

COURSE TITLE: AUTISM PUZZLE

NO. OF CREDITS: 3 QUARTER CREDITS
[semester equivalent = 2.00 credits]

INSTRUCTOR: Lori Gibson
loribgibson@hotmail.com

WA CLOCK HRS: 30
OREGON PDUs: 30

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

If you have students with one of the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), and you don't know what they're thinking or feeling, your days will be difficult – and theirs will be too. Most Pre-K through 12th grade educators have worked with ASD students all ready, and the prevalence of ASD is increasing. This class is an essential introduction to this puzzling disorder. Course topics include the potential causes, diagnosis, types of ASD, explanation of behavior patterns, and strategies/resources for educators. You can customize your assignments to match your circumstances.

This course is appropriate for Pre-K through grade 12 teachers, administrators, support staff and parents.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. Understand what Autism Spectrum Disorders (Autism, Asperger's and PDD-NOS, etc.) are and be able to identify the distinguishing features between them.
2. Be able to define what Autism Learning Disorders (ALD) and Autism Learning Styles (ALS) are. A
3. Be able to discuss the importance of knowing what these are specifically in a student who has been given a diagnosis of ASD.
4. Have a framework for understanding the current research and findings regarding the origins of ASD.
5. Have numerous strategies/resources that you can use in your professional situation.
6. Have numerous resources that you can share with colleagues, administrators, parents and your students, when applicable.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

HOURS EARNED:

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participant's their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), or Washington State Clock Hours or Oregon PDUs. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours and Oregon PDUs.

UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION

REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%

CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering determine with your

district personnel, department head or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

REQUIRED TEXT

Helping Children with Autism Learn by Bryna Siegel, 2007: Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y. 512 pages. ISBN 978-0195325065

- ***Helping Children with Autism Learn: Treatment Approaches for Parents and Professionals***
ISBN# 0195325060
by Siegel, Bryna
OUP US

[Buy from Amazon](#)

MATERIALS FEE

Text, *Helping Children with Autism Learn*, is available from Amazon for about \$17.

ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION

Assignment #1:

- Please introduce yourself with a 1-2 page background statement that includes:
 - Description of your current professional situation.
 - What brings you the most joy and what are your greatest challenges in your work?
 - What outcomes do you hope to achieve in taking this course?
 - Please include any other information you would like us to know about you.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: 'Autism Puzzle, #1'

Assignment #2:

Understanding the Basics.

Dr. Bryna Siegel has worked extensively with children and families impacted by autism for the past 25 years as the director of the University of California's Autism Center. She is a well-respected researcher and clinician. She states in the forward "As a disorder which affects the most fundamental aspects of social development autism has posed important challenges-for theories of child development, brain development, and education."

- In order to understand Dr. Siegel's basic beliefs and structures for understanding autism read the Forward and Introduction in *Helping Children with Autism Learn*.
- Write a brief summary which includes the following:
 - What is a spectrum disorder?
 - Why are Autism and the other related disorders considered to be spectrum disorders?
 - How does Dr. Siegel define Autism Learning Disorders?
 - How does Dr. Siegel define Autism Learning Styles?

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: 'Autism Puzzle, #2'

Assignment #3:

Possible Causes.

Whenever there is disorder, it is human nature to seek the cause. Obviously there are definite benefits to discovering why the disorder occurs – both for prevention and remediation. The bottom line of understanding ASD is knowing that the brain has developed in a way that is slightly different from the typical brain, and these differences result in the origins for the patterns of behavior that we cluster as

the disorder of autism.

- Please read Chapter 1 “Understanding the Origins of Autism and Its Meaning for Development.”
- In a 1-2 page paper outline the various areas of study as to the origins of autism.
- Please include discussion regarding the risk factors of genetics, epidemiology and prenatal and birth factors.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: ‘Autism Puzzle, #3’

Assignment #4:

- Diagnosis and Understanding Patterns of Behavior and Thinking.
- Read Chapter 3 “Autistic Learning Disabilities Defined: How Strengths Compensate for Weaknesses and Form Autism.”
- Please specially focus on the DSM-IV criteria for Autism.
- Write a one-page paper detailing the three (3) domains necessary for a diagnosis of Autism.
- See Table 3-2 on page 90 for an outline of your summary.
- We encourage you to seek further explanation of each of the domains by referring to Chapters 4, 5 and 8, which describe each of the domains with much more detail.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: ‘Autism Puzzle, #4’

Assignment #5:

- Familiarize Yourself with Treatment Options.
- Read the “Likely Treatment Outcomes” section (pgs. 456-470). Then go back and read two of the chapters that are most appropriate to your situation from Part III: “Methods of Teaching Children with Autism.”
- Write a two-page paper that contains:
 - A summary of your learning and your reaction to the first portion of the reading regarding possible outcomes.
 - Indicate which chapters you read from Part III. Discuss these strategies for working with ASD students and if applicable the viability of these strategies working in your school.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: ‘Autism Puzzle, #5’

Assignment #6:

- Increase Your Resources
- It is vitally important that all of us in education understand autism, as students with these issues are increasingly impacting the face of education.
- We also believe that it is imperative that we know of resources to encourage and support the parents of these students.
- Visit the listed websites from the Bibliography and Resource list, as well as any others you deem beneficial that you might find in your search.
- In a 1-2 page paper list and briefly describe which website(s) could be a beneficial referral for each of the following groups:
 1. fellow colleagues and/or administrators
 2. parents of ASD students
 3. students – sites they can refer to as resources for basic understanding (if you teach early childhood education you can disregard the student portion of this assignment).

