Autism Endorsement Program

PSY 542-01: Behavior Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Fall 2025

Instructor: Jewel Sale, Psy.S., BCBA
Email: salej@gvsu.edu

Office hours: Email or by appointment
Meeting location: Online through Blackboard

Course Description

This course examines the behavioral characteristics of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and overviews interventions to reduce problem behavior. Topics include data collection and functional behavior assessment, as well as the development of behavior intervention plans based on knowledge of function. Interventions include preventative, skill development-based, and reinforcement strategies.

Course Objectives

1. Identify behavioral issues associated with autism spectrum disorder and how problem behaviors impact student success in school and community settings.
2. Identify strategies to address problem behavior in schools based on a tiered model of intervention.
3. Understand the use of a problem-solving process applied to individual student problem behaviors.
4. Use multiple, appropriate assessment tools to assess problem behavior, including data collection procedures and functional behavior assessment.
5. Develop behavior intervention plans that consider the function and context of problem behavior.
6. Apply the Prevent-Teach-Reinforce-Respond model to address problem behavior within a school context.
7. Identify interventions that prevent problem behavior, including the use of visual supports, and self-monitoring systems.
8. Identify interventions that teach alternatives to problem behavior, including social skill interventions, coping and self-regulation skills, and Functional Communication Training.
9. Identify interventions that reinforce appropriate behavior.

Readings
Required Book:

Dunlap, G., Iovannone, R., Kincaid, D., Wilson, K., Christiansen, K. & Strain, P.S. (2019). *Prevent-Teach-Reinforce: The school-based model of individualized Positive Behavior Support*. 2nd Edition. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company: Baltimore, MD.

Recommended Book:
Minahan, J., & Rappaport, N. (2016). *The Behavior Code: A practical guide to understanding and teaching the most challenging students*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Articles/Additional Resources:
Additional readings for the course are listed in the schedule and will be available on the Blackboard site.

Course Information

Required Equipment (owned or accessible)
- High-speed internet access
- Computer with a sound card and speakers and operating system that meets current Blackboard browser requirements (see below)
- Microphone (built in or external) - preferred
- Computer camera for videoconference, synchronous meetings (most laptops have a camera)

Blackboard Ultra is the Course Management System
This course utilizes Blackboard Ultra, GVSU's online course management system. To access Blackboard, go to https://lms.gvsu.edu/ and enter your log in and password. GVSU's I.T. Department has compiled Student resources related to Blackboard Ultra which may help you find answers to some of your questions about using the Ultra system, including an orientation.

Use of Blackboard is integral to this course and students must log on a few times each week to complete course requirements, receive important announcements and updates, and communicate with instructors and other students about course content.

Check the current technical requirements to use Blackboard. If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, contact the help desk by email or phone: helpdesk@gvsu.edu or 616-331-3513. The help website is https://www.gvsu.edu/it/. For additional information about online learning, go to the GVSU Online Education webpage.

Accessing the Library
Many of GVSU's library resources can be accessed online through Library Online Services, including many journal articles available on demand. You must have an active GVSU student account to take advantage of the library's resources and services.

Graduate Writing Resources
Graduate Writing Resources are available to assist with many types of writing tasks. These resources are not just available for students who struggle with writing and can help any student improve writing skills.

Student Accessibility Resources

If you need specific accommodations and you have a documented disability, please contact the [Student Accessibility Resources](#) office to coordinate accommodations. If you plan to request accommodations in this course, let me know as soon as possible so I can assist you. I will do my best to provide supports regardless of whether you have a diagnosed disability.

Course Organization and Assignments

Unit Modules

There will be six two-week modules and one three-week module in this course. Most units will include readings, lectures, an assignment, discussion board activities, and a quiz. Assignments will be due at the end of the unit. All previous units will be open throughout the course.

Readings

You will have book chapters and articles to read weekly. Stay caught up on the readings as this is where you will learn much of the content for the autism endorsement. The required book for this course should be a helpful reference tool that you can continue to use throughout your career in working with students with behavior problems. Additional readings (chapters and journal articles) will be posted in Blackboard.

