



California State University, Sacramento
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.)
SYLLABUS & COURSE OUTLINE

Semester/Year: Spring/2026	Course: CSAD 680: Clinical Methods: Differential Diagnosis	Section: 01
Meeting Days: Thursdays	Meeting Times: 8:00- 8:50 am	Location: Folsom 2204/ Online
Instructor: Soumya Venkitakrishnan, Au.D., Ph.D.	Email: s.venkitakrishnan@csus.edu	Phone: 916-278-4899
Office Location: 2404G, Folsom Hall	Office Hours/Appointments: Mondays, Tuesdays (zoom), Wednesdays, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm, Make appointment	

Catalogue Course Description:

CSAD 680 Clinical Methods: Differential Diagnosis.

1 Unit

Prerequisite(s): Admission to Doctor of Audiology
program; [CSAD 610](#), [CSAD 620](#), [CSAD 630](#), [CSAD 640](#), [CSAD 650](#), [CSAD 660](#), [CSAD 670](#)

Corequisite(s): [CSAD 680C](#)

Discussion of clinical cases to encourage critical thinking and decision-making processes.

Sacramento State Graduate Learning Goals (GLG)

Sacramento State Graduate Learning Goals (GLG)	Addressed by this course (Y/N)
Disciplinary knowledge: <i>Master, integrate, and apply disciplinary knowledge and skills to current, practical, and important contexts and situations.</i>	Y
Communication: <i>Communicate key knowledge with clarity and purpose both within the discipline and in broader contexts.</i>	Y
Critical thinking/analysis: <i>Demonstrate the ability to be creative, analytical, and critical thinkers.</i>	Y
Information literacy: <i>Demonstrate the ability to obtain, assess, and analyze information from a myriad of sources.</i>	Y
Professionalism: <i>Demonstrate an understanding of professional integrity.</i>	Y
Intercultural/Global Perspectives: <i>Demonstrate relevant knowledge and application of intercultural and/or global perspectives.</i>	Y
Research: <i>Conduct independent research resulting in an original contribution to knowledge in the focused areas of their graduate program</i>	Y

Expected Learning Outcomes (ELO)

Mastery of each student-learning outcome listed below is indicated by a grade of B or better on each component of the corresponding measures listed in the table. Students are required to track their progress towards meeting each learning outcome and must make an appointment with the instructor for any grade equal to or less than a B. The instructor will suggest strategies to help you establish competence and knowledge in these areas.

Students should track their progress towards meeting each learning outcome by listing their grades on the table below over the course of the semester.

CSAD 680 SPECIFIC STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss clinical cases from the semester
2. Evaluate clinical cases for differential diagnosis, intervention and/or treatment plans, and other clinical questions.

Table 2: Course Learning Outcomes, Components, and Grades Received

Course Learning Outcome	Components Indicating Competence	Grades Received
1-2	Class discussion/ questions	
1-2	Student presentation	
1-2	AI hallucinations assignment	

Textbooks, Materials, and Online Resources:

1. Valente, M., Valente, L. M. (2020). Adult Audiology Casebook. Germany: Thieme.
2. Handbook of Clinical Audiology. (2015). United Kingdom: Wolters Kluwer Health.

Online Resources: Canvas site

Access to the CSUS Library is a requirement of this course. Please become familiar with library access and login information as quickly as possible. This will make your life much easier. Link the CSUS Library to any scholarly search engine you use as this will give you access to required readings of journal articles. Do not pay for any articles. As a CSUS student you should have free access to the library and its resources. The Department has access to the Health Sciences Librarian Rachel Stark. She is available to you for assistance and questions on how to utilize the library effectively. <https://library.csus.edu/directory/rachel-stark>

Access to CANVAS is a requirement of this course. Campus computers are available for student use in many locations. Laptops are available to loan out as needed. Please get in touch with the Department for further information. This course is posted on CANVAS. All lecture material and required readings not in the textbook will be available only on CANVAS. I do not recommend printing the lectures until the day before class, as the content could change. Please forward interesting links to me as I will post them for the benefit of the entire class. Required readings will be posted in WORD or PDF format on CANVAS. All submissions must be in WORD or PDF format.