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: ‘Autism Puzzle, #6’

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

B. LEARNING APPLICATION

In this section you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you are not teaching in a classroom, please contact the instructor for course modifications. If you are a classroom teacher and start or need to complete this course during the summer, please try to apply your ideas when possible with youth from your neighborhood, at a local public library or parks department facility, (they will often be glad to sponsor community-based learning), or with students in another teacher's summer classroom in session.

Assignment #7:

Assignment #7-A:

- Describe a student you know who has an ASD.
- Write a 2-3 page detailed summary of the student's unique learning disorders and learning styles, referencing Dr. Bryna Siegel's work.
- If you do not know a student with an ASD, you may create a fictional summary, although if it is possible to meet a student and gain information from their parents or teachers that would be more beneficial.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: 'Autism Puzzle, #7-A'

OR

Assignment #7-B:

- Another assignment of your own design, with the instructor's prior approval

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: 'Autism Puzzle, #7-B'

Assignment #8:

Assignment #8-A:

- Adapt a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- Write a 250-500 word commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by also contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library [here](https://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library). (<https://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library>)
- Send your modified lesson and your commentary via email to your instructor.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: 'Autism Puzzle, #8-A'

OR

Assignment #8-B:

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Adapt a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library [here](https://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library). (<https://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library>)
- Sample Lesson Plan Template: <https://www.hol.edu/about/lesson-template/>
- Write a 500+ word article concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.
- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog [What Works: Teaching at its Best](https://www.hol.edu/blog) prior to writing your article. (<https://www.hol.edu/blog>)
- When you submit your article to your instructor, please also email a copy to [Yvonne Hall](mailto:yvonne@hol.edu) THI blog curator and media specialist. (yvonne@hol.edu)
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Submit your modified lesson along with your article via email to your instructor.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: 'Autism Puzzle, #8-B'

Assignment #9: (500 Level ONLY)

Assignment #9-A:

- From the course text, bibliography, community-based resources, websites or other sources please find a specific resource that

you can use to practically work with ASD students that you may have in your classroom.

- Identify the resource and write a detailed summary of 3-5 strategies you will incorporate into your teaching as a result. Please include the outcomes you hope to achieve.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: 'Autism Puzzle, #9-A'

OR

Assignment #9-B:

- You may create a PowerPoint presentation to give to your staff regarding the potential causes, diagnosis, types of ASD, explanation of behavior patterns.
- Be sure to focus on practical strategies/resources for educators.
- When you send your presentation indicate the date of the presentation, the audience, and comments or feedback received.

Send to instructor: loribgibson@hotmail.com; Subject line to read: 'Autism Puzzle, #9-B'

C. INTEGRATION PAPER

Assignment #10: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER

(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

Send to your instructor at their email address. Subject line to read "(put course name here) Integration Paper"

INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:

Please indicate by email to the instructor if you would like to receive comments on your assignments.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

Lori Gibson, M.A., E.S.A. is a school counselor for Spokane Public Schools. She holds a Master's in Counseling Psychology from Gonzaga University. She also has a B.A. in Elementary Education from Whitworth University. Over the past 28 years she has also held positions as a counselor for North Chicago High School in Illinois and the Lake Washington School District in Redmond, WA. Lori has taught workshops for The Heritage Institute for the past 18 years (most of them with her dear friend Jacquie Johansson Bernbaum). She is passionate about the opportunity to support her colleagues in their noble work in schools. In a time when high stakes testing seems to take precedence above all, she believes educators must work diligently to focus on the "whole child." The challenges facing students can include learning disabilities, social difficulties, family stressors, generational poverty or entitlement issues, to name a few. Educators know these are challenges that can make it extremely difficult for some students to engage in the learning process. This necessitates teachers and administrators to be up to date on the latest research and have specific strategies to address the needs of their students. The purpose of Lori's courses is to equip educators for these challenges in a respectful and encouraging manner.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AUTISM PUZZLE

Baron-Cohen, S. (2004). *The Essential Difference: Male and Female Brains and the Truth about Autism*. New York, N.Y.: Basic Books. ISBN: 978-0465005567. Written by the author of the well-respected *Mindblindness*, this text is a fascinating read, looking at Baron-Cohen's theory that autistic people are just at the far end of a spectrum. To simplify considerably - he proposes a spectrum where there are those who are good at empathizing (females) and those who are better at systemizing (males). Autistic people lie at the extreme end of the spectrum as they are typically extraordinarily good systemizers and poor empathizers. There is a fun and interesting test called reading the Mind in the Eyes (see Appendix 1). This book, although controversial, is a well-written and interesting exploration of a theory on the origins of autism.

