

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
EDSE 401/501: Introduction to Special Education
Spring 2004

Instructor: Dr. Carla Manno

Office Phone: 703-993-3173

Office Address: 213A Krug

Office Hours: 4:30-6:30 Thurs., or by appt.

E-mail: cmanno@gmu.edu

Credit Hours: 3.0

Meeting Day/Time: Monday, 4:30-7:10; section 001

*EMAIL: students MUST use their GMU email for all email communications: sign-up for your account and begin using IMMEDIATELY via mail.gmu.edu

Welcome! You've chosen a dynamic and important field of study, and I look forward to working with you this semester and beyond.

Course Description:

This course provides a survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Content includes historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies (including existing and emerging technologies), assessment, and support services for individuals with disabilities ranging from mild, moderate to severe levels of varying disabilities. The course will study the impact of disabilities on academic and social/emotional performances. Field experience is required. Prerequisites: none.

Student Outcomes:

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

- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
- Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education.
- Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of special education.
- Describe social, cognitive, intellectual, and academic factors associated with all disability areas.
- Describe historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education.
- Describe the role of families in the educational process.
- Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including technological advances.

- Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.
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Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:

EDSE 501 is part of the George Mason University Graduate School of Education Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Emotional Disturbance, Learning Disabilities, and Mental Retardation. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization in the United States. As such, the curriculum for this course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities from preschool through grade 12.

The CEC standards are listed on the following web site:

http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/common_core_4-21-01.html

CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include some of the following CEC Core standards:

Standard 1 - Foundations

Knowledge:

- Models, theories, and philosophies that form the basis for special education practice.
- Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management planning and implementation.
- Relationship of special education to the organization and function of educational agencies.
- Rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional learning needs.
- Issues in definition and identification of individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Issues, assurances and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement within a continuum of services.
- Family systems and the role of families in the educational process.
- Historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups.
- Impact of the dominant culture on shaping schools and the individuals who study and work in them.
- Potential impact of differences in values, languages, and customs that can exist between the home and school.

Skill:

- Articulate personal philosophy of education.

Standard 2 – Development and Characteristics of Learners

Knowledge:

- Typical and atypical human growth and development.
- Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities.

- Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the individual with exceptional learning needs and the family.
- Family systems and the role of families in supporting development
- Similarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.
- Effects of various medications on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Standard 3 – Individual Learning Differences

Knowledge:

- Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life.
 - Impact of learners' academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.
 - Variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures and their effects on relationships among individuals with exceptional learning needs, family, and schooling.
 - Cultural perspectives influencing the relationships among families, schools, and communities as related to instruction.
 - Differing ways of learning of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally diverse backgrounds and strategies for addressing these differences.
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Nature of Course Delivery:

Learning activities include the following:

- 1) Class lecture, discussion, and participation.
 - 2) Videotapes and other relevant media presentations.
 - 3) Study and independent search/field visit.
 - 4) Application activities, including in class evaluation of research, theory, case studies, legal precedents, policy, etc.
 - 5) Class presentations of group/individual work, as announced.
 - 6) Written assignments as announced for projects and weekly reviews.
 - 7) Midterm and Final exams assessing understanding, mastery, and individual student interaction with the course material and themes within and related to Special Education.
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Required Text:

Hallahan, D. P., & Kauffman, J. M. (2003). Exceptional learners: Introduction to special education (9th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
(with case study supplement)

Supplemental readings: as assigned throughout the course, some available electronically

**Note: this syllabus may change according to class needs. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you*

have emergency medical information to share with your instructor, please call and/or make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.

Evaluation:

- 1) Class attendance (see policy as described in syllabus)
- 2) Group project
- 3) Midterm Exam
- 4) Final Exam
- 5) In-class chapter-related responses/weekly reviews

**It is recommended that students retain copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE ED/LD program. Products from this class can become part of your individual professional portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards. Midterm and Final Exams will not be given back for use in the portfolio: students are encouraged to complete "personal reflections" reports regarding their mastery using their results and the standards described.*

Grading Criteria:

- 95-100% = A
- 90-94% = A-
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- < 70% = F

Detailed Assignment Descriptions:

Midterm Exam (25pts.): Based on lectures, class discussions, cases, chapters, required readings, films, and topics completed prior to the exam

Final Exam (25pts.): Final examination based primarily on class lectures, class discussions, required readings, etc. since the time of the midterm (with some cumulative as well).