Course Requirements/Components:

Course Format

Seminar

Class Preparation:

All required readings are for the date listed in the course schedule, not the following class period. Students are responsible for all assigned readings, whether discussed in class or not.

Class Participation:

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and are required to have read the assigned material prior to class meetings.

Class Attendance:

Classroom attendance is necessary for this course. Students are expected to arrive on time. Students must email the instructor if they are not able to attend the class and are responsible for learning the material that was covered during their absence. **More than two absences will cause the initiation of an academic performance improvement plan (APIP).**

Student travel policy: https://www.csus.edu/college/health-human-services/communication-sciences-disorders/_internal/_documents/policy/csad-student-travel-policy.pdf

If you are sick, stay home and do not attend class. Notify your instructor. Please self-diagnose if you are experiencing any COVID- like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, loss of smell or taste, nausea, diarrhea, or headache) or have had exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID contact Student Health & Counseling Services (SHCS) at 916-278-6461 to receive guidance and/or medical care. The CDC provides a good source of information regarding COVID-19 and a way to self-check

symptoms: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Students must adhere to COVID-19 policies regarding mask wearing and vaccinations as described on the CSUS website. Please see <https://www.csus.edu/compliance/risk-management/coronavirus.html> and <https://www.csus.edu/return-to-campus/return-to-campus-faq.html> for more information and updates.

Class Assignments

Course grades will be based on the different assignments:

IPE Community Event & Reflection Assignment: Students will participate in a required Interprofessional Education (IPE) initiative collaborating with Physical Therapy students to provide balance assessments, hearing screenings, and fall prevention education to older adults at the Asian Community Center Senior Services. This assignment includes attending one IPE workshop with PT students, participating in one community engagement event where you will conduct hearing and balance screenings while working in interprofessional teams, and submitting a reflective paper addressing your interprofessional collaboration experience, clinical application of course concepts, and professional growth. Pre- and post-event surveys will assess learning outcomes. This experiential learning opportunity provides hands-on experience in community audiology practice, culturally responsive care, and interprofessional teamwork while serving an underserved population.

AI Hallucination Detection: Fix the AI Differential: Students will review a short clinical audiology case paired with an AI-generated differential diagnosis response. Students will identify inaccurate, unsupported, or misleading elements in the AI output, correct the differential diagnosis using course concepts, and briefly explain why the AI errors could matter for clinical decision-making and patient safety.

Reflection-on-Action Assignments: Require students to complete the designated reflection-on-action form and upload it to Calipso, as well as submit the assignment to Canvas. This assignment will be completed once at midterm and once during the final week of classes.

Final Case Presentation: Human vs Algorithm Integration: Students will identify or formulate a clinical audiology case and retrieve the relevant case history and clinical findings, ensuring that all patient information is fully de-identified prior to inclusion. Students will create and deliver an engaging case presentation that includes patient demographics, case history, test findings, differential diagnosis, and clinical recommendations. As part of the presentation, students will submit the case to a generative AI tool and briefly compare the AI-generated diagnosis to their own clinical reasoning, addressing whether the AI correctly identified the disorder and discussing the limitations of AI in complex diagnostic scenarios. Presentations should actively involve the class through questioning and discussion.

Attendance and professionalism: Classroom participation includes asking/ answering questions and engaging in discussions throughout the semester. Professionalism will include timely arrival in class, timely and professional response to emails (within 48 hours), engaging in the class, timely submission of assignments, no mobile phone use in the class except for emergencies, use of professional language in class, and with classmates, not interrupting other students/ faculty, and utilizing appropriate turn-taking skills, etc.

