (1994). *Let me hear your voice*. Ballantine Books. ISBN-10: 0449906647

ANY book written by John Elder Robison. I can personally recommend: *Switched On*

ANY book written by Torey Hayden. They are ALL excellent!

Recommended Readings:

Any book from Council for Exceptional Children Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities: <http://www.daddcec.com/other-publications.html>

**American Psychological Association (APA). (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (7th Ed.). Washington, D.C.

**This book is only listed because you will need to have all writing activities written in APA format.

Other resources. Texas A&M University—Commerce’s Library provides access to thousands of online journals. Of particular interest to this class are resources found in the ERIC and PsychInfo databases. You may access these resources on campus or from home by using your CWID and password at <http://www.tamuc.edu/library/>

Course Description

This course addresses the (a) process of verbal, non-verbal, and paralinguistic communication skills; (b) assessment of communication competence, including social skills; and (c) research-based intervention strategies and effective practices for promoting effective communication for learners with social communication impairments, including Autism Spectrum Disorders. Language development, communication and language-based assessments, social skills training, alternative/augmentative modes of communication, assistive technology devices, and the impact of contextual factors affecting communication competence will be discussed and investigated.

Student Learning Outcomes At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the etiologies and characteristics of receptive/expressive language, cognitive communication, social aspects of communication & communication modalities in individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).
2. Students will integrate developmental theories and milestones into an assessment of individuals with social communication impairments, including ASD.

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3. Students will be able to identify, explain, and compare strategies and materials used to educate individuals with social communication impairments, including ASD.
4. Students will demonstrate understanding of procedures of effective assessments, instruction, and supports that target (a) social communication, (b) functional behavior, and (c) the academic performance of individuals with social communication impairments, including ASD.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

To be successful in this course, you will need to know how to access and navigate (a) Desire2Learn, (b) Microsoft Word, and (c) Microsoft Excel. If you use the program PAGES, you will need to convert your file to a Word document or PDF before submitting to Dropbox. **I will not serve as technical support.** TAMUC has multiple professionals (e. g., Instructional Technology, CITE, library) who will be able to help you troubleshoot and/or teach you how to navigate the necessary technical requirements for this course. You will also be required to create a user-friendly virtual space to post content (most students use Pinterest for this assignment).

Instructional Methods

Each week, you will be responsible for completing a module. In the module, you will have Background Information, Assignments, and Discussions.

There is a large project in this course—Resource Guide—and it accounts for much of your grade. Do not fear—I have designed this project to be productive and fun.

Finally, we will have **a book study** throughout the course. There will be opportunities to discuss topics within the book associated with course content. Written summaries will also be required to demonstrate syntheses of ideas, concepts, and story lines.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

To contact success in this course, it is recommended that you log into the course on a regular basis. There is a lot of reading in this course. The assignments aren't too difficult, but it is recommended that you schedule dedicated time to reading course content (e.g., articles and books).

Secondly, it is HIGHLY recommended that you take every learning opportunity provided to you throughout the course. There may be synchronous virtual classes (i.e., video conferencing) throughout the semester. The purpose of these virtual classes are to unpack and further discuss the topics and content presented in the course.

Finally, to be successful in this class, I recommend you access your resources fully, frequently, and without timidity. Ask your peers questions in the discussion board.

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Email or text (Remind) the instructor if you have any questions or concerns. Contact the TAMUC Gee librarians (they have provided multiple ways to contact them).

GRADING

The instructor reserves the right to make subjective judgments about the quality of student participation and products. In other words, quantity does not equate to quality nor does effort equate to quality. Moreover, a grade of A will be reserved for only the highest achieving students. If you need to receive an A in this course, I suggest you work hard to submit stellar products. My office hours are listed on the first page of this syllabus if you need to come and speak with me DURING the semester regarding your grades. Please do not wait until the semester is over to discuss grades. In both undergraduate and graduate school, grades are earned according to individual student performance on described activities. Effort is important but the outcome of your effort is the product upon which grades are based. Final grades are assigned as follows using a weighted percentage points earned scale:

- ✓ Grades of A are reserved for students whose products are consistently exemplary and commensurate with the work of an accomplished graduate student. A products provide clarity of thoughts and ideas with no grammatical, structural, or spelling errors.
- ✓ Grades of B are earned by students whose products are good but not outstanding. B products provide detail and explanation; may have a few grammatical, structural, or spelling errors.
- ✓ Grades of C are earned by students whose products are limited but display sufficient understanding; may have major grammatical, structural, or spelling errors.