Lectures

There will be a series of recorded lectures for each module. These lectures are beneficial to support your understanding of the reading content and to help you engage in assignments, quizzes and other course activities.

Discussion Board

Discussion board activities will be posted for most units to promote engagement with topics covered in the unit. Most discussion board activities will involve questions that you respond to through Blackboard in either pairs or groups.

Assignments

You will have an assignment associated with each learning module. These will vary in type and length but most will involve practice or application of concepts from the unit content. These are graded and will constitute an important part of your learning and grade for the course. All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner (typed, and free from spelling and grammatical errors). More information about each of these assignments will be provided on Blackboard.

Quizzes

Each unit will have a brief quiz. These quizzes will primarily focus on content from the readings and recorded lectures. Quizzes may involve a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. Most quizzes will be open for the full unit, but you should plan to allow time to complete your review of readings and lectures before beginning the quiz.

Synchronous Meetings

There will be two synchronous meetings throughout the semester. One will be toward the beginning of the semester and we will have a mixture of lecture and discussion. The second meeting will be at the end of the semester and will include review and discussion.

Points and Grading

Assignment	Total Points for Semester
Discussion board (5 @ 10 points)	50
Synchronous Meetings (2 @ 15 points)	30
Assignments (7 @ 20 points)	140
Quizzes (7 @ 5 points)	35
Exam Week Reflection (1 @ 10 points)	10
TOTAL POINTS	265

Final Grade Requirement

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	70-76%
D	61-69%
F	0-60%

Academic Integrity and GVSU Policies

GVSU Student Code regarding Integrity of Scholarship and Grades:
Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities: "Standards of conduct are established in order to foster a community and environment where the mission, vision and values of Grand Valley State University… can flourish. These standards are embodied within a set core of values that include **integrity**, **community**, **inclusion & equity**, **respect**, and **responsibility**. The University conduct process exists to protect the interests of the community and to challenge those whose behavior falls outside of these values and our policies."

According to GVSU Code STU 5.1, **"**Academic Misconduct is defined as any action or behavior that misrepresents one's contributions to or the results of any scholarly product submitted for credit, evaluation, or dissemination." Additional information about the following aspects of Academic Misconduct, including cheating, collusion, dual submission, falsification, and plagiarism is available [here](#).

Academic Dishonesty
If I have evidence of any form of academic dishonesty (cheating on an exam, giving or receiving information about what is asked in the exam, or any other form of cheating such as plagiarism), you will receive a failing grade in that activity and other consequences as dictated by GVSU policy. Plagiarism is presenting work, ideas or words that are not your own as though they were your own—this includes work of other students or work that is in a published source (the textbook, a journal article). To avoid plagiarism be sure to do your own work, and put information in your own words. Use of quotes with appropriate reference to the original source from which you got the information or ideas is less preferred than paraphrasing (with referencing of the source provided) in psychological writing.

Use of AI
AI Policy Statement by David A. Joyner @davidjoyner@fediscience.org.

We treat AI-based assistance, such as ChatGPT and Copilot, the same way we treat collaboration with other people: you are welcome to talk about your ideas and work with other people, both inside and outside the class, as well as with AI-based assistants. However, all work you submit must be your own. You should never include in your assignment anything that was not written directly by you without proper citation (including quotation marks and in-line citation for direct quotes).

Including anything you did not write in your assignment without proper citation will be treated as an academic misconduct case. If you are unsure where the line is between collaborating with AI and copying from AI, we recommend the following:

1. Never hit "Copy" within your conversation with an AI assistant. You can copy your own work into your conversation, but do not copy anything from the conversation back into your assignment. Instead, use your interaction with the AI assistant as a learning experience, then let your assignment reflect your improved understanding.

2. Do not have your assignment and the AI agent open at the same time. Similar to above, use your conversation with the AI as a learning experience, then close the interaction down, open your assignment, and let your assignment reflect your revised knowledge. This includes avoiding using AI directly integrated into your composition environment: just as you should not let a classmate write content directly into your submission, so also avoid using tools that directly add content to your submission.

