George Mason University

Graduate School of Education

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EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education

Fall 2009

**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 experiences, conducted in public school settings, 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 OF COURSE 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.

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.

**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

 Applications with relevant hardware and software

 Application activities, including in-class evaluation of intervention research and materials

 Class presentations

 Written case study and observation reports using APA format.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, *Exceptional Learners:  An Introduction to Special Education,*  11th edition, 2009 ABLongman, ISBN 9780136067931 / 013606793x

|  |
| --- |
| **Note:**  This syllabus may change according to class needs. 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.* |

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS**

 **Attendance:** Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time and (d) complete all assignments to earn the **5-point class participation grade**.Attendance, timeliness, and professionally relevant, active participation are expected. Attendance and professional participation at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Missing **more than one class** or **repeated** tardiness/leaving early will result in losing your participation grade for the course. Please notify me ***in advance*** by phone or email if you will not be able to attend class.

 **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 College of Education. 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/

We will use person-first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). We will also strive to replace the term “Mental Retardation” with “Intellectual Disabilities” in our oral and written communication in accordance with terminology choices in the disability community.

 **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!!!** Go to <http://mail.gmu.edu>. Click on Options tab at the top of the page. Click on Settings link on the left of the page. Type in your most-checked email account in the box labeled Mail Forwarding.

 **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](mailto:jtemple1@gmu.edu) 703/993-2387). You may also schedule with the Cohort Advisor, Terry Werner ([twerner@gmu.edu](mailto:twerner@gmu.edu) 703-993-2064). 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.

**GMU GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STATEMENTS OF STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

 Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/teacher/professional-disposition/> for a listing of these dispositions.

 Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/deanofstudents/honorcode/ 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](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

 Weekly Readings: from the text and other sources will be required. It is expected that students will allot approximately three hours per week for class study/readings. Students are expected to share acquired information and reactions during class discussion.

 Child Abuse Awareness Program:Students will complete an online child abuse awareness training module at <http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers/> . The site includes 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. **Very important: You must provide a link to this certificate or print and scan it to use as a signature assignment in your electronic portfolio on TaskStream for 501.**

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 Blackboard:

You will begin using Blackboard following class session #2 of this course to complete your **3 discussion board assignments**.

GMU’sBlackboard will be used to post important information and presentations for this course and for you to check grades, complete assignments, and communicate with your classmates and instructor. You are responsible for checking Blackboard at least once a week and right before class to make sure you are informed about class/GMU issues.

Your **GMU email address** is entered in the Blackboardsystem.

The following is how you will access the Blackboard-GSE Login Page:

Enter the URL <http://courses.gmu.edu> into your browser location field.

Click on the **Login** button.

Enter your **email information**

Click **Login** or hit **Enter**.

 Field Exploratory Activity Papers are required. These school-based observations/activities will occur in public school settings. See descriptions following this section for more details.

 Disability-Specific Information Paper will ensure you are more informed about specific types of disabilities within a given Federal category.

 A Final Exam will be given to assess knowledge and understanding of student outcomes.

**EVALUATION**   **POINTS**

 Blackboard Activities 15 (3 x 5 pts. ea.)

 \*Child Abuse and Recognition Quiz\* 10

 Field Observations/Exploratory Activities 25

 Class participation 5

 Disability-specific paper 20

 \*Final Exam\* 25

Total 100

\***TASKSTREAM SUBMISSION\*: Electronic Portfolios**

These assignments are “signature” assignments for the student portfolio and must be submitted digitally to Taskstream, your electronic portfolio under **CEC Standard 9 for the Child Abuse Online Training (the receipt issued after completion of the module) and CEC Standard 1 (Field Observation)**. Because this is your first class, you will need to self-enroll into Taskstream. There is a folder under Course Documents on Blackboard that contains step-by-step directions for Taskstream. Every class you take in this program will have a signature assignment that must be submitted (501 has 2). In addition, you will be submitting other documents from your courses to complete your portfolio.

**Every student registered for any EDSE course including this semester is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at** [**http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/**](http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/)**. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN).  Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.\***

**GRADING CRITERIA**

95-100% = A

90-94% = A-

85-89% = B

80-84% = B-

70-79% = C

< 70% = F

Description of Assignments for this course

**I. Field Exploratory Activities for Students ALREADY EMPLOYED in a public school setting as a special education teacher or paraprofessional**

***Note: This project will be used to fulfill the 8 hour field experience requirement for students who are already working with students with disabilities in a public school.***

**Required:**

Type a 2-4 page overview of your teaching situation, your personal philosophy about teaching exceptional learners, and the learning needs **you have** as you enter this profession.

