PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
The Master of Autism Studies provides students with a unique opportunity to examine autism from scientific, therapeutic, educational, and humanistic perspectives. Students gain deep expertise in autism spectrum disorder by completing a curriculum in which every course focuses on autism. Students also develop the skills needed to become leaders in the interprofessional field of autism services by completing rigorously interdisciplinary coursework and by exploring a broad range of evidence-based approaches to autism intervention. In addition to providing unparalleled interdisciplinary expertise in autism, the Master of Autism Studies is distinctive in the way it incorporates the voices of people on the spectrum into the curriculum as well as in the way it engages with the Catholic intellectual tradition and the mission of Saint Mary’s College.

PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS
Upon completion of the Master of Autism Studies program, students will:

• Understand the lived experiences of autistic persons; reflect on the interplay among these experiences and broader theories of human nature, society and culture; and examine ethical theories and practices relevant to autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

• Be able to find, understand and evaluate scientific research about ASD, its causes, its treatment, common co-morbid conditions, etc.

• Understand the major scientific and social scientific theories of ASD and of relevance to ASD.

• Understand important models or approaches used in treating ASD (e.g., ABA, DIR, TEACCH, sensory integration, etc.); make decisions about the appropriateness of individual models/approaches for individual persons with autism that take into account scientific evidence, levels of efficacy, clinician’s experience, ethical considerations, and the wishes of the client and/or caregivers; and practice/implement these models/approaches at a level commensurate with the student’s professional and/or personal engagement with autism.

• Understand therapeutic disciplines and their techniques for assessing and treating ASD; make decisions about the appropriateness of individual techniques/methods/interventions for individual persons with autism that take into account scientific evidence, levels of efficacy, clinician’s experience, ethical considerations, and the wishes of the client and/or caregivers; and practice/implement these techniques at a level commensurate with the student’s professional and/or personal engagement with autism.
There are no prerequisites for this program.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- All applicants must have a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university, or the international equivalent. The most competitive candidates will have maintained at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA in undergraduate coursework, though experience with autism (such as being autistic, working in an autism-related field, or being a caregiver) will also be taken into account.
- Submission of a completed application form.
- Official transcripts from every college or university attended.
- GRE scores (optional).
- Two to three letters of recommendation from people familiar with the applicant’s academic and/or professional abilities, focusing particularly on the potential for success in this program.
- A personal statement that addresses the applicant’s reasons for pursuing an advanced degree in autism studies, personal and/or professional objectives for engagement with autism after completing the degree, and how Saint Mary’s aligns with these personal and professional objectives.

- Either A) a video interview or B) a sample of academic or professional writing that shows the applicant’s ability to communicate effectively.

Applications for the summer term open September. Saint Mary’s College uses the GradCAS application system. The applicant must complete the application form, submit the application fee for GradCAS (no additional fee is collected by Saint Mary’s), and provide all supporting documents through the GradCAS application system. The application deadline is March 31.

PATHS TO COMPLETION

Students will normally complete the Master of Autism Studies degree on either a one-year (15 month) track or a two-year track. Undergraduates from Saint Mary’s and other approved institutions may also complete the Master of Autism Studies degree as part of the 4+1 Program in Autism Studies. And students interested in becoming speech language pathologists who specialize in working with people on the spectrum may choose to complete the Master of Autism Studies degree as part of the dual degree program that combines the Master of Autism Studies and the Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology.

ONE YEAR TRACK

Students pursuing the Master of Autism Studies on the one-year track will take two courses during the first summer term, four courses during the fall semester, four courses during the spring semester, and two courses during the second summer term. The following chart shows the sequence of courses students on the one-year track will typically take to complete the degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer 1 (May–August)</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer 2 (May–August)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUST 500</td>
<td>AUST 510</td>
<td>AUST 580</td>
<td>AUST 560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 520</td>
<td>AUST 530</td>
<td>AUST 570</td>
<td>AUST 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AUST 535</td>
<td>AUST 550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AUST 540</td>
<td>AUST 611</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TWO YEAR TRACK

Students pursuing the Master of Autism Studies on the two-year track will complete their degrees in either six or seven terms of study. Students will normally take one to two courses per term for six consecutive terms; depending on their schedules and the nature of their capstone projects, students on the two-year track may choose to complete their capstone course and project either in the sixth term (in which case, AUST 700 would be added as a third course in the spring 2 semester) or in a seventh term of study (summer 3). The following chart shows the sequence of courses students on the two-year track will typically take to complete the degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer 1</th>
<th>Fall 1</th>
<th>Spring 1</th>
<th>Summer 2</th>
<th>Fall 2</th>
<th>Spring 2</th>
<th>Summer 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUST 500</td>
<td>AUST 540</td>
<td>AUST 580</td>
<td>AUST 560</td>
<td>AUST 510</td>
<td>AUST 570</td>
<td>AUST 700*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 520</td>
<td>AUST 535</td>
<td>AUST 550</td>
<td></td>
<td>AUST 530</td>
<td>AUST 611</td>
<td>AUST 700*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4+1 PROGRAM IN AUTISM STUDIES