Wellness activities: Students may complete up to three optional wellness activities designed to support professional well-being and sustainability during the transition to externship. Activities include brief reflective check-ins, a letter to one's future extern self, and a short boundary-setting plan focused on maintaining balance and professionalism in clinical settings. All submissions are private and not shared with classmates.

For more information on the assignments and rubrics, please refer to Canvas.

Commitment to Integrity

As a student in this course (and at this university), you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class, and integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

Late work/ regrading:

All assignments must be submitted by the scheduled deadline. In the case that life events or other reasons prevent the student from submitting the assignment on time, contact the instructor to request for an extension. This request should be made one week in advance, or as early as possible. This extension will not be provided more than twice during the semester and will not be provided for the final assignment. Late submission will result in reduction in **10% points per day** of delay in submission. Grades will not be changed to elevate a grade level (e.g., B to B+), and no emails will be entertained.

Grading Policy:

Table 3: Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Source	% of Grade
IPE Community Event + Reflection	25%
AI Hallucination Detection: Fix the AI Differential	25%
Reflection on action assignment	10%
Final Case Presentation: Human vs Algorithm Integration	35%
Attendance and Professionalism	5%
Wellness activity (Extra credit)	5%
Total	100%

CSUS Grading Policy

The CSUS Grading Policy (Policy# 11476953) can be found at:

<https://sacramentostate.policystat.com/policy/11476953/latest>

Letter grades are assigned according to the following scores

Letter	%
A	93-100%
A-	90-92.99%
B+	87-89.99%
B	83-86.99%
B-	80-82.99%
C+	77-79.99%
C	73-76.99%
C-	70-72.99%
D+	67-69.99%
D	63-66.99%
D-	60-62.99%
F	< 60%

Course Policies/Procedures:

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to arrive in class on time, prepared to participate and engage in classroom activities for both in-person and synchronous/virtual interactions. Students are responsible for class content, lecture materials, assignments, announcements, and must be aware of changes in the class schedule. Students are advised that instructional faculty may include an attendance policy in courses, which may require attendance as part of the student's course grade. These policies will be set in the syllabus.

Given the full-time, intensive nature this doctoral program, it is important that students contact instructors if they are absent or are anticipating absence, especially over an extended period of time. In the case of the latter, the Au.D. Program Director must also be notified. Attendance for clinical practica is outlined in the clinic handbook.

Email

Students in the Au.D. program are required to maintain an active CSUS email address, which is linked to the student ID number. Official emails will be sent through CSUS email. Students are expected to regularly check their CSUS emails.

TENTATIVE Course Schedule/Outline:

Date	Topic/Class Content	Reading	Assignment
01/29	Course overview/ Expectations		
02/05	Case discussions: Ménière's Disease vs Vestibular Migraine: Diagnostic Gray Zones	Valente (2020): Meniere's Disease and aided distortion Vestibular Function Testing Aids in Differentiating Ménière's Disease from Vestibular Migraine, Study Finds: https://hearinghealthmatters.org/hearing-news-watch/2025/menieres-migraine-difference/	Class participation
02/12	Case discussions: Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss: Time-Sensitive Clinical Decision Making	Plain Language Summary: Sudden Hearing Loss Valente (2020): An unexpected cause of sudden hearing loss	Class participation
02/19	AI- assignment discussion: Where Algorithms Fail (In-class walkthrough of AI assignments using ambiguous cases)		Class participation
02/24	No class- attend IPE Session from 3:30-4:30 pm	In-person Location: Folsom Hall (Room number TBD)	Complete Pre-event surveys
02/26	No class- IPE Education Session attendance (See above)		
03/05	Case discussions: Asymmetric Hearing Loss: How Much Asymmetry Is Enough?	Valente (2020): Asymmetric hearing loss evaluation and management.	Class participation
03/12	Case discussions: Functional and Psychogenic Hearing Disorders: Clinical Judgment and Language	Valente (2020): Audiologic management of a patient with psychogenic hearing loss The Terminology of False and Exaggerated Hearing Loss Case Report of Non-Organic Hearing Loss: Literature Review Psychogenic hearing loss in children and adolescents. Diagnosis and psychotherapy	Class participation Submit: AI Hallucination Detection: Fix the AI Differential
03/19	Case discussions: Hidden Hearing Loss, APD, mTBI, and PTSD: When Audiograms Are Normal	Valente (2020): Hidden hearing loss A Systematic Review: State of the Science on Diagnostics of Hidden Hearing Loss	Mid-term reflection on action assignment due
03/26	<i>Spring Recess</i>	<i>Holiday, Campus Closed</i>	
04/02	Event Attendance (See below)		
04/03	Attend event on April 3rd: 1 pm- 4 pm	ACC Senior Services- 7334 Park City Dr, Sacramento, CA 95831	Complete post-event surveys
04/09	Praxis questions preparation		
04/16	Final Student presentation discussion/ preparation		Final Student presentations due
04/23	AAA Conference: Final Student	Student 1, Student 2	