*I. Teaching Situation*

Describe your current teaching situation. Include information regarding the types of learners in your setting (e.g. LD, ED, etc). Describe your background experience relative to exceptional learners. Include an idea of your long-term goals in this field.

*II. Personal Philosophy of Special Education*

Discuss your reasons for entering this profession and what you believe 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 need to know more about right now? Identify the direction that the rest of your exploration of the field of special education will take. **This section should match with the activities you choose to complete in the remainder of this project.**

**Activity Options:**

Select an aspect(s) of the field of special education that you need to explore. Choose and complete activities to enhance your knowledge of that aspect of special education. Type up 2-4 pages for **each** activity selected. Include a brief description of the context and what you learned. 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 no less than 6 hours and should consist of at least 3 separate activities.**

*Ideas to Consider:*

Observe relevant school settings or community settings (e.g., self-contained, co-taught class, 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, Reading or other curriculum specialist etc.)

Interview an adult with a disability

Interview a parent of a person with a disability

Interview a sibling of a person with a disability

Interview the entire family of an exceptional learner

Conduct an accessibility assessment (maximum of 2 hours allowed)

Attend an eligibility meeting for a student (not one of your own)

Attend a child study team meeting (again, not for one of your own students)

Attend staff development presentations (maximum of 2 hours allowed)

Examine media-based resources (maximum of 2 hours allowed; e.g. journals, documentaries, webquest, etc.)

Other (ask instructor to confirm acceptability/assist with ideas for you)

**Note: You may have family members help you arrange experiences, but you may not use them for field observations or interviews.**

**OR**

**1.Description -Field Observations for students who ARE NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED in a public school setting. You may ask to observe in classmates’ classrooms or contact Lauren Clark for help with placement at 703-993-9777. *Note: This project will be used to fulfill the 8 hour field experience requirement for students who are NOT already working with students with disabilities in a public school.***

Students who **are not** currently working in a public school are required to complete two field observations. For *each* observation report you will observe one class in a public school, any grade between 1 and 12, for at least 3 hours. The class can be a self-contained classroom or a team-taught classroom; however, if it is a team-taught setting, it needs to be one in which you have knowledge as to who the students with special education needs are. Observations must be of disability areas other than what you work with in your current job. Preschool, Montessori, and private school settings are not acceptable for this assignment.

During the observations, you will not interact with the teacher, staff members, or any students. Instead, you are there to observe, take notes on salient things you observe, and reflect. You are not watching any one student; you are observing the entire class and describing what you see –adults, students, classroom layout, furniture, materials, etc.

Based on your observation, you will write a one- or two-page summary that addresses the guidelines below. Summaries should be detailed and in APA format The following is a brief guideline to assist students when writing their field observation reports

 class setting

o team-taught, self-contained, content area

o number of teachers/IAs

o descriptive layout of the classroom

 student demographics

o number of students, gender distribution,

o grade level

 description of activities observed

o describe what the adults were doing

o describe what the students were doing –how they responded to the adults

 description of instructional materials and use of technology

o text books

o computers or other types of technology

o manipulatives

 description of any individualization or specialized instruction for one or more students

 personal thoughts and reflection

o linking observations and/or thoughts and reflection to text and class discussion

**II. Description –Disability-Specific Information Paper**

Within the 13 Federal disability categories, there are numerous specific disabilities and disorders: for example, Cerebral Palsy, Retinitis Pigmentosa, Down Syndrome, Cri de Chat Syndrome, Dyslexia, Schizophrenia, etc. You will investigate a specific disability of your choosing (please clear with instructor first) and provide research-based information about the identification, implications, and impact of that disability: medical, physical, social, educational, etc. across the lifespan (birth to death). You will also connect the reader to evidence-based resources and supports pertaining to this disability. Your paper will be approximately 10 + pages in length.

**III. Online Child Abuse Training Module**

Students will complete an online child abuse awareness training module at <http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers/> ***This is the first submisssion to Taskstream for the Signature Assignment for CEC Standard 1***

**IV. Blackboard Discussion Boards**

Respond to discussion respectfully and thoroughly by writing at least one paragraph that addresses the prompt and one that acknowledges others’ responses. Do not do ahead of time.

