

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education
Special Education Program
Fall 2009

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EDSE 401/501 (sect.001): INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

CLASS TIME: Mondays, 7:20 10:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Fairfax Campus, Robinson Hall, 246A

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, and needs, educational strategies, including existing and emerging technologies, assessment and support services of/for individuals with disabilities. The course will study the impact of disabilities on academic and social/ emotional performance. Field exploratory activities are 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 contributions 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, litigation, and use of innovative technology.

RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS & PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

EDSE 501 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in special education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. 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. The CEC standards: 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

- 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 with 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 with a continuum of services.
- Family systems and the role of families in the educational process.
- Historical points of view and contributions 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, & customs that can exist between home and school.

Skill: Articulate personal philosophy of special education

Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners

- 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 facilities 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

- 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 on 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.

GMU GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION: STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://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 Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing at the beginning of the course. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.
- Students are expected to attend all class sessions during the course; arrive on time; and stay for the duration of the class time. Absences will result in missed in-class assignments and decreased class participation points.
- All out-of-class assignments are to be completed prior to the beginning of class on the date that they are due. If you are absent, the due date does not change and students are responsible to make sure that all assignments are handed in on time. Late assignments will result in a reduction in points.
- In-depth reading and study are required outside class time. Students are expected to allot approximately three hours for class study and preparation for each credit hour weekly.

REQUIRED TEXT

Friend, M. (2008). *Special education: Contemporary perspectives for school professionals* (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson

Other readings may be assigned by the instructor as appropriate/needed.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

Learning activities include the following:

- Class lecture, discussion and participation
- Videotapes and other relevant media presentations
- Study and independent library research
- Application activities and assignments
- Independent research and presentation activities

EVALUATION

1. class attendance and participation
2. child abuse awareness program and submission to Taskstream
3. field exploratory activities
4. individualized research project
5. comprehensive final exam and submission to Taskstream

For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, students will be required to submit a signature assignment from each of their Special Education courses to Taskstream, an electronic portfolio system (<https://www.taskstream.com/pub/>). In addition, students completing Midpoint and Final Portfolio courses will use Taskstream to create a full portfolio of their work based on assignments completed throughout their program. For this reason, students will need to retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE Special Education program. In addition to the signature assignment, products from this class can become part of your individual program portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards.

Grading criteria

- 95 – 100 points = A
- 90 – 94 points = A-
- 86 – 89 points = B+
- 80 – 85 points = B
- 70 – 79 points = C
- <70 points = F

COURSE-SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

Workload: In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot approximately three hours for class study and preparation for *each* credit hour weekly in addition to time spent on papers and assignments.

Written and Oral Language: APA Style is the standard format for any written work in the GSE. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.) You are required to use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines: <http://apastyle.apa.org/>.

Note: If you have difficulty writing, please utilize the resources provided at the GMU Writing Center. You may be referred to the Writing Center (703-993-1200 or <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>) by the instructor; if so, a Proof of Session form will be required when you submit your assignment.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant. You must take great care to give credit to an author when you borrow either exact words or ideas. Generally, if you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper APA citation. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of cheating in this class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the Dean's Office.

Email: Please note that your GMU email will be used exclusively for this course: Please activate and forward your gmU email to your most-checked account!!!

Be an Informed Student: Negotiating all the requirements for your Master's and/or VA Licensure is extremely complex. It is recommended that you schedule a phone/email or in-person appointment with the Special Education Advisor, Jancy Templeton (jtemple1@gmu.edu 703/993-2387). Doing so each semester will ensure that you rectify any outstanding issues, are timely with all necessary paperwork, and are ultimately in good standing to graduate on time.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW (details for each provided on subsequent pages)

Attendance and Participation (10 points): Students are expected to a) attend all classes; b) arrive on time; and c) stay for the duration of the class. Attendance, timeliness, and professionally relevant, active participation are expected. *Missing more than one class or repeated tardiness will result in your participation grade being dropped 5 points for each additional absence/excessive tardiness.* Please notify me *in advance* by email if you will not be able to attend class.

Participation (10 points): Participation points will be assigned based on my subjective assessment of your participation. If you are in class regularly, appear to be engaged/attentive, contributing to dialog and activities, or asking relevant questions, participation points will be granted.

Child Abuse Awareness Training (5 points): 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. Quizzes and scenarios assess student understanding and a certificate of completion is awarded. Points will not be awarded upon the completion of the quiz (taken in-class) unless the certificate has also been successfully submitted to Taskstream prior to class on the date of the quiz.

Pre-Exploratory Reflection Paper (15 points): Adult learners bring varying levels of experience to introductory courses such as this. The Pre-Exploratory Reflection Paper is a 3-5 page paper designed to help you reflect on where you are now, where you wish to go in the future, and what you feel your learning needs are currently. At the conclusion of the paper the student is to *specifically state* the three activities planned to further the exploration/knowledge-base related to special education.