The 4+1 Program in Autism Studies allows students to complete a bachelor’s degree and the Master of Autism Studies in five years with a savings of money and time compared with what would be required if they completed both degrees separately. Undergraduates from Saint Mary’s and other approved institutions may apply to the 4+1 Program in Autism Studies during their junior year. If admitted into the program, students will take two autism studies courses during the summer between their junior and senior years (AUST 500 and
AUST 520), and will take one or two additional autism studies courses during the fall and spring semesters of their senior year (normally, AUST 510 and/or AUST 611). Students will be charged the rate of undergraduate summer tuition for the courses taken in the summer between their junior and senior years. Since courses taken in the fall and spring of the senior year will be counted as part of the student’s academic year coursework, students will not be charged additional tuition for these courses (as long as they do not exceed 18 credit hours per semester). After their baccalaureate graduation, students will complete all remaining Master of Autism Studies coursework in the fall, spring and summer of their fifth year. For courses taken in the fifth year, 4+1 students will be charged the per credit hour tuition rate equivalent to the graduate cohort they will be joining. For more information, see the 4+1 Program in Autism Studies section of the bulletin.

DUAL DEGREE IN AUTISM STUDIES & SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

The Master of Autism Studies and Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology dual degree program provides students with an opportunity to gain expertise in autism and become licensed and certified speech language pathologists while enjoying a savings of cost and time in comparison with what would be required if they pursued these degrees separately. Because this dual degree program combines the Master of Autism Studies and the MS in Speech Language Pathology, there are additional application requirements. For more information, see the Dual Degree in Autism Studies and Speech Language Pathology section of the bulletin.

PROGRAM IN AUTISM STUDIES

Master of Autism Studies (36 hours)

All of the following (36 hours):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUST 500</td>
<td>Gateway: Autistic Experiences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 510</td>
<td>Autism and Humanity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 520</td>
<td>A Biopsychosocial Understanding of the Autism Spectrum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 530</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods in Autism Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 535</td>
<td>Autism Research Design and Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 540</td>
<td>Approaches to Autism Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 550</td>
<td>Occupational Therapy and Autism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 560</td>
<td>Autism and Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 570</td>
<td>Autism and Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 580</td>
<td>Social Policies and Social Services for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum and Their Families</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 611</td>
<td>Autism and Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUST 700</td>
<td>Capstone Project</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completion of a capstone project is also required.

AUTISM STUDIES COURSES

AUST 500 Gateway: Autistic Experiences (3)

This course will help students to broaden and deepen their perspectives on the varied lives of autistic people. Through a combination of experiential learning and studying first person accounts of life with autism, students will examine a diverse range of autistic lives and explore ways in which gender, culture and other factors impact life with autism.

AUST 510 Autism and Humanity (3)

What can autism teach us about being human? And what can theories of human nature teach us about autism? In this course, we will build upon the exploration of autistic experiences undertaken in the gateway course, and begin to investigate ways in which our understanding of autism can both enrich and be enriched by a broader understanding of what it means to be human. Topics to be addressed might include: person first vs. identity first language; models of disability; neurodiversity, autistic identity and autistic culture; philosophical theories of human nature, society and culture; Catholic understandings of the human person, and/or Catholic social teaching. Prerequisite: AUST 500.

AUST 520 A Biopsychosocial Understanding of the Autism Spectrum (3)

There has been a tremendously successful movement for autism awareness; however, the public’s knowledge of the autism spectrum has not paralleled the public awareness campaign or the tremendous scientific progress we have made in understanding the autism spectrum. Moreover, there has been a vast amount of misinformation and folk science theories that have been promoted in the media.

This course is designed to examine our scientific knowledge of the autism spectrum from multiple levels of analysis, including (but not limited to) biological, psychological, cultural, and cross-cultural research. We will critically examine the etiology, development, and diagnosis of ASD. We will view the ASD diagnosis in the context of the individual, family, community, and culture.

AUST 530 Quantitative Methods in Autism Research (3)

Many scientific and therapeutic theories relevant to autism come from research that draws conclusions from statistical evidence. Therefore, it is important that people who seek to use such theories be both good consumers and good producers of data analytic techniques. This course will survey a variety of descriptive and inferential methods commonly found in autism research and study designs. Students will learn the theoretical and computational aspects of the techniques, perform them with appropriate computer software, and interpret the implications of the results. Special attention will be given to how statistical evidence has been used in published research studies on autism. Prerequisite: AUST 520.

AUST 535 Autism Research Design and Methods (3)

This course will give students a broad overview of the research methods used to understand and support the developmental optimization of people with autism and their families. The course will emphasize the skills needed to critically evaluate research that provides the evidence base for applied work with people with autism. Methodologies to be discussed will include both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods within a variety of experimental, quasi-experimental and non-experimental designs. Prerequisite: AUST 520.