Mental Health and Other Student Support
Mental health concerns, including overwhelming stress, excessive worry, difficulty participating in daily activities, and changes in mood, appetite, or sleep patterns can interfere with your academic performance. College student surveys report that roughly 1 out of 3 students screen positive for a

current mental health concern ([Healthy Minds Study](#)). GVSU values your health and wellness and provides services to support your mental health. If you would like mental health support or are concerned for another member of our campus community, reach out to the [University Counseling Center](#) for free resources, self-help options, and services. Also, visit [Campus Recreation & Wellness](#) for additional health and wellness programming.

Student absences due to religious holidays will be accommodated per the GVSU policies on inclusion. Your health and your family's health should be your priority. If you are dealing with illness, sick family members, travel difficulties, a bad internet connection, increased anxiety, childcare challenges, or any other issues, please reach out and we will figure out accommodations.

There are a variety of other student resources to support you in other areas. I would be happy to assist you with reaching out to these supports if you feel you would benefit from them. Many of these resources have both in person and virtual sessions available.

The Knowledge Market (Located in the Library: Assistance with Research, Writing and Presentations) https://www.gvsu.edu/library/km/
The Tutoring and Reading Center https://www.gvsu.edu/trc/
Mental Health Needs (Counseling Center) https://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/
Financial Wellness (Money Smart Lakers) https://www.gvsu.edu/moneysmart/
Financial Aid Issues https://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/
COVID information https://www.gvsu.edu/lakerstogether/
Career Services (Career related events, resume writing, sample interviews): https://www.gvsu.edu/careers/
Professional Advising (for major and graduation requirements, etc.): https://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/

Psych Friends
Psych Friends mentors are upper-level psychology and behavioral neuroscience students who are trained to provide support in many areas, such as: effective studying and time management techniques, exam preparation and reflection skills, understanding the PSY and BNS major requirements, potential jobs and careers in the field, the process of applying for graduate school, and how to maintain physical and mental health as a student. Visit https://www.gvsu.edu/navigate to schedule an online or in-person meeting today!

Tutoring
Tutoring and academic assistance are available to all GVSU students. You can utilize drop-in hours or make appointments in the Tutoring and Reading Center, or you can stop by one of the content-specific drop-in tutoring centers on campus when they are open for questions and homework help. For more information or to request assistance, please contact the Tutoring and Reading Center at tutoring@gvsu.edu.

GVSU Course Policies
This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies

Behavior Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Fall 2025 Schedule

Dates	Topics	Readings and Resources	Assignments
Unit 1 8/25-9/7	Foundational Supports for Challenging Behaviors ➢ Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) ➢ Team-Based Problem Solving	• Chapter 1 – Bambara (2015) • Chapter 2 – Dunlap (2010)	Assignment 1 Discussion Board Quiz 1
Unit 2 9/8-9/21	Assessment Procedures and Data Collection	• Chapter 3 – Dunlap (2019)	Assignment 2 Discussion Board Quiz 2
Unit 3 9/22-10/12	Functional Behavior Assessment Teachers and Self-Care	• Chapter 1 – Minahan & Rapaport (2012) • Chapter 4 – Bambara (2015) • Chapter 4 – Dunlap (2019) • Lesh (2020)	Assignment 3 Quiz 3 Synchronous Meeting - Choose 1 to join: Tues, September 23rd 4:00-5:15 pm -or- Wed, September 24 7:00-8:15pm
Unit 4 10/13-10/26	Behavior Intervention Plan Development: Linking Function to Intervention	• Chapter 3 – Minahan & Rapaport (2012) • Chapter 4 – Minahan & Rapaport (2012) • Chapter 5 – Bambara (2015)	Assignment 4 Discussion Board Quiz 4
Unit 5 10/27-11/9	Prevention Based Interventions	• Appendix A of Dunlap (2019) • Iovannone (2009) • Strain (2011)	Assignment 5 Discussion Board Quiz 5
Unit 6 11/10-11/23	Teaching Based Interventions and Social Skills	• Appendix B of Dunlap (2019) • Tiger (2008) • Laugeson (2014)	Assignment 6 Quiz 6
Unit 7 11/24-12/7	Reinforcement and Response Based Interventions	• Appendix C of Dunlap (2019) • Sullivan (2020) • Burt & Pennington (2017)	Assignment 7 Discussion Board Quiz 7
Exam Week	Exam Week Synchronous Small Group Discussion & Reflection- Choose 1 to join: Monday, December 8th 7:00-8:15 pm – or – Wednesday, December 10th 4:00-5:15 pm		Reflection due Thursday, December 11th by midnight

