



COURSE TITLE: COMD 5357 AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

Term: *Summer 2026*

Course Dates: June 1, 2026 – July 4, 2026

Professor: Amy Louise Schwarz, PhD, CCC-SLP

Course Times: 8 am to 10 am M T W TH

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Classroom: HSC H Building: H104

Email: AmyLouise.Schwarz@uttyler.edu

Office Hours:

Graduate Students: M, W, F: 10 am to 11 am & by appointment

Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to review methods of non-oral communication as applied to hospital, rehabilitation, and school settings. Use of electronic communication systems emphasized. This course is taught through a multicultural perspective and multicultural case studies and readings. A client centered approach for both children and adults will be applied across settings, disorders, and severities. This course is required for the master's degree and for certification by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. The information and theoretical foundations in this course serve as an introduction to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and is paired with explaining the responsibility speech-language pathologists' encounter in the profession.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will demonstrate the ability to:

1. analyze, synthesize and evaluate knowledge re: communication modalities, including the etiologies, characteristics, and anatomical physiological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, linguistic, and cultural correlates (Standard IV-C).
2. analyze, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge re: the principles and methods of assessment and intervention regarding communication modalities (ASHA Standard IV-D).
3. use oral and written or other forms of communication sufficiently for entry into professional practice (ASHA Standard V-A).
4. interpret, integrate, and synthesize all information to develop diagnoses and make appropriate recommendations for intervention in the area of communication modalities (ASHA Standard V-B 1e).
5. (a) develop setting-appropriate intervention plans with measurable and achievable goals that meet clients'/patients' needs and (b) collaborate with clients/patients and relevant others in the planning process in the area of communication modalities (ASHA Standard V-B 2a).
6. select or develop and use appropriate materials and instrumentation for prevention and intervention in the area of communication modalities (ASHA Standard V-B 2c).
7. measure and evaluate clients'/patients' performance and progress in the area of communication modalities (ASHA Standard V-B 2d).

Assessment of Student Learning

These competencies will be measured through quizzes and case study projects (video demonstrations, language sampling, evaluation decisions, and intervention care plans), and a comprehensive final exam. Student learning is assessed on an individual basis. Students receive two competency scores. One score is the traditional course grade that will be used by UT Tyler to calculate a cumulative GPA. Students can locate their course grade by viewing their grades in Canvas in the (default) Gradebook view. To stay in good standing with the UT Tyler Graduate College students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above. Visit this link for more information about this UT Tyler Graduate School requirement: [University of Texas at Tyler - Probation/Suspension for Master's Degree Students](#)[Links to an external site.](#).

The other score is based on a 5-point scale and is similar to the scale ASHA suggests for evaluating graduate students during clinical supervision. Students can locate this score by viewing their grades in Canvas and selecting the Learning Mastery view. For ***each*** previously stated ASHA standard, a minimum score of 3 out of 5 averaged across applicable quiz questions and assignments assumes minimum competency and partial fulfillment of ASHA standards for this course. This course is structured to interweave diagnostic and treatment content and KASA standards. For this reason, I have used the weighted decaying average feature in CANVAS outcomes with the most recent result counting as 65% of mastery weight and with all other results averaged and counting as 35% of weight. A decaying average gives more weight to the most recent attempt, which helps reflect a student's current skill level. It's especially useful for courses where students are expected to improve over time. At the end of the course, I have to indicate in Calipso whether each student has met each ASHA standard associated with this course. I will use the data from the Learning Mastery view in Canvas for this purpose. It is possible for a student to receive an A or B in the course and not meet minimum competency for a particular ASHA standard. For this reason, each student needs regularly to check the Learning Mastery view in Canvas Grades to determine whether they are meeting minimum competency for the ASHA standards associated with this course.

Required Materials

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TECHNOLOGY: To participate in this course, students must have access to a laptop, tablet, or smart phone that can access Canvas and various internet sites during class. Students can share if necessary. If students need help with Canvas, please contact [UT Tyler Technology Support](#)[Links to an external site.](#).

REQUIRED READINGS

Beukelman, D. R. & Light, J. C. (2020). *Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Supporting Children and Adults with Complex Communication Needs*, Fifth Edition. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co. Baltimore, Maryland.

Chakraborty, R. (2017, May). *Language manuals for culturally, linguistically diverse communities*.

