

**EDCD 797: Special Education (1 credit)**  
**Instructor: Carol J. Kaffenberger, Ph.D.**  
**Spring 2010**

Course Meets: Tuesdays 7:20 – 10:00 p.m.  
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**Course Description**

Special Topics course, EDCC 797: *Special Education*, provides students with an overview of the issues facing children and adolescents with special education needs. The psychological, emotional and educational impact of special education and the role of school counselors working with the students and their families in schools will be explored.

**Course Objectives/Student Outcomes**

1. Understand the physical, psychological, sociocultural, and educational impact of special education on children and adolescents.
2. Examine your own and other's beliefs about students with disabilities/special needs.
3. Examine the relationship of culture, ethnicity, poverty, and special education.
4. Gain an understanding of the mental and emotional disorders meeting special education criteria.
5. Gain an understanding of interventions strategies to effectively counsel students and their families.
6. Special education and 504 accommodations within the school setting will be examined.
7. Acquire an awareness of the importance and development of prevention and intervention programs to address the problems of students in school and community settings.
8. Understand the role of the school counselor working with students with special education needs.

**Relationship to Course and Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

EDCC 797 is a special topics course and meets the requirement that all masters students take 2 credits of special topics course work. This 1-credit course will contribute to the counseling students knowledge of a particular population of clients.

EDCC 797 fulfills the requirements of the following professional organizations:

- o Virginia Department of Education requirement for school counseling licensure that candidates understand the knowledge, skills and processes of individual counseling.
- o Virginia Department of Health Professions requirement that Licensed Professional Counselor candidates complete graduate study in theories and techniques of counseling and psychotherapy.
- o Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) core requirement described in Section II.K.e: Helping relationships: An understanding of counseling and consultation processes.
- o American Counseling Association Code of Ethics requirement that counselors establish counselor education and training programs that integrate academic study and supervised practice.

**Required Texts:**

Mandlawitz, M. (2007). *What every teacher should know about IDEA 2004 laws and regulations*. Allyn & Bacon

Trolley, B. C., Haas, H. S., & Patti, D. C. (2009). *The school counselor's guide to special education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

**Required Reading (\* available on Blackboard):**

\*Cortiella, C. (2006). *NCLB and IDEA: What parents of students with disabilities need to know and do*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.  
<http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/Parents.pdf>

\*Geltner, J. A., Leibforth, T. N. (2009). Advocacy in the IEP process: Strengths-based school counseling in action. *Professional School Counseling, 12*, pp. 162-164.

Hayes, N. (2002). To accommodate, to modify, and to know the difference: Determining placement of a child in Special Education or "504". Retrieved 2/27/09  
<http://www.newhorizons.org/spneeds/inclusion/law/hayes.htm>

\*Kaffenberger, C. & Seligman, L. (2007). Helping students with mental and emotional disorders. In B. T. Erford (Ed.) *Transforming the school counseling profession* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice-Hall.

Lockhart, E. J. (2007). Students with Disabilities. In B. T. Erford (Ed.) *Transforming the school counseling profession* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice-Hall.

\*Milsom, A. & Hatley, M. T. (2005). Assisting students with learning disabilities: Transitioning to college: What school counselors should know. *Professional School Counseling, 8*, 436-441.

\*Santos de Barona, M., & Barona A. (2006). School counselors and school psychologists: Collaborating to ensure minority students receive appropriate considerations for special educational programs. *Professional School Counseling, 10*, 3-13.

\*Taub, D. J. (2006). Understanding the concerns of parents of students with disabilities: Challenges and roles for school counselors. *Professional School Counseling, 10*, 52-57.

**Professional Dispositions:**

**Professional Performance Criteria** (Effective February 25, 2003).

The American Counseling Association (ACA) code of ethics requires counselors and counselor trainees to maintain standards of professional competence and possess good moral character. The Counseling and Development Program in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University has adopted a set of professional performance criteria that is consistent with the ACA code of ethics. Please refer to the dispositions found on the C & D Homepage at:

[http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling/professional\\_performance.htm](http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling/professional_performance.htm)

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

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.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](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.

### **Course Structure:**

Students are responsible for developing their own learning goals for this course. A variety of reading material and experiential activities will be provided during the five weeks of the course. Students should come to class prepared to actively participate in class discussion and activities. Class activities will include lecture, small group work, experiential exercises, videos, and guest presentations. Each student will choose a focus for exploration during the five weeks of the semester and tailor each of the assignments chosen to explore the focus. Students will be guided in the development of their focus during the first night of class.

### **Course Requirements:**

- **Active Participation, Technology Competence, and Website Exploration** is expected in all class activities. **[Participation 15 points + Website 10 points = 25 points]**
  - Students are expected to attend all classes and come to class prepared having completed all reading and written assignments. Students are expected to use Blackboard and respond to discussion group questions. Students are encouraged to share resources and information with others and provide this information on Blackboard or in a handout. [Blackboard: courses.gmu.edu]
  - **Website Exploration.** Due March 17 **[10 points]**. Students are expected to use the internet to explore special education information and resources. By the second class meeting students should locate and download documents from at least two websites One document should be from one of the following websites:
    - Fairfax County Public Schools Special Education <http://www.fcps.edu/specialed.htm>
    - FCPS Parent Resource Center <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/prc/VDOElinks.htm>
    - IDEA Partnership <http://www.ideapartnership.org/>
    - Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team Meetings and Changes to the IEP <http://www.ideapartnership.org/partnership5a1.cfm?osepid=22>
  - Website resources should be used to explore your focus and identified in your self-directed learning project.
- **Self-Directed Learning Activities.** In an effort to develop a student-centered learning environment in this course you will be asked to identify a focus for your assignments. You may consider working with a partner. Below is a menu of activities. You may choose activities that you believe will provide the best learning experience for you and will allow you to explore your focus. You must complete two of these activities (if working alone and three if you are working with a partner). You may also create your own activity (with instructor permission).
  - **Examples of a focus:**
    - Special Education and AD/HD
    - Counseling interventions for students with disabilities
    - Over-identification of students of color
    - Special education and English language learners
    - Parent perspective of special education
    - Impact on family of having a child with special needs
    - Transitions (elementary to secondary; secondary to college)
- **Due Dates:**
  - March 10 submit electronically a one page paper identifying a focus with a rationale and the self-directed activities you think you will use.
  - April 6 submit your student-directed learning project.