	presentation		
04/30	Final Student presentation	Student 3, Student 4	
05/07	Final Student presentation	Student 5, Student 6	
05/14	AI- Assignments/ events de-brief		Final Reflection on action assignment due

** Course schedule is subject to change as required to accommodate student learning or guest lecture/ material availability.

Hornet Honor Code

<https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/internal/documents/hornet-honor-code.pdf>

As proud members and representatives of the Sacramento State Hornet community, we commit ourselves to actively promoting honesty, integrity, respect, and care for every person, ensuring a welcoming campus environment, and striving to help every member of our Hornet family feel a strong sense of belonging.

As Hornets, we will:

- Promote an inclusive campus and community
- Listen and respect each other's thoughts, interests, and views Value diversity and learn from one another
- Engage daily with mutual trust, care, and integrity
- Support a culture of honor and adhere to campus policies for honesty, ethics, and conduct
- Be proud to be Sac State Hornets.

Academic conduct

Students enrolled in the Au.D. program must adhere to the Department and University policies on academic misconduct. Please see the department's policy on academic misconduct ("Policy on Student Academic and Clinical Conduct"). The following are expectations for professional behavior in the classroom:

- Ethics: Students must uphold the ethical standards set forth by professional bodies in the field (see Appendices C and D).
- Respect: Students should demonstrate respect to their peers, instructors, and staff.
- Feedback: Students are expected to self-reflect and modify their work in response to feedback, while displaying non-defensive behavior to suggestions.
- Health: Students should maintain their personal wellness and health, attending to any needs in a timely fashion in order to support their academic and professional growth.
- Attire: Students should dress appropriately for class. Classes may be held in clinic space, so students are expected to observe the clinic dress code.
- Accountability: Students are expected to be accountable, honest, and professional for their activities and communications. The general principles of ethical behavior should be applied to their coursework, evaluations, and examinations.
- Language: Students should demonstrate professional oral and written communication, including emails. Discretion and professional language should be used in all modalities, emphasizing constructive rather than reactive use.
- Scholarship: Students should take an active role in their learning, recognizing their deficiencies and seeking to correct them, as part of their commitment to lifelong learning.
- Effort: Students should collaborate and work to complete tasks and assignments on time or by the set deadline. Students are expected to follow through on all activities while maintaining professionalism and intellectual curiosity.

Commitment to Integrity

As a student in this course (and at this university) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class and also integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

Sac State's Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures

"The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades." Read more about Sac State's Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures at the following website:

<https://sacramentostatetext.com/policy/11300038/latest>

Definitions: At Sac State, "cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means." **Plagiarism** is a form of cheating. At Sac State, "plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution." Source: Sacramento State University Library Note: Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may be reported to the office of student affairs.

Department Policy on Use of APA format

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders requires the use of the APA format and style. All students are required to reference the APA manual (7th edition.) All assignments are to be composed using APA format and style unless otherwise noted.