Retrieved from <http://languagemanuals.weebly.com/>

REQUIRED VIEWINGS

Amy Donaldson, endever* corbin, & Jamie McCoy: *Speaking Autistic Adults Who Use AAC*. (2021, June 23).

Www.youtube.com. Retrieved May 4, 2026, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoaTa-jYfQI>

International Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC). (2016, August 16). *The 2016 ISAAC Film Festival*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll8VvnJ6ypY>

PBS NewsHour (2017, March 15). Typing sentences with thinking is possible with new technology. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/typing-sentences-simply-thinking-possible-new-technology>

I reserve the right to add additional required readings and viewings to the syllabus.

Instructional Methodology

Information for this course is primarily conveyed in-person classes, lectures, required readings, and demonstrations. Students receive guided and independent practice applying the concepts through in-class activities, when students solve clinical issues on written exams, which often include questions about case studies.

Technology is integrated into the instructional pedagogy through the use of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Practice Portal (a repository of clinical research articles), the ASHAWire (a repository of peer-reviewed journal articles published by ASHA), the Canvas learning management system, Studio, Zoom, PowerPoint slides, the use of online small group work, SharePoint, and CoPilot.

Course Requirements

EMAIL COMMUNICATION: I prefer face-to-face communication to email communication. If you email me by 4:00 pm during the work week (Monday through Friday), I will respond the same day. If you email me after 4:00 pm during the work week, I will respond the following work weekday. ***I will not respond to emails on the weekend.***

OFFICE HOURS: See the Contact section at the top of this syllabus for days of the week and times. I meet with students in D.251.2 for office hours. I conduct office hours on a first come first serve basis individually and in groups depending upon how many students attend office hours on a given day and what their questions are. If you need to meet with me individually, please email me before office hours, so I can make time. Please come with questions.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: **I will take attendance every class period.** Class attendance is expected, as important material and learning activities will occur during class time. It is the responsibility of the student to get missed material from a fellow student should an absence occur. I will determine whether to round up borderline final course grades based on student attendance. If you are struggling with the material or feel discouraged in any way for any reason, please visit me during office hours. I am here to help you access the course material. I want every student to be successful.

STRUCTURE OF CLASSROOM TIME: During some class periods, I will lecture. During other class periods, students will be assigned to pairs or small groups. Together, each pair/group will work through hands-on activities designed to promote learning in such areas as solving clinical problems related to augmentative communication (AAC), creating AAC overlays, data collection, searching and consolidating the evidence-base for specific clinical questions, and basic introduction to clinical report writing.

CANVAS MODULES & QUIZZES: This course includes several assignments and quizzes that cover information on course readings and other course material. The quizzes may include video submissions, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false questions that will assess higher order engagement with AAC principles. If you are struggling with the course material and are tempted to cheat, please visit me during office hours, so I can help you access the course material.

LINGRAPHICA STUDENT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: Students will complete a self-study module certifying their competency in using Lingraphica, which is an aided augmentative and alternative device that is commonly used with adults who have aphasia. The certification takes approximately 4-5 hours across the span of 4 weeks to complete. Each student must enroll in the program – <https://lingraphica.com/graduate-student-lcp-enrollment->

form/. Without enrollment Lingraphica cannot provide a completion certificate. The Lingraphica Student Certification Program includes four components. See Modules for details.

AIDED AAC PAIR PROJECTS: This is a partner assignment. Students must sign up for a project by 5 pm **on the third class period** through the People Tab on the Canvas site for this class. Each case study includes a client with a disorder who is from a culturally and linguistic diverse background. Students will incorporate knowledge of scientific, cultural, and linguistic information into a PowerPoint presentation that focus on the different cultural issues that could arise when assessing and selecting the type of AAC for their client. Note that this project requires an iterative process, not a linear process. This means that each pair should be prepared to revise its thinking several times when finding an appropriate research article, finding an appropriate video, and applying course content. Designing the overlays is one of the **last tasks** the group should complete. **Each pair needs to secure Dr. Schwarz's approval of the research article and video discussed in the presentation. To prevent Dr. Schwarz from becoming a de facto pair member, each pair is restricted to no more than two office hour appointments with Dr. Schwarz.** Therefore, partners must communicate with each other before any pair member makes an appointment with Dr. Schwarz to discuss the project. **No exceptions will be made to the two meeting rule.** Please see the Assignment Tab in our Canvas site for a description of the project. **A grading rubric will not be provided.**

PRAXIS FINAL EXAM: Each student will take a "practice PRAXIS exam" during the final exam period.

