

INSPIRE 3EL3 – Experiential Learning Opportunities
CO3 – Language and Communication in Autism Spectrum Disorder
Spring 2020

Instructor:

Dr. Mackenzie Salt

Email: saltms@mcmaster.ca

Class Dates:

- Lecture Videos (pre-recorded using Echo360) will be posted Monday and Wednesday mornings for students to view.
- Synchronous drop-in discussion sessions are offered using Microsoft Teams on Tuesdays (12:00-1:00PM) and Fridays (12:00-1:00PM).

Course Description:

In this course, students will learn about autism spectrum disorder, ASD, specifically focusing on one key area of interest, language and communication. ASD is diagnosed based on impairments in language and social interaction, as well as repetitive behaviours. This course will focus on the former. Students will receive a primer about ASD, learning about what it is, how it was identified and when, what prominent theories were put forth to explain ASD, all with a focus on the language and social impairments identified as part of the disorder. Students will also learn about the history of the disorder including changes to its classification and how it is diagnosed. Students will engage with previous research, learning about how language deficits in ASD were originally determined and tested, and learn about the research methods used to study language in ASD as well as the pros and cons therein. Students will also explore the conflicting theories that offered explanations for language deficits in ASD in the past and will be introduced to current thinking and research into language abilities in ASD. Students will also be shown media depictions of autistic people interacting with others to observe some of the symptomatology discussed in lecture. Students will also be asked to analyse any observed differences in what is seen compared to the research. Transcriptions of autistic adults interacting with others will also be analysed.

Course Objectives:

On completion of this course, students will:

- Be aware of the history of ASD;
- Be aware of the previous research methods used to research language difficulties along with some of the inherent issues therein;
- Be aware of current thinking on language and ASD with a focus on newer approaches;
- Think more critically about research methodologies used in the past and be more able to challenge assumption made in research into language in any community, not just ASD.

Required Texts and Course Topics:

Readings including journal articles and book chapters will be provided by the instructor via Avenue to Learn.

Topics to be covered include:

- The history of autism
- Language abilities in autism
- Research methods studying child language
- Research methods studying adult language
- Language development
- Clinical linguistics
- Pragmatic language

Course Communication:

1. Avenue to Learn: Announcements, lecture content, and grades will be posted to Avenue to Learn. The course page will be my primary method of contact, please check the course page regularly to ensure you don't miss out on important information or announcements.

2. Email: Feel free to email me if you have any questions or concerns. If there are any specific supports that may be useful to your learning, please also let me know. Please ensure that all communication for this course is through your mcmaster.ca email. Also, please include the course code in the subject line of your email. This helps me keep the course content together and makes it far less likely that a student's email will disappear or get lost. I will do my best to respond within 2 business days, however, please remember that I am human; sometimes I might be a little late or the email may get lost. If you do not hear back from me within 3 working days, feel free to re-send your email with a friendly reminder.

3. Microsoft Teams: Synchronous drop-in discussion sessions will be offered using Microsoft Teams. Instructions regarding how to use Microsoft Teams and any other information regarding this software will be posted in Avenue to Learn.

Class Schedule:

Students will watch lectures that are recorded using Echo360 and posted twice per week (Monday and Wednesday mornings). Students will also use Microsoft Teams to attend online drop-in discussion sessions on Tuesdays (12:00-1:00PM) and Fridays (12:00-1:00PM), akin to tutorials, where students can discuss the material with the instructor and ask any questions that they might have. Further details will be provided on Avenue to Learn.

Assessment and Course Deliverables:

Please note that INSPIRE 3EL3 – CO3 is a graded 3-unit course.

Students will carry out a total of four reflection assignments (worth 25% each) throughout this course. Each reflection assignment will be based on the material presented in lectures in a given week along with selected readings with provided prompts. Students will be expected think critically about the information they have been provided and reflect on the prompts given. Penalty for late assignments will be 10% for the first 4 days past the deadlines. No assignments will be accepted past the deadline unless special arrangements were made before the due date.

- 25% - Reflection #1 (Week 2)
- 25% - Reflection #2 (Week 3-4)
- 25% - Reflection #3 (Week 5)
- 25% - Reflection #4 (Week 7)

Course Policy Statements

1. Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities:

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. SAS can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or email sas@mcmaster.ca. If you have a disability and are registered with SAS, they will help you sort out what accommodations would be helpful to you so that you may successfully complete this course. Additionally, they will provide you with a letter for us requesting accommodation. Please feel free to contact your instructor about this so that we can work out a plan that will support your learning. For further information, consult McMaster University's Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy (<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/Academic-Accommodation-for-Religious-Indigenous-and-Spiritual-Observances-Policy-on.pdf>).

2. Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous, or Spiritual Observances (RISO):

It is important that any students requiring academic accommodation based on religion, indigenous, and spiritual observances know that these requests will be respected in the classroom. Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous, or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy (<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/Academic-Accommodation-for-Religious-Indigenous-and-Spiritual-Observances-Policy-on.pdf>).

Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also

contact their instructor as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and/or tests.

3. Assignment Deadlines and Missed/Late Work

Assignment Deadlines & Missed/Late Work: Students are expected to hand in all assignments on the specified due dates. Penalty for late assignments will be 10% for the first 4 days past the deadlines. No assignments will be accepted past the deadline unless special arrangements were made before the due date. Given that some course assignments require electronic submission, you should familiarize yourself with the Avenue to Learn Assignment in advance of the deadlines, and ask for assistance as necessary. Problems with electronic submission WILL NOT be accepted as an excuse for lateness.

4. MSAF Statement McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF):

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) If you are absent from the university for a minor medical reason, lasting fewer than 3 days, you may report your absence, once per term, without documentation, using the McMaster Student Absence Form. Absences for a longer duration or for other reasons must be reported to your Faculty/Program office, with documentation, and relief from term work may not necessarily be granted.

When using the MSAF, report your absence to intersession@mcmaster.ca You must then contact your instructor immediately (normally within 2 working days) by email at saltms@mcmaster.ca to learn what relief may be granted for the work you have missed, and relevant details such as revised deadlines, or time and location of a make-up evaluation. Please note that the MSAF may not be used for term work worth 25% or more, nor can it be used for the final examination. Please note: students who use the MSAF, but who do not contact the instructor within the 2 working days' period, may not be granted any relief.

5. McMaster Policy on Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences—e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy: (<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-1-1.pdf>).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1) Plagiarism—e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained; 2) Improper collaboration in group work; 3) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

6. Acknowledgement of Course Policies

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of INSPIRE 3EL3 – CO3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly. Lack of awareness of the course policies cannot be invoked at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand. The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course and will notify students accordingly (in class and post any changes to the course A2L).

7. Extreme Circumstances

The lecture schedule is only a guideline and may be modified during the course of the class. The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes.