

**George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Program: Special Education**

EDSE 401/501: 5S1: Introduction to Special Education

Spring 2005

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Office Hours: 30 minutes before each class and by appointment

Class Meeting Time and Place:

Robinson Hall, Room B103

Thursdays January 27 through May 5 (no class on 3/17)

All classes meet 7:20-10:00pm

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 of/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 research in etiological factors associated with all disability areas.
- Describe social, cognitive, intellectual, and academic characteristics 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.

Relationship of Courses to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDSE 501 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the area of special education. The program aligns 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 the course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities from preschool through grade 12.

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 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 special 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.
- Similarities and differences among individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Effects of various medications on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Standard 3 - Individual Learning Differences

Knowledge:

- Effects 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.

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 library research.
4. Application activities, including in-class evaluation of intervention research and materials.
5. Class presentations of case studies.
6. Written case study and observation reports.

Required Text

Hallahan & Kauffman, (2003). Exceptional Learners: Introduction to Special Education. Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA.

Recommended Text

American Psychological Association (2001). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

Evaluation

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Class attendance and participation | 10 points |
| 2. Field observation report | 30 points |
| 3. Case study | 30 points |
| 4. Case study presentation | 15 points |
| 5. Child Abuse Quiz | 20 points |
| 6. Choice of Assignments | 20 points |
| 7. Research Paper | 50 points |
| 8. Final Exam | 30 points |
| Total Possible = | 200 points |

Grading criteria

- 188-200 points = A
179-187 points = A-
160-178 points = B
140-159 points = C
< 140 points = F

ASSIGNMENTS

Students are required to read the assigned chapter and any other reading ahead of time in order to participate in class discussions and activities.

All assignments are to be typed, using APA style. For more information on APA style, refer to the manual or go to www.apastyle.org/previoustips.html.

In order for students to receive timely feedback, **late work will not be accepted**. However, students have the opportunity to redo any assignment.

I understand that you have other obligations; however, our time for learning is limited. If you must miss class for **any reason**, you will be required to submit **one page** of reflection on the previous class's topic, required readings, or research on the topic missed **for each hour of class missed**.

It is recommended that students retain copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE special education 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.

Choice of assignments due 2/24

- Watch and respond, in no more than 7 pages, to one of the following films:
 - *I Am Sam*
 - *Children of a Lesser God*
 - *Forrest Gump*
 - *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?*
 - *Rain Man*
 - *My Left Foot*
 - *Mask*
 - *Nell*
 - *The Other Sister*
 - *Finding Nemo*
 - *Benny and June*
 - *Slingblade*
- Read and respond, in no more than 7 total pages, to 3 journal articles that focus on instructional strategies for students with disabilities. Some journals to explore:
 - *Teaching Exceptional Children*
 - *Intervention in School and Clinic*
 - *Teaching K-12*
 - *Phi Delta Kappan*
 - *Exceptional Children*
 - *Reading Teacher*
 - *Instructor*

***Field Observation and Report:** due 3/10

An observation of students with disabilities in school settings will be completed.

A structured observation report format and rubric will be provided.

Students who are unable to gain access to a public school may complete an alternative observation.

***Case Study:** due

A comprehensive case study on a student with disabilities will be completed. The case study will include the following components:

- Student's demographic data
- Description of school and neighborhood
- Educational history (schools attended, reason for referral, placement)
- IEP goals and objectives, classroom accommodations
- Observational information
- Teacher interviews

- Additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications
- Summary and synthesis (Comparison of student's characteristics with those described in the textbook, i.e., which characteristics were identified in your student? Integrate sources from the literature with what you observed in your case study.)
- Appendices such as student work samples, teacher interview questions/answers

A rubric will be provided.

Students who are unable to gain access to a public school must see the instructor to arrange an alternative assignment.

***Child Abuse Recognition Training**

Bring your certificate to class on 4/6

Students will review the online child abuse recognition training module at http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers/ and be tested on the definitions and indicators of child abuse and neglect, how to respond to signs of abuse and to report abuse, the legal requirements of Virginia teachers to report abuse, state support services, and the actions that follow reports of abuse.

Research Paper

Topic Due 3/24

Paper Due 4/21

Students will complete a research paper on a chosen topic in the field of special education. The paper should follow the following guidelines:

- At least 10 pages in length
- Follow APA format, including reference list
- Use at least 5 sources

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Inclusion
- co-teaching
- working with paraprofessionals
- working with parents
- Instructional strategies for students with disabilities (such as learning disabilities, Autism, etc.)
- reauthorization of IDEA
- NCLB
- Discipline
- classroom management
- behavior modification
- task analysis

*These assignments are probable entries for the student portfolio.

Final Exam:

Given on May 4, 2005. Due May 11, 2005.

A final exam will be given to assess knowledge and understanding of student outcomes. **The exam will be take-home and short answer and essay format.**

Since it is take-home, please write the Honor Code on the front and sign it. **You may not communicate with each other about the examination, but you may use any other source of information.**

If you wish to receive written feedback on your examination, please supply a self-addressed stamped envelope with your completed exam. I will e-mail you with your exam grade and final class grade.

HONOR CODE: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

COURSE TOPICS

1/27	Ch 1 and 2	Introductions and Syllabus review Introduction to Special Education
2/3	Ch 1 and 2	Legal issues in Special Education
2/10	Ch 3	Multicultural Education
2/17	Ch 14	Working with Families
2/24	Ch 5 Choice Assignment Due	Learning Disabilities
3/3	Ch 6 Case study presentations	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
3/10	Ch 7 Case study presentations Field Observation Due	Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

3/24	Ch 4 Case study presentations Research Plan Due	Mental Retardation
3/31	Ch 11 Case study presentations	Autism
4/7	Ch 8 Case study presentations Child Abuse Certificate Due	Communication Disorders
4/14	Ch 9 Case study presentations	Hearing Impairments
4/21	Ch 10 Case study presentations Research Paper Due	Visual impairments
4/28	Ch 11 Case study presentations	Severe and Multiple Disabilities
5/5	Ch 12 Final Exam Given	Physical and Health Disabilities
5/12	Final Exam Due	Make-up Date

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 the instructor or need special arrangements, **please call and/or make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.**

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.