Reading List

Bambara, L.M., Janney, R., & Snell, M.E. (2015). *Behavior Support* (3rd edition). Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company: Baltimore, MD.

Burt, J. & Pennington, R. (2017). A teacher's guide to using extinction in school settings. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 53*, 107-113.

Dunlap, G., Iovannone, R., Kincaid, D., Wilson, K., Christiansen, K. & Strain, P.S. (2018). *Prevent-Teach-Reinforce: The school-based model of individualized Positive Behavior Support*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company: Baltimore, MD.

Iovannone, R., Greenbaum, P., Wang, W., Kincaid, D., Dunlap, D., & Strain, P. (2009). Randomized Controlled Trial of the Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (PTR) Tertiary Intervention for students with problem behaviors: Preliminary outcomes. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 17*, 213-225.

Lesh (2020). Don't forget about yourself: Words of wisdom on special education teacher self-care. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 52*, 367-369.

Minahan, J., & Rappaport, N. (2016). *The Behavior Code: A practical guide to understanding and teaching the most challenging students*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Laugeson, E. A., Ellingsen, R., Sanderson, J., Tucci, L., & Bates, S. (2014). The ABC's of teaching social skills to adolescents with autism spectrum disorder in the classroom: The UCLA PEERS® program. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 44*(9), 2244-2256.

Strain, P., Wilson, K., Wilson, K. & Dunlap, G. (2011). Prevent-Teach-Reinforce: Addressing problem behaviors of students with autism in general education classrooms. *Behavioral Disorders, 36*, 160-171.

Sullivan, K., Crosland, K., Iovannone, R., Blair, K., & Singer, L. (2020). Evaluating the effectiveness of Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for high school students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, published online, 1-14.

Tiger, J.H., Hanley, G.P., & Bruzek, J. (2008). Functional Communication Training: A review and practical guide. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 1*, 15-23.

Thoughts on a Successful Online Learning Experience

Taking an online course is different from traditional classroom courses. You will take a larger role in organizing your time and guiding your own learning. The role of the instructor becomes facilitator, guide, and resource to help you learn the course material and apply it in your personal and professional life. I am here to assist you, but you need to let me know what you need.

As a successful online learner, you will interact with the course materials regularly; manage your time; share thoughts and experiences with others; critically reflect on material; and apply what you are learning. You are the conductor of your own learning, which is what lifelong learning is all about!

Much to the surprise of many students, online courses are not easier than traditional courses. Quite the contrary. You may have more flexibility and less travel, but the content is the same and you have a greater responsibility for your learning. There are also more opportunities and expectations to participate in discussions. Online learning is an excellent format, but it is not and should not be passive. You want to be actively engaged with your instructor, other students, and your own thinking.

Tips for a Successful Learning Experience

Although these might seem obvious and simple, they will make a difference

- Read the syllabus and all preparatory information on Blackboard
- Stay organized and track due dates
- Plan weekly study times
- Keep up on the reading
- Log on to Blackboard at least 3 times per week to check announcements, discussion board, and interact with course material
- Get to know the other students in the class and help each other learn the language and the concepts
- Post questions, comments, and ideas on discussion board
- Ask questions of the instructor. Not just clarification questions about logistics, but content questions.