**V. Final Exam**

Open book and note, essay responses. ***This is the second signature assignment for this course for TaskStream for CEC Standard 1***

**VI. Class Participation**

Presence, Participation, and Collaboration

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CLASS** | **TOPICS** | **ASSIGNMENTS** | **DUE THIS CLASS SESSION** |
| August 26, 27 | Registration  Introductions  Syllabus Review  Introduction to Special Education |  |  |
| September 2, 3 | Legal History | Chapter 1 |  |
| September 9, 10 | Referral and Assessment | Chapter 2 | Discussion Board 1 |
| September 16, 17 | Referral and Assessment  IEP |  |  |
| September 23, 24 | Intellectual Disabilities | Chapter 5  Chapter 13 | Discussion Board 2 |
| September 30, October 1 | Learning Disabilities | Chapter 6 |  |
| October 7, 8 | Emotional Disabilities | Chapter 8 | Discussion Board 3 |
| October 14, 15 | Hearing Disabilities and Deafness | Chapter 10 |  |
| October 21, 22 | Autism Spectrum Disorders | Chapter 12 |  |
| October 28, 29 | Vision, Physical Disabilities, TBI | Chapter 11  Chapter 14 | Disability-Specific Information Paper |
| November 4, 5 | Speech and Language Disabilities | Chapter 9 |  |
| November 11, 12 | OHI/ADD/ADHD  Developmental Disabilities | Chapter 7 | Copy of Child Abuse Certificate and submission to TS |
| November 18, 19 | Gifted and Talented | Chapter 15 |  |
| December 2, 3 | Parents and Families | Chapter 4 | Field Exploration Activities Paper |
| December 9, 10 | Final Exam |  |  |

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**I. 3 Blackboard Online Discussion/Reflections Rubric (5 pts. apiece)\_**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **5**  **Exemplary** | **4**  Good | **3**  **Acceptable** | **2**  **Inadequate** | **1**  **Unacceptable** |
| *Background*  Student has clearly completed the discussion prompt or activity prior to developing written response. Response is on time! |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Quality*  Addresses all aspects of discussion starter/prompt. Reacts to both prompt **and** classmates’ responses **(very important!)** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Reflection**  Summarizes thoughts about articles read or information received and includes rationales for the statements made.  Depth of reflection & depth of linkages to other course readings, teaching, and learning in general. |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Collaboration**  Student incorporates classmates’ responses into own response. Acknowledges differences of opinion appropriately. Recognizes and validates multiple viewpoints. |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Writing**  Reflection is written to graduate-level standards and there are very few writing or printing errors. |  |  |  |  |  |

II. Field Exploratory Activities Scoring Rubric (employed in school)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Exemplary | Good | Acceptable | Inadequate | Unacceptable |
| **Teaching Situation**  Describes current teaching situation. Includes information regarding the types of learners. Describes background experience relative to exceptional learners. Includes idea of long-term goals in this field  (5 points) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Personal Philosophy of Special Education**  Discusses reasons for entering profession and beliefs about teaching the exceptional learner. Why writer wants to do this and how one should approach this profession (5 points) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Learning Needs**  Identifies direction for rest of exploration of the field of special education. Match activities chosen to complete the remainder of project (2.5 points) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Reflection of 3 Activities**  Brief description of context and what was learned.  Time and location documented at the top of each reflection. Link between activities selected and learning needs stated. (15 points) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Writing**  Paper is written to APA & graduate-level standards and there are very few writing or  printing errors. (2.5) |  |  |  |  |  |

II. Field Observations Scoring Rubric( not employed in school)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| For EACH Observation | **Exemplary** | **Good** | **Acceptable** | **Inadequate** | **Unacceptable** |
| **Introduction/Class/Setting/Student Demographics**  Describes teaching situation. Includes information regarding the types of learners. Describes layout of class, grade level, type of class, staffing, school  (3 points) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Description of Activities Observed**  What adults and students were doing during observation  (5 points) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Description of Instructional Materials and Use of Technology**  **What materials, resources, etc. were being used to support learning**  (2.5 points) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Individualized or specialized instruction**  Evidence of differentiation  (2.5 points) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Personal Thoughts and Reflections**  Linkages to text and class notes/handouts/discussions  (10 points) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Writing: Paper is written to APA & graduate-level standards and there are very few writing or**  printing errors. (2 points) |  |  |  |  |  |

**III. Disability-Specific Information Paper** Rubric

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **5**  **Exemplary** | **4**  Good | **3**  **Acceptable** | **2**  **Inadequate** | **1**  **Unacceptable** |
| **Introduction**  Description of specific disability is presented and linked with appropriate federal category  5 points |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Body**  Paper describes: manifestation, identification, physical/cognitive implications, educational impact, and life-span implications and prognosis  5 points |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Resources**  Linkages to supporting resources, organizations, initiatives, programs, and  Research are provided  5 points |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Format**  Clear, concise, and comprehensive.  2.5 points |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Writing**  Paper is written to graduate-level standards in APA and there are very few writing or printing errors.  2.5 points |  |  |  |  |  |

**Total: 20 possible**

Student\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Grade\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_