CALIPSO: Each student is required to maintain an electronic portfolio of all the work completed in this class. The items to be included in the portfolio are shown below. Students will only receive full credit for this gradebook entry (a) if all the items are uploaded by the deadline AND (b) all the items are labeled correctly by the deadline.

How to Label the Documents You Upload to Calipso

Document	Example
Syllabus	SmithJ_Syllabus
Lingraphica Student Certificate	SmithJ_Lingraphica
Multilingual Aided AAC Pair Project 1	SmithJ_Multilingual AAC Project 1
Multilingual Aided AAC Pair Project 2	SmithJ_ Multilingual AAC Project 2

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS

Summary of assignments and percentages associated with each assignment

Assignments	Percentages
Lingraphica Student Certification Program	10%
Quizzes	35%
2 Multilingual Aided AAC Pair Projects	44%
Practice PRAXIS Exam	10%
Portfolio uploaded to Calipso by deadline	1%

Total	100%
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GRADE APPEALS: **Within 7 days** after I release a grade that a student wishes to appeal, the student must make a **written (typed) appeal** that includes a well-reasoned argument as to why the grade should be changed with concrete citations from the text and/or supporting course material. If a student is appealing the grade given on the multiple choice portion of the exam, the student must include in the grade appeal reasons from the course material that confirm and/or refute each answer choice. If this information is not included in the grade appeal of multiple choice questions, I will not accept the grade appeal. **I will not consider written grade appeals received after the 7-day period. I will not consider grade appeals made in-person.** If a student appeals a grade on an exam or an assignment that I have curved, students will automatically lose the points from the curve that were added to their grade in favor of the points in their written appeal. Therefore, it only makes sense for a student to appeal a curved grade, if the student's written appeal exceeds the number of points added by the curve.

TIMELINESS: Students are required to take quizzes and submit assignments as scheduled. If a student thinks they might miss an assignment or a quiz date because they are ill or caring for someone who is ill, please email me **before** the due date of the quiz or assignment. If the absence is due to a University sanctioned class field trip/athletic event and/or religious holiday, please let me know in email by Friday, June 4th at 5:00 pm. What is most important is that we regularly communicate. I want everyone to be successful.

STUDENT PREGNANCY AND PARENTING NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY: The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning environment that is free from discrimination of pregnant or parenting students, in accordance with the [Texas Education Code, Title 3, Section 51.982: Protections for Pregnant and Parenting Students](#)Links to an external site. and other applicable laws. This policy entitles pregnant and parenting students to academic accommodations, including flexible attendance and extended dates for assignments. If you are a pregnant or parenting student, please complete the [Self-Reporting Form](#)Links to an external site. and the UT Tyler Parent and Family Programs will contact the professors to provide the necessary accommodations. Detailed information about this policy are available at:<https://uttyler.smartcatalogiq.com/uttyler/ut-tyler-hop/series-500-student-success/5-14-3-student-pregnancy-and-parenting-nondiscrimination/>Links to an external site.

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form](#)Links to an external site..

MILITARY AFFILIATED STUDENTS: UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The [Military and Veterans Success Center \(MVSC\)](#)Links to an external site. has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

DISABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES: In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler>Links to an external site. and fill out the New Student application.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR QUALIFIED STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Please contact me as soon as possible if you are

a student with a disability who will require an accommodation(s) to participate in this course. You will be asked to provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Office (SAR). Failure to contact me and provide the necessary documentation in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. All students with SAR accommodations must make arrangements to take the final exam at the testing center.

NO RECORDING OF CLASS LECTURES &/OR ACTIVITIES: Students do not have my permission to audio or video record class lectures and/or activities.