Field Exploratory Activities (25 points): To address your differing backgrounds, you will have the opportunity to select activities from a menu of options so that you can tailor this portion of the course to address your own learning needs as you build an emerging philosophy of special education.

Blackboard or Alternatively Assigned Activities/Assignments (10 points): In lieu of regularly scheduled class, an alternative assignment will be given for 11/23. This may include an assignment which requires a written submission. Details will be provided closer to the date.

Comprehensive Final Exam (25 points): A comprehensive exam covering key course content will be administered, including information presented through lectures, class discussions, cases, chapters, required reading, and videos. Key points of emphasis include the foundations of special education, procedures of special education, the characteristics of each disability area, and effective instructional strategies.

Agenda

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Preparation
8/31	Introductions Course Overview Assignment/Blackboard/Taskstream Explanation Introduction to the Field		
9/14	Special Education History Personnel and Procedures		chapters 1 & 2
9/21	Multicultural and Bilingual Issues		chapter 3
9/28	Learning Disabilities ADHD	Pre-Exploratory Reflection Paper	chapters 5 & 6
10/5	Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Positive Behavioral Supports		chapter 7
10/13*	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Speech/Language Disorders		chapters 8 & 9
10/19	Deafness and Hearing Loss Visual Impairments	CARR Certificate Submission & Quiz	chapters 10 & 11
10/26	Autism Spectrum Disorders		chapter 12
11/02	Assistive Technology		
11/09	Physical and Health Disabilities Severe and Multiple Disabilities		chapters 13 & 14
11/16	Gifted and Twice Exceptional	Field Exploratory Activities Paper	chapter 15
11/23	Alternative Assignment –class will not meet		
11/30	Co-Teaching Working With Parents and Families		chapter 4
12/07	Individualized Education Programs		
12/12	Final Exam	Final Exam	

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

Pre-Exploratory Reflection Paper- Details and Scoring Rubric

I. Current Work Situation

Describe your current work situation. Include information regarding the types of learners in your setting (e.g. LD, ED, etc) –if you are a teacher, IA, etc If you are not working in a school or learning setting, describe your experiences working with others who have learning needs. Also describe your background experience relative to exceptional learners if you have any. Include an idea of your long-term goals in this field.

II. Personal Philosophy of Special Education

Discuss your reasons for taking this class and/or entering this profession, as well as what you believe –at this point- about teaching the exceptional learner. Why do you want to do this? How do you think one should approach this profession?

III. Learning Needs

What do you wish/need to know more about right now? Identify the direction that the rest of your exploration of the field of special education will take and describe what you propose to do for each of your three field exploratory activities.

IV. Specific Activity Plans

Clearly articulate your plans for the field experience activities. These activities must be different than your current work situation and expand beyond your current comfort zone or knowledge base.

	Points Available	Points Earned
Current Work Situation- Content	4	
Personal Philosophy- Content	4	
Learning Needs- Content	4	
Activity Plans Specifically Stated	3	
Total Points	15	

Instructor Approval of Proposed Activities: ____ yes ____ no

Comments:

Field Exploratory Activities- Details and Scoring Rubric

Select aspects of the field of special education that you need to explore. Choose and complete novel activities to enhance your knowledge of that aspect of special education. The final product will include an 7-10 page reflection of each activity selected, as well as the impact/influence related to each. Include a brief description of the context and what you learned and how the activity will benefit you in the future. Document the time spent engaged in the field exploration and the location of the experience at the top of each reflection. Make sure that there is a link between the activities selected and the learning needs you stated. **Your activities (not including the write up) should total 6 hours and should consist of at least 3 separate activities.** The activities should not include family members or private school settings.

Ideas to Consider:

- Observe relevant school settings or community settings (e.g., job sites, group homes)
- Conduct a home visit for one of your students
- Shadow/Interview an individual in a position of interest to you (e.g. Interpreter, Teacher, Audiologist, Counselor/Social Worker, Physical Therapist, Principal, Recreation Therapist, Speech Pathologist, Work-Study Coordinator, Job Coach, etc.)
- Interview an adult with a disability
- Interview a parent or a sibling of a person with a disability
- Interview the entire family of an exceptional learner
- Attend an eligibility or child study team meeting for a student (not your own student)
- Attend a child study team meeting (not for one of your own students)
- Attend staff development presentations (maximum of 2 hours allowed)
- Other- seek instructor approval

Name: _____

Date: _____

	Points Available	Points Earned
detailed description and reflection of <u>each</u> of the three activities you selected, as well as your initial impressions after completing each	15 (5 each)	
personal reflection on how the experiences (as a whole) may influence your thinking/actions in the future; how might these activities influence you in the future –personally and professionally.	5	
Total Points	25	

Comments: