Title: 1 in 68: Autism Spectrum Disorders

1 Unit

Facilitator:

Jordan Engel, Danielle Gonzalez, and Ali Setayesh

Course Description:

Since the rate of children born with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has reached 1 in 68 according to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this course aims to develop students’ understanding of what Autism means. The class will explore a range of topics that will be enhanced in a mid-term paper as well as a final group project. We will meet once a week for roughly 1.5 hours to openly discuss ASD and listen to presentations from our peers. In order to receive a passing grade you may only miss 2 classes.

This new high in U.S. Autism rates has inspired disability rights movements and spurred numerous scientific research projects. Biology, so far, does not hold the answers: there is no blood test or brain scan to diagnose autism. The condition has a large genetic component, and has been linked to new mutations that distinguish affected individuals even from their parents. But thousands of different combinations of gene variants could contribute to the atypical brain development believed to be at the root of the condition, and the process of cataloging them and understanding their function has just begun.

In this DeCal, not only will you learn about possible neurobiological roots of ASD, you will also discover its research beginnings, possible intervention therapies, family dynamics, media portrayals, child and adult life, stigma, public outreach, and public awareness.

The primary goal of this coarse is to stimulate and encourage a deeper understanding about individuals who meet the DSM-5 criteria for ASD and their families.

Schedule: TBD