Goleman, Daniel (2007). *Social Intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam. ISBN: 978-0553384499. Most educators have read Daniel Goleman's classic work on emotional intelligence. This book is a must-read for those who want to understand the components of social intelligence. It is an especially important work for those who teach Asperger's or High-Functioning Autistic students.

Lockshin, S, Gillis, J. & Romanczyk, R. (2005). *Helping Your Child with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Step by Step Workbook for Families*

. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1572243842. Having a child with ASD can create a very stressful family life. This book is a helpful guide to looking at the behaviors that can be challenging and provides practical suggestions for working through them. This book is in a workbook format so it is user-friendly and will help parents navigate the twists and turns of having an ASD child with the goal of having a healthy family for the benefit of everyone.

Mannix, D. (2008). *Social Skills Activities for Special Children*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Publishers. ISBN: 978-0470259351. This is an update of the classic resource for special education teachers, counselors and social workers who want to help their students develop social skills. The book has over 160 activities and is organized around three core areas crucial to social development in the elementary grades. They include: accepting rules and authority at school, relating to peers, and developing positive social skills. There is a separate book for those who work in secondary schools – *Social Skill Activities: For Secondary Students with Special Needs*.

Ozonoff, S., Dawson, G. & McPartland, J. (2014). *A Parent's Guide to Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism, Second Edition*. New York, N.Y.: Gilford Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1462517473. This book takes a comprehensive look at children who are diagnosed as having either Asperger Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism. It looks at diagnosis, potential interventions, support for families, etc. Many books on this subject look at early intervention and early childhood. The strength of this book is that it also covers the adolescent and transition to adulthood issues for these individuals. Although written for parents, it is a tremendous resource for teachers as well.

Seigel, Bryna. (2007). *Helping Children With Autism Learn*. New York, NY. Oxford Press, (selected chapters assigned for credit). ISBN 978-0195325065. Dr. Bryna Siegel is the Director of the University of California's Autism Clinic. She has worked with autistic children and their families for over 30 years. As a result of her personal commitment to these children she has written a thoughtful and hopeful book. She understands that the behaviors and thoughts of a child diagnosed with ASD can be very complex, puzzling and overwhelming for parents and educators. Dr. Siegel's framework for looking at the abilities and disabilities of ASD student are very insightful for increasing understanding, as well as developing effective educational interventions for these students.

Shapiro, Lawrence & Holmes, Julia (2008). *Let's Be Friends: A Workbook to Help Kids Learn Social Skills & Make Great Friends*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1572246102. Very practical workbook for children. Could be adapted by parents or teachers to help children in primary grades, although it is probably best for 3rd grade through junior high and possibly high school students. We have used it in the elementary school setting with Asperger's students and recommend it.

Sicile-Kira, C. (2014). *Autism Spectrum Disorder (revised): The Complete Guide to Understanding Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, and Other ASDs*. New York, N.Y.: TarcherPerigee. ISBN: 978-0399166631. This book was written by the mother of an ASD child, who is also a professional in the field of autism. This is a very comprehensive book as well for understanding the autism categories, potential causes, diagnosis, possible treatments and interventions, etc. There is an excellent chapter on education, as well.

Silverman, Stephan & Weinfeld, Rich (2014). *School Success for Kids with Asperger's Syndrome*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc. ISBN: 978-1618211651. This book does an excellent job of describing Asperger students, what their needs are within the school system as well as offering effective solutions to help them navigate, and develop the social and language skills necessary to survive in the system. This is a good resource (regardless of the age of the Asperger's student) for parents, teachers and administrators.

Winner, Michelle Garcia (2006). *Think Social*. San Jose, CA: Think Social Publishing. ISBN: 978-0970132048. This is an excellent curriculum for working with ASD students. Based on Theory of Mind, it focuses on the ability of students to understand the perspective of others, which is obviously necessary in order to relate to others. Speech therapists, special education teachers, counselors, social workers and others will find this to be a very useful tool for working with their ASD students.

Winner, Michelle Garcia (2007). *Thinking About You Thinking About Me*. San Jose, CA: Think Social Publishing. ISBN: 978-0970132062. If you are interested in a thorough exploration of social cognitive learning disabilities, this is definitely a text we would recommend. It is the theoretical work that is the basis for Michelle Winner's curriculum *Think Social!* It describes the impact that language and behavior have on social thinking. There are strategies, etc. in this text as well. Those who are responsible

Web-Based Resources

www.autism4teachers.com

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/> (recommend under Families and Adults –visit the Resource Library)

http://www.autismspeaks.org/whatisit/talking_to_parents_action_kit.php (recommend watching the video on techniques for talking with parents about concerns regarding possible developmental issues)

www.tonyattwood.com.au

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/>

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/MINDInstitute/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/>

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/MINDInstitute/>

www.templegrandin.com

www.autism-society.org

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6qTvx9fbOA-> "Private Worlds" hosted by Linda Ellerbee Nick News

<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/aut.html>

<http://www.cyh.com> (recommend clicking on the Kids section and search for "autism" for many kid-friendly resources)

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/autism.htm>

www.educateautism.com

<http://www.do2learn.com/>