

**George Mason University  
Graduate School of Education  
Course Syllabus, Spring 2010**

**ESDE 620, Section 6M4: Managing Severely Challenging Behaviors  
and Applied Behavior Analysis**

**Professor:** Vicky G. Spencer, Ph.D

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Office Location:** Krug Hall/GMU

**E-mail:** [vspencer@gmu.edu](mailto:vspencer@gmu.edu)

**Phone:** 703-993-5598

**Fax:** 703-993-3681

**Course Times:** 4:30 – 8:30 P.M.

**Course Dates:** 3-17 – 5-26

**Course Description:** The focus of this course is on the application of behavior analysis principles to increase learning of students with special needs. Emphasis is on single subject research designs.

**Student Outcomes:**

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

- Define behavior change terminology
- Define behaviors accurately and prepare behavioral objectives for a wide range of behaviors.
- Describe, demonstrate understanding, and apply single subject research design.
- Conduct functional analyses of behavior.
- Develop and implement behavior change programs.
- Describe strategies that increase behavior.
- Describe strategies that decrease behavior.
- Describe strategies for teaching new behavior.
- Collect and graph data.
- Describe strategies for promoting self-management behavior.
- Describe different reinforcement schedules.
- Demonstrate previously acquired research skills.

**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:**

Course's Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organization

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program. This program complies with the standards for special educators established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization.

The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site: <http://www.cec.sped.org> . Look in the second column on the left, and click on "Professional Standards." On this page, to the right, there is a red book pdf document titled "What Every Special Educator Must Know." The CEC

Standards are located in this document. The primary CEC standards that will be addressed in this class will be Standard 5 on Learning Environments and Social Interaction.

**Special Education Content Standard #5:  
Learning Environments and Social Interactions**

Special educators actively create learning environments for individuals with ELN that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement of individuals with ELN. In addition, special educators foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. Special educators shape environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with ELN. Special educators help their general education colleagues integrate individuals with ELN in regular environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Special educators use direct motivational and instructional interventions with individuals with ELN to teach them to respond effectively to current expectations. When necessary, special educators can safely intervene with individuals with ELN in crisis. Special educators coordinate all these efforts and provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.

Beginning special educators demonstrate their mastery of this standard through the mastery of the CEC Common Core Knowledge and Skills, as well as through the appropriate CEC Specialty Area(s) Knowledge and Skills for which the preparation program is preparing candidates.

**Nature of Course Delivery**

Learning activities may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Class lecture and discussion
- Application activities and assignments
- Small group activities and assignments
- Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard
- Research and presentation activities
- Video and other media supports

**Required Texts:**

Alberto, P.A. & Troutman, A.C. (2003). *Applied Behavior Analysis for Teachers* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.), New Jersey: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Martella, R.C., Nelson, J.R., & Marchand-Martella, N.E. (2003). *Managing Disruptive Behaviors in the Schools: A Schoolwide, classroom, and individualized learning approach*, Pearson Education, Inc.

(Supplemental)

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

**Other Required Resources**

*Blackboard*

Check Blackboard weekly for additional course materials at <http://courses.gmu.edu>

### *TaskStream*

The signature assignment required for this course must be submitted electronically to Mason's NCATE management system, TaskStream: (<https://www.taskstream.com>).

Note: Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Students who do not submit the required signature assignment to TaskStream will receive a grade of Incomplete (IN) in the course. The Incomplete (IN) will change to a grade of (F) if the required signature assignment has not been posted to TaskStream by the incomplete work due date listed in the current semester's Schedule of Classes.

### **Student Responsibilities**

*George Mason University Email:* <https://mserver3.gmu.edu/> From this link, follow the directions for activating an email account. GMU makes such accounts available at no cost to students. Every student is required to establish a GMU email account to access Blackboard and other important university correspondence that will be sent to GMU email accounts only. Once an email account has been established, it is possible to forward email sent to the GMU account to another email account. Students are responsible for any information shared electronically and should check e-mail regularly.