LIMITED USAGE OF COPILOT & OTHER ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE LANGUAGE MODELS: Artificial intelligence (AI) language models, such as CoPilot, may be used for idea generation for the treatment ideas only. Click here [Artificial Intelligence Links to an external site.](#) for UT Tyler's AI resources. If you are in doubt as to whether you are using AI language models appropriately in this course, I encourage you to discuss your situation with me. Examples of citing AI language models are available at https://subjectguides.uwaterloo.ca/chatgpt_generative_ai/aigeneratedcontentcitationLinks to an external site. You are responsible for fact checking statements composed by AI language models.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY: UT Tyler expects students to do their own work on all graded material submitted for all program course requirements. ***Students guilty of knowingly using, or attempting to use, another person's work as though the work were their own, and students guilty of knowingly permitting, or attempting to permit, another student to use their work, will receive at minimum a zero on the assignment and at maximum a grade of 'F' for the course.*** Such conduct may also constitute grounds for dismissal from the University. Specific expectations for academic integrity and sanctions for academic dishonesty are outlined on the following website: [Chapter 8 of the UT Tyler Manual of Policies and Procedures for Student Affairs Links to an external site.](#)

GRADES: I will only post each student's course grades in CANVAS to protect confidentiality. Final course grades will be determined according to the following scale based on the total number of points earned:

A = 90 to 100%

B = 80 to 89%

C = 70 to 79%

D = 60 to 69%

F = 0 to 59%

I will determine whether to round up borderline final course grades based on student attendance.

CLASS POLICIES:

1. **Attendance: I will take attendance every class period.**
2. **Tardiness: Each class will start on time and end on time. Please arrive a few minutes before class so that I can begin on time. *If you are late, be prepared to tell a short child-friendly joke when you arrive.***
3. **Electronic Devices: Please silence your mobile phones and other signaling devices when you enter the room.**
4. Please do not engage in conversation during the lecture. Doing so is distracting to the speaker and inconsiderate of others.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: In the event of an emergency or natural disaster the campus community will be notified immediately through several means of communication. This includes Campus Alert E-mail, the University's website, campus and local media, text-messaging, Fire Alarm Systems, Indoor Warning System and Outdoor

Warning System. [University of Texas at Tyler - Emergency Response, Fire Safety, False Alarm or Report, and Security](#)Links to an external site.

Other General Information

TBD

Tentative Course Schedule

I reserve the right to modify the syllabus. All major modifications will be reviewed with students.

Week	Date	Topics & Readings Due Before Class	Due @ 11:59 pm
Week 1	6/1 6/2 6/3 6/4	<p><u>Readings:</u> Chapters 1-3</p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Chapters 1-3</p> <p><u>In Class Activities:</u> Review syllabus & pair projects & Lingraphica Certification Discuss the 2016 ISAAC Film Festival Case Study 1 Jeopardy</p>	<p>Tuesday 6/2: Syllabus Quiz 6/2: Lingraphica</p> <p>Friday 6/4: Quiz</p>
Week 2	6/8 6/9 6/10 6/11	<p><u>Readings:</u> Chapter 5 & 6</p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Chapters 5 & 6</p> <p><u>In Class Activities:</u> Discuss Multilingual Aided AAC Pair Project Presentations</p> <p>Goal Writing, Data Collection & Graphing Case Study 2 Case Study 3 Jeopardy</p>	<p>Tuesday 6/9: Lingraphica</p> <p>Friday 6/11: Quiz</p>
Week 3	6/15 6/16 6/17 6/18	<p><u>Readings:</u> Chapter 7</p> <p><u>Lecture:</u> Chapters 7</p> <p><u>In Class Activities:</u> Case Study 4 Multilingual Aided AAC Pair Project In Class Work Time</p>	<p>Tuesday 6/16: Lingraphica</p> <p>Friday 6/19: Quiz</p>

Week 4	6/22 6/23 6/24 6/25	<u>Readings:</u> TBD based on Pair Project 1 Article Selections <u>In Class Activities:</u> Case Study 5 Multilingual Aided AAC Pair Project In Class Work Time Multilingual Aided AAC Pair Project 1 Presentations	Tuesday 6/23: Lingraphica Friday 6/25: Quiz
Week 5	6/29 6/30 7/1	<u>Readings:</u> TBD based on Pair Project 1 Article Selections <u>In Class Activities:</u> Multilingual Aided AAC Pair Project In Class Work Time Multilingual Aided AAC Pair Project 2 Presentations Due: Lingraphica Student Certificate Due: Upload required documents to Calipso	<u>WEDNESDAY</u> 7/1: Upload documents to Calipso
Final	7/2	In-person PRAXIS Style Final Exam 8 am to 10 am	