- April 6 you will make a brief presentation (see guidelines below) to the class concerning your focus. You and/or your partner will provide classmates with a two page handout (or trifold), and you will turn in your project to the instructor.

➤ **Activities Menu (choose two of the following if working alone and three if working with a partner. You may also choose to develop your own activity with instructor approval):** You will hand in two/three of these activities in addition to a handout on your focus on the last night of class.

- **Literature Review [25 points].** Locate and read three professional articles related to your focus. Write a 2-3 page paper briefly summarizing the readings and relevance to your focus. Discuss the implications for the professional school counselor.
- **Professional Growth Opportunities [25 points].** Attend a professional growth opportunity (PGO) related to special education; minimum of 90 minute session. Write a 2 page review the PGO. Summarize what you learned from the PGO and reflect on how this relates to students with disabilities, and your role as a professional school counselor. Include any handouts provided at the PGO.
- **Professional Library or Bibliotherapy [25 points].**
  - **Professional Library:** Read a book concerning an aspect of special education related to your focus. Write a **two-page** review of the book. Include, summary of information; identify the audience for this book, and discuss its strengths and weakness. **OR**
  - **Bibliotherapy (maximum length 4 pages):** Read and review six books to be used with students. The following information should be submitted for each book selected: Title, author, publisher of the book and a short synopsis of the book , including a recommended audience, and strategies for using each book.
- **Write a 2-page summary of a special education category [25 points].** Include an overview of the category, diagnostic criteria, educational and counseling implications/strategies and relevant resources, and the role of the school counselor.
- **Interview a student, parent, regular education or special education teacher, or school counselor concerning their experiences with special education. [25 points]** Write up of interview should include relevant information about the interviewee, questions asked and a summary of responses. Write a reflection about what you have learned, how this relates to your focus and what are the implications for school counselors. Page length will depend on the interview.
- **Review of popular literature [25 points]** (newspapers, news magazines, books, magazines, websites, TV, media) to investigate your focus. Find a minimum of 5 articles/features on topics related to your focus. Write a **3-5 page** paper briefly summarizing the articles and integrating them into your discussion. The articles should be included; reference page is required.
- **Professional school counselor's role in special education process [25 points].** In light of your focus, write a **2 to 3 page** paper describing your ideas about the role of the school counselor in the special education process. Identify the level (elementary, middle or high school). Use a minimum of two counseling or educational journal references.

**Everyone will complete the following assignments:**

- **All assigned readings.**
- **Presentation to the class.** The presentation will be 10 minutes in length on the last night of class concerning your focus. Students will prepare a 2 page handout, or a trifold, that includes a summary of the focus or issue, resources, references concerning the focus. Suggested format for the handout: include your name(s); statement about the focus with a brief explanation; summary of information relevant to your focus; references; and reading/internet resources. Bring copies of the handout for each classmate and include the handout in the packet you turn in to instructor [**25 points**]

**Summary of Grading System & Course Requirements**

Attendance, Participation, Technology & Website Exploration	25 points
Individually selected projects (see syllabus for projects and points)	50 points
<u>Project presentation &amp; handout</u>	<u>25 points</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100 points</b>

**ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend all classes, to come on time and stay for the entire class. Students who miss all or part of two classes will not be permitted to complete the class.

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, working, speaking, or hearing. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability please inform your instructor at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible, so that arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center (703) 993-2474 for information and the required documentation.

In accordance with the George Mason University Grading Policy, the following grades may be achieved:

A	95-100	points
A-	90-94	points
B+	85-89	points
B	80-84	points
C	79	points and below

## Course Agenda

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
4/6/10	Orientation: Introductions Syllabus Overview of special education Choosing a focus	
4/13/10	Overview of special education process & terminology review Websites Discussion of readings Identifying stakeholder issues	<b>DUE:</b> <b>Website exploration &amp; documents</b>  <b>Readings:</b> <b>1. Hayes</b> <b>2. Trolley Ch. 1-3</b> <b>3. Lockhart</b> <b>4. Santos de Barona</b>
4/20/10	Role Play Discussion of readings Case studies Video, "When the Chips are Down"	<b>Readings:</b> <b>1. Trolley Ch. 4-6</b> <b>2. Madlawitz</b> <b>3. Cortiella</b> <b>4. Geltner</b>
4/27/10	Topic: The school counselor's role Guest speakers	<b>Readings:</b> <b>1. Trolley Ch 7</b> <b>2. Kaffenberger</b> <b>3. Taub</b>
5/4/10	Student Sharing/Presentations	<b>Due:</b> <b>1. Presentations</b> <b>2. Case Study &amp; Essay</b>