Understand When You May Drop This Course

It is the student's responsibility to understand when he/she need to consider disenrolling from a course. Refer to the Sac State Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and compelling reason is required to drop from the course. Serious and compelling reasons include: (a) documented and significant change in work hours, leaving student unable to attend class, or (b) documented and severe physical/mental illness/injury to the student or student's family. Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. An incomplete will only be assigned if there is a compelling extenuating circumstance. All incomplete course assignments must be completed by the department's policy.

Equal Access

California State University-Sacramento, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you have a documented disability and verification from the Disability Access Center (DAC), and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of disability to DAC and meet with a DAC counselor to request special accommodation before classes start. **Sacramento State Disability Access Center (DAC)** offers a wide range of support services and accommodations for students in order to ensure students with disabilities have equal access and opportunity to pursue their educational goals. Working collaboratively with students, faculty, staff and administrators, DAC provides consultation and serves as the information resource on disability related issues to the campus community. DAC is located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) or (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at dac@csus.edu Additional information can be found on the DAC website:

<https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/disability-access-center/>

Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES) Support

If you are experiencing challenges in the area of food and/or stable housing, help is just a click, email or phone call away! Sacramento State offers basic needs support for students who are experiencing challenges in these areas. Please visit our Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES) website to learn more about your options and resources available. <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/crisis-assistance-resource-education-support/>

Title IX

The University requires faculty and staff to report any personal disclosures of sexual misconduct including rape, dating/domestic violence and stalking to the Title IX Coordinator. Students who do not wish to report their experience to me or the Title IX Coordinator may speak to someone confidentially by contacting Student Health and Counseling Services.

Sac State is committed to supporting students and fostering a campus environment free of sexual misconduct and gender-based discrimination. If a student chooses to disclose to a faculty or staff member an experience related to sexual misconduct which includes rape, relationship violence, or stalking, all faculty and staff are obligated to report this disclosure to the university's Title IX Coordinator. Sac State's Title IX Coordinator is Mary Lee Vance. Please email equalopportunity@csus.edu or (916) 278-5770. Upon receipt of the report, the Title IX Coordinator will contact you to inform you of your rights and options as a survivor and connect you with support resources, including resolution options for holding accountable the person who harmed you. Students who elect not to discuss their experience with the Title IX Coordinator can speak confidentially to the following confidential resources:

Student Health & Counseling Services at The WELL On Campus

Phone Number: 916-278-6461

Website: <https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling/counseling/>

Campus Confidential Advocate Email: weave@csus.edu

On Campus Phone Number: 916-278-5850 (during business hours)

WEAVE 24/7 Hotline: 916-920-2952

Other Resources

The Office of Student Affairs maintains a list of campus resources/centers: <https://www.csus.edu/center/>

Testing Center: <https://www.csus.edu/testing/>

Library: <https://library.csus.edu/>

Student Health and Counseling Services at The WELL: <https://www.csus.edu/shcs/>

Sacramento State Disability Access Center (DAC): <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/disability-access-center/>

Peer & Academic Resource Center: <https://www.csus.edu/parc/>

Student Academic Success and Education Equity Programs: <https://www.csus.edu/saseep/>

CHHS Student Success Center: <https://www.csus.edu/college/health-human-services/student-success/>

Reading & Writing Center: <https://www.csus.edu/undergraduate-studies/writing-program/reading-writing-center.html>

SMART Thinking (tutoring resource): <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/degrees-project/internal/documents/smarthinking.pdf>

Knowledge And Skills Acquisition (KASA) For Certification in Audiology

ASHA Knowledge And Skills Acquisition (KASA) tracking for courses and clinics in the AuD program can be found online in the student's CALIPSO account.

