



## *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

### *Syllabus*

## *The evolution of perspectives in autism research: from disorder to neurodiversity - 34422*

*Last update 09-10-2024*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)*

*Responsible Department: Education*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 1st Semester*

*Teaching Languages: Hebrew*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Yonat Rum*

*Coordinator Email: [yonat.rum@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:yonat.rum@mail.huji.ac.il)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Mondays 10.30am-11.30am, or by appointment*

---

Teaching Staff:

Dr. yonat rum

Course/Module description:

*This course will review how autism was perceived, described, and defined from the first clinical descriptions in the 1940s to the present while referring to the accumulated knowledge, changes, and open questions.*

Course/Module aims:

*To expose the students to the current definition of autism, explanatory theories, research, criticism coming from autistic communities, and controversial issues in autism research. The reading material will include basic scientific articles in the field of autism, as well as theoretical and historical papers alongside texts describing lived experiences, opinions, and discussions in science press and social media.*

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

*describe the current definition of autism and understand the differences between the way we perceive autism today and the way autism was perceived in the past. Students will be able to review several explanatory theories for autism and the main issues currently in dispute in autism research. Students will be able to present a reasoned personal opinion regarding one or more of the controversial issues discussed in class.*

Attendance requirements(%):

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: This course will be delivered in person to encourage and enable discussion and questions. The lectures, the reading materials and the discussions in class are an essential part of the course. Attendance at lectures is mandatory. Participation in the meetings will increase the opportunities for learning and success in the course.*

Course/Module Content:

- 1. Introduction: A look at definitions, theories and myths*
- 2. Early clinical descriptions*
- 3. Changes in the definitions and trying to understand etiology*
- 4. Assessment, diagnosis, and intervention*
- 5. Explaining theories*

- 
6. The Double Empathy Problem theory and the Neurodiversity approach
  7. Autistic communities, self-advocacy, and participatory research
  8. Genetic research in autism: a little about the science and a lot about the controversies
  9. Autism or Autisms?
  10. Summary

#### Required Reading:

The "live" syllabus of this course is the Moodle website. There you will find the reading materials for each lesson and suggestions for further reading..

Attached is a basic reading list, subject to changes:

Baron-Cohen, S. (2009). Autism: the empathizing-systemizing (E-S) theory. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1156(1), 68-80.

Chevallier, C., Kohls, G., Troiani, V., Brodtkin, E. S., & Schultz, R. T. (2012). The social motivation theory of autism. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 16(4), 231-239.

Happé, F., & Frith, U. (2020). Annual Research Review: Looking back to look forward—changes in the concept of autism and implications for future research. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 61(3), 218-232.

Jaswal, V. K., & Akhtar, N. (2019). Being versus appearing socially uninterested: Challenging assumptions about social motivation in autism. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 42, e82.

Milton, D., Gurbuz, E., & López, B. (2022). The 'double empathy problem': Ten years on. *Autism*, 26(8), 1901-1903.

Rajendran, G., & Mitchell, P. (2007). Cognitive theories of autism. *Developmental review*, 27(2), 224-260.

גיל, ר., שהם, ש., ושלי, ס. (2016). הבניית זהות תרבותית חיובית בקהילות של אנשים עם מגבלות. בתוך: לימודי מוגבלות, מקראה. הוצאת מכון ון ליר.

דרומי, א. (2018). אוטיזם מסע להבנת הרצף. ספרי ניב (מבוא, פרק 4)

סילברמן, ס. תרגום לעברית: צוקרמן, א. (2021). על הספקטרום. כתר (פרק 3, פרק 4)

פריט, א. תרגום לעברית: נורית לוינסון (1997). אוטיזם - פשר החידה. ספרית פועלים (פרק 10: חשיבה על מיינד).

#### Additional Reading Material:

---

Grading Scheme:

*Written / Oral / Practical Exam 100 %*

Additional information:

*Students who need support due to a disability or difference are requested to contact me as soon as possible.*