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%
B = 80%-89%
C = 70%-79%
D = 60%-69%
F = 59% or Below

Percentage toward final grade	Assignment/Activity
20%	Book Study Activity
35%	Weekly Assignments
35%	Activities and Resource Guide (**see D2L for details)
10%	Professionalism and Good Conduct

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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

1. Professionalism: It is expected that you demonstrate professionalism. For the purposes of this course, professionalism will be exhibited by the student: (a) completing all assigned readings, (b) submitting assignments by the deadline, and (c) adhering to the university student code of conduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating).

2. Writing Assignments: Prepare all written assignments according to the APA Publications Manual (6th ed.), as appropriate. You can access information regarding basic APA style at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu> or the Learning Center located on the main floor of the library.

a. ***ALL WRITTEN WORK WILL BE SUBMITTED TO TURNITIN TO CHECK FOR PLAGIARISM (Turnitin will provide a score of the percentage of the paper that has been directly lifted from other sources). SCORES OF 30% OR MORE WILL BE IMMEDIATELY RETURNED TO THE STUDENT FOR REVISIONS. AFTER SECOND SUBMISSION, IF THE SCORE REMAINS 30% OR MORE, THE PAPER WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE A ZERO. The BEST way to avoid any potential confusion is to get very good at stating things in multiple ways--but most importantly, in a way that is different than the original source(s). Papers in this class will likely not require direct quotes. We will discuss when it is appropriate to use direct quotes in a paper (and it isn't very often).

b. I STRONGLY encourage you take advantage of the student resources TAMUC offers you. I will reward students with bonus points if you can provide documentation that you have utilized the Writing Center to help you improve the quality of your written work. Here is a link to the Online Writing Lab: <http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/onlineWritingLab.aspx>

3. On-time Submission of Assignments: The information in this course builds on itself. Therefore, it is critical that work is completed in a timely manner. Course assignments and projects will receive 2 points off for each day that they are late; after 3 days, it will go down by a letter grade for each day that it is late.

Specific Requirements

1. Readings: To gain background knowledge, students will be required to complete a series of readings assigned on D2L.

2. Weekly Assignments: For weekly modules, students will have a series of activities to engage in and assignments to complete. Expectations and directions will be posted within the modules.

3. Book Study Activity: Students will be required to read *one* of the books suggested in this course. Opportunities for follow-up discussion with the instructor and peers will

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happen throughout the semester. At the conclusion of the semester, a synthesis paper will be due (details on D2L).

4. Resource Guide Repository: Students will be required to create a cloud-based repository where specific products and resources will be stored and shared with the instructor. The purpose of this assignment is to provide the student a professional resource repository to use while practicing as a service provider for individuals with social communication impairments, including ASD.

5. Professionalism, Participation, and Good Conduct: Students are in-training to be Masters level professionals; therefore, it is expected that all products are completed in a timely manner and free of spelling and grammatical errors. Additionally, students are expected to use professional vernacular of (dis)ability culture, which includes using person-first language at all times when referring to individuals with a disability (e.g., a child with autism or a student with behavioral problems). Respectful and culturally responsive discourse on discussion boards and interactions with the instructor are required! Professionalism in communications with the instructor and peers WILL BE EVALUATED—this is a course in social skills and students will be expected to display them throughout the course.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

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<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Browser support

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser,
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Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

Desktop Support

Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)	Maintenance Browser Version(s)
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A
Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

Tablet and Mobile Support

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest
Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	<p>The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version.</p> <p>Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.</p>

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Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
 - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
 - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
 - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- You must have a:
 - Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
 - Speakers or headphones.
 - *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.

Pop-ups are allowed.

JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
 - [Adobe Reader https://get.adobe.com/reader/](https://get.adobe.com/reader/)
 - [Adobe Flash Player \(version 17 or later\) https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/)
 - [Adobe Shockwave Player https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/)
 - [Apple Quick Time http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with

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attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Brightspace Support

Need Help?

Student Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words “[click here](#)” to submit an issue via email.



System Maintenance

D2L runs monthly updates during the last week of the month, usually on Wednesday. The system should remain up during this time unless otherwise specified in an announcement. You may experience minimal impacts to performance and/or look and feel of the environment.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

See D2L for course outline and calendar.

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