Scientific and Research Foundations

- Basic science skills (e.g., scientific methods, critical thinking)
- The basics of communication sciences (e.g., acoustics, psychoacoustics and neurological processes of speech, language, and hearing)

Standard II-A: Foundations of Practice

- A1. Genetics, embryology and development of the auditory and vestibular systems, anatomy and physiology, neuroanatomy and neurophysiology, and pathophysiology of hearing and balance over the life span
- A2. Effects of pathogens, and pharmacologic and teratogenic agents, on the auditory and vestibular systems
- A4. Principles, methods, and applications of acoustics, psychoacoustics, and speech perception, with a focus on how each is impacted by hearing impairment throughout the life span
- A7. Applications and limitations of specific audiologic assessments and interventions in the context of overall client/patient management
- A10. Effects of hearing impairment on educational, vocational, social, and psychological function throughout the life span
- A13. Principles of research and the application of evidence-based practice (i.e., scientific evidence, clinical expertise, and client/patient perspectives) for accurate and effective clinical decision making
- A14. Assessment of diagnostic efficiency and treatment efficacy through the use of quantitative data (e.g., number of tests, standardized test results) and qualitative data (e.g., standardized outcome measures, client/patient-reported measures)

Standard II-C: Audiologic Evaluation

- C1. Gathering, reviewing, and evaluating information from referral sources to facilitate assessment, planning, and identification of potential etiologic factors
- C2. Obtaining a case history and client/patient narrative
- C3. Obtaining client/patient-reported and/or caregiver-reported measures to assess function
- C4. Identifying, describing, and differentiating among disorders of the peripheral and central auditory systems and the vestibular system
- C5. Providing assessments of tinnitus severity and its impact on patients' activities of daily living and quality of life
- C6. Providing assessment of tolerance problems to determine the presence of hyperacusis
- C7. Selecting, performing, and interpreting a complete immittance test battery based on patient need and other findings; tests to be considered include single probe tone tympanometry or multifrequency and multicomponent protocols, ipsilateral and contralateral acoustic reflex threshold measurements, acoustic reflex decay measurements, and Eustachian tube function
- C8. Selecting, performing, and interpreting developmentally appropriate behavioral pure-tone air and bone tests, including extended frequency range when indicated
- C9. Selecting, performing, and interpreting developmentally appropriate behavioral speech audiometry procedures to determine speech awareness threshold (SAT), speech recognition threshold (SRT), and word recognition scores (WRSs); obtaining a performance intensity function with standardized speech materials, when indicated
- C10. Evaluating basic audiologic findings and client/patient needs to determine differential diagnosis and additional procedures to be used
- C11. Selecting, performing, and interpreting physiologic and electrophysiologic test procedures, including electrocochleography, auditory brainstem response with frequency-specific air and bone conduction threshold testing, and click stimuli for neural diagnostic purposes
- C12. Selecting, performing, and interpreting otoacoustic emissions testing
- C13. Selecting, performing, and interpreting tests for nonorganic hearing loss
- C14. Selecting, performing, and interpreting vestibular testing, including electronystagmography

(ENG)/videonystagmography (VNG), ocular vestibular-evoked myogenic potential (oVEMP), and cervical vestibular evoked myogenic potential (cVEMP)

- C15. Selecting, performing, and interpreting tests to evaluate central auditory processing disorder
- C16. Electrophysiologic testing, including but not limited to auditory steady-state response, auditory middle latency response, auditory late (long latency) response, and cognitive potentials (e.g., P300 response, mismatch negativity response)
- C17. Posturography
- C18. Rotary chair tests
- C19. Video head impulse testing (vHIT)

Standard II-E: Audiologic Rehabilitation Across the Life Span

- E2. Identifying the need for, and providing for assessment of, concomitant cognitive/developmental concerns, sensory-perceptual and motor skills, and other health/medical conditions, as well as participating in interprofessional collaboration to provide comprehensive management and monitoring of all relevant issues
 - E7. Developing and implementing individualized intervention plans based on clients'/patients' preferences, abilities, communication needs and problems, and related adjustment difficulties
 - E14. Identifying individuals who are candidates for cochlear implantation and other implantable devices
-