AUST 540 Approaches to Autism Intervention (3)

Since Leo Kanner’s and Hans Asperger’s first clinical descriptions of autism, there have been numerous proposed theories and approaches to intervention. The search for a “cure” for autism has led to numerous ideas on how to improve the circumstances of individuals with ASD and their families. These approaches have varied greatly in terms of their theoretical underpinnings, approach to treatment, level of family involvement, empirical support, and ethics.

This course is designed to explore historical and modern intervention approaches to ASD. The course will contain in depth evaluations of theoretical underpinnings of treatment models and practical workshops devoted to common intervention techniques. In this course, we will work as a class toward developing biopsychosocial understanding of ASD treatment, a model which values biological, individual, family, community, and cultural factors affecting treatment. Prerequisite: AUST 520.

AUST 550 Occupational Therapy and Autism (3)

This course introduces students to resources occupational therapy can offer to individuals with autism spectrum disorder in the home, school, community and/or clinical environments. Topics to be discussed include: evaluation; occupational therapy interventions that address the physical, cognitive, psychosocial, sensory and other aspects of performance; and measurement of outcomes. Prerequisite: AUST 540.

AUST 560 Autism and Communication (3)

This course provides students with an introduction to the development of communicative competence including linguistic domains of form (phonology, morphology, and syntax), content (semantics), and use (pragmatics). Social and emotional development and its impact on determining what is meaningful and relevant to learn while acquiring language will be emphasized. The course is designed to examine development and impairment of speech, language, and communication in individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and will focus on differential diagnosis, assessment, and evidence-based interventions within a family-centered approach. Prerequisite: AUST 540.

AUST 570 Autism and Education (3)

This course is designed to introduce the student to education as an integral field in the interdisciplinary approach to assessment of and intervention for individuals with autism. The historical, philosophical,
This course is designed to provide an overview of the various ways in which professional social workers may serve as an advocate and case coordinator for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families in settings such as schools, health care and residential care facilities, social service agencies, and advocacy organizations. This course will provide an opportunity to gain a working knowledge of evidence-based interventions, treatments and services, and government laws and social policies; such knowledge is critical in making appropriate referrals or coordinating services for families. In addition to focusing on the individuals affected by autism, special attention will be paid to the needs of the family and society. Some of the special topics to be explored are: autistic children in foster care, international and cross-cultural perspectives on autism, rural communities, and interdisciplinary teamwork to support families.

**AUST 580 Social Policies and Social Services for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum and Their Families (3)**

This course provides an overview of the various ways in which professional social workers may serve as an advocate and case coordinator for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families in settings such as schools, health care and residential care facilities, social service agencies, and advocacy organizations. This course will provide an opportunity to gain a working knowledge of evidence-based interventions, treatments and services, and government laws and social policies; such knowledge is critical in making appropriate referrals or coordinating services for families. In addition to focusing on the individuals affected by autism, special attention will be paid to the needs of the family and society. Some of the special topics to be explored are: autistic children in foster care, international and cross-cultural perspectives on autism, rural communities, and interdisciplinary teamwork to support families.

**AUST 600 Practicum (0-3)**

Field experience observing and, when appropriate, working in an autism-related community placement under the supervision of program faculty and/or on-site staff. By permission of the autism studies program director only. May be repeated for credit.

**AUST 601 Research (0-3)**

Participation in autism-related research under the supervision of program faculty and/or other qualified professionals. By permission of the autism studies program director only. May be repeated for credit.

**AUST 611 Autism and Ethics (3)**

Beginning from the anthropology developed in “Autism and Humanity,” this course examines ethical theories, ethical practices, and ethical problems relevant to autism spectrum disorder. Topics to be explored might include: happiness, family, friendship, and work in the lives of autistic people; the moral dimensions of laws, social policies, international conventions, and Catholic social teaching relevant to autism; medical ethics, professional ethics, and ethical issues related to treatment of ASD. Prerequisite: AUST 580.

**AUST 700 Capstone Project (3)**

Supervised preparation for completing the required capstone project. The nature of the preparation will vary according to the nature of the capstone project undertaken.

---

Section on Data Science:

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The Master of Science in Data Science program is committed to providing graduates with the range and depth of expertise to be leaders in data driven industries. Students who successfully complete the program will demonstrate high levels of mathematical, analytical, technical, and professional skills and knowledge. Upon the completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Analyze large, complex data sets as would be encountered in the context of real-world business problems.
- Apply and fine-tune computing resources for data analysis, including programming and industry-standard tool use.
- Develop and implement data analysis strategies based on theoretical principles, ethical considerations, and detailed knowledge of the underlying data.
- Generate actionable intelligence for decision-making.
- Clearly and professionally communicates nuanced analysis results to a diverse, varying-technical audience.