In-class chapter-related responses/ weekly reviews (25pts.): At the beginning of each class session, students will respond to questions related to the chapter reading due that week. Responses will be scored and returned the following week, and can be used for review for the midterm and final exams.

These responses cannot be made-up at a time other than given, so students are encouraged (aside from the attendance policy: see below) to be on time and present for each class session, as well as to be prepared in their reading of the assigned materials for each week (announced case studies and related reading may also be included in the responses).

Group Project (25pts.):

Students will work in pairs (or groups of 3), integrating the information for the chapter assigned for the week they are presenting with the course objectives and themes. The overall pedagogical approach of this assignment includes (a) encouraging student participation—through their individual strengths and experiences—in interacting with the course material and contributing to the community of our learning group; (b) ensuring manageable and meaningful field-based experience related to specific disabilities and broader issues within the schools; (c) encouraging group learning experiences and professional presentations; and (d) scaffolding of chapter and topical-related learning towards the midterm and final: this approach allows for adult-learner interaction with the material while providing a platform for student participation in creating the review materials for the exams as well as influencing the creation therein.

The following are specific guidelines for the project, though students are encouraged to add information and change their approach to the assignment as long as it meets approval of the instructor:

- A) Field-based visits and case-study descriptions for students dealing with issues discussed in the chapter.
- B) Creation of a “study guide” and reproduction of copies of this study guide reviewing the chapter and the topics expanded upon in the group presentation. Instructor will use these as well in adapting exams to some extent as related to group projects and foci.
- C) Class Presentation: should include visual presentation using overhead, video, or computer projection. Students may choose to do a role-play, debate, or other related activity as discussed with the instructor. Feel free to be creative with this.

Student presentations should be between 15 and 20 minutes.

Attendance and Participation:

- 1) Students may miss one class without penalty to their grade (though you will miss the in-class response). **FOR ALL CLASSES MISSED:** you are still responsible to turn in any assignments due that night **ON TIME** and will be responsible for all material in the class. Therefore, **CHOOSE SOMEONE** as a ‘buddy’ (or 2

people?) whom you can depend on to take notes/ pick up materials for you if you are absent/etc. Notify that person that you will miss class in time for them to be of assistance.

- 2) Second class absence=3 pt loss. Same coverage for class work/assignments.
- 3) Third class absence= 3 additional points subtracted.
- 4) After 3rd absence: 5 points deducted for each class missed (as well as the 6 points from missed classes 2 and 3). If you anticipate that you will have difficulty making it to class due to scheduling conflicts, take this course another time. If an emergency occurs for you during this semester, please refer to the official GMU incomplete/withdrawal policies. INCOMPLETES are not given based on inability to complete the work in time or make it to class, except as stated in the GSE policy. Make-ups will not be given for in-class weekly reviews, midterm, or final.

There will be a sign-in sheet at the beginning of class; partial attendance (i.e.: coming 20 minutes late or more, or leaving 20 minutes or more before the class ends) will be noted on the assignment sheet and will apply as ½ class missed for above point deductions.

***Bonus of 2 points added to final grade will be given to those students who have “perfect attendance” (on time for all classes, not absent at all).**

Course Topics:

Date	Book Chapter(s)	Concepts	Assignments Due
January 26		Introductions/ overview	*Put your group's due date for presentation where appropriate
February 2	1	Exceptionality and Special Education; legal aspects, history, prevalence	
February 9	2,3	Current Trends and Issues; legal aspects (cont'd)	
February 16	4	Mental Retardation	
February 23	5,6	Learning Disabilities, ADHD	
March 1	7	Behavior Disorders	
March 8			Spring Break
March 15			Midterm Exam
March 22	8,9	Communication Disorders; Hearing Impairment	
March 29	10	Visual Impairment/ Low Vision	
April 5	11	Low Incidence,	

		Multiple, and Severe Disabilities	
April 12	12	Physical Disabilities	
April 19	13	Gifted Learners	
April 26	14	Parents and Families	
May 3			Final Exam