*George Mason Blackboard:* <http://courses.gmu.edu>. From this link, you will find a variety of materials related to this course. The site will be updated as the course progresses. **Students are responsible** for any information shared via Blackboard and should check the site regularly

*George Mason Patriot Web:* <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu>. This is a self-service website for students, faculty, and staff of George Mason University. A wealth of useful links, information, and online forms are available on this website including program of studies details, application for graduation, request for transfer of credit, and internship application.

*Cohort Information:* Please visit Blackboard at <http://gmucommunity.blackboard.com> and begin by clicking "login" and using the User Name "cohort" followed by the Password "cohort" to access a variety of materials including the Frequently Asked Questions Guide, Enrollment forms, Textbook information, and TaskStream support.

*Advising Contact Information:* Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through the special education program. You may wish to contact Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at [jtemple1@gmu.edu](mailto:jtemple1@gmu.edu) or 703-993-2387. When contacting her, be prepared to provide your G number.

*APA Style:* 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 (6th ed.) or to access one of the internet sites that provides a summary of this information.

*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 citation. 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 registrar. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. The instructor reserves the right to submit your work to **turnitin** or **safeassign**, plagiarism detection services, for an integrity assessment as needed.

*Graduate School of Education Dispositions Criteria:* Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu/> for a listing of these dispositions.

*George Mason University Honor Code:* [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12) This URL defines student and faculty conduct to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community. The honor code deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing.

*Students with Disabilities:* [www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) 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 semester. See the website or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

*Responsible Use of Computing:* <http://mail.gmu.edu> Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. From the link above, click on the Responsible Use of Computing link found at the bottom of the screen.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend **all** classes, arrive on time, remain in class for the duration of each session, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom (see Professional Disposition Criteria), and complete all assignments with professional quality and in a timely manner. When absence from class is unavoidable, students are responsible for getting all class information (e.g., handouts, announcements, notes, syllabus revisions, etc.) from another class member prior to the class meeting that follows the absence. Be aware that any points earned for participation in class activities during a time of absence will not be earned and cannot be reclaimed.

### **Computers, Cell Phones, Blackberries, and Recording Devices**

If you are using a computer during class, it must be for work directly related to this course! Please keep your phones off or on vibrate during the class. The use of electronic devices that record class or photograph individuals or materials may not be used without instructor permission.

## Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Below are the basic weights of the various kinds of work required for the course, but students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily a judgment about your performance on a particular assignment. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.

Your performance in the course will be rated upon the following:

Participation Activities	10%
Blackboard Quizzes	20%
Applied Behavior Analysis Project	30%
Article Critiques	20%
Final Exam	20%
Total	100%

**Note:** *Points will be deducted for work submitted late.* This includes any items that are not submitted upon request due to class absence or tardiness.

It is recommended that students retain electronic and hard copies of ALL course assignments. Products from this class can become part of one's individual professional portfolio used to document satisfactory progress towards licensure as based on the CEC standards.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Participation in Class Activities: (10%)** Students are expected to attend class and actively participate in all assignments, group activities, and class discussions. Active participation includes the asking of questions and the presentation of one's own understanding with regard to the readings and lectures as well as interactive discussion and participation in activities with other class members. Active participation also includes listening and respectful consideration of the comments of others. This will require all students to complete the required readings, activities, and assignments for that specific class meeting. Additionally, during each class meeting there will be opportunities to earn points for successful completion of in-class activities. If you are not in attendance and thus not able to participate when these activities occur, assigned points cannot be earned.

**Blackboard Quizzes: (20%)** Students will complete two Blackboard quizzes over the assigned readings. Each quiz is worth 10 points.

**Applied Behavior Analysis Project: (30%)** *Signature Assignment.* Guidelines for this project will be provided on Blackboard and discussed in class.

**Article Critiques: (20%)** Students will read and critique two research studies in the area of applied behavior analysis. Read and respond with a three page summary. Please follow the format provided on Blackboard.

**Final Exam: (20%)** A comprehensive exam covering key course content will be administered on Blackboard.

**Grading criteria\*\***

94 – 100% = A

90 – 93% = A-

87 – 89% = B+

80 – 86% = B

70 – 79% = C

<70 = F

*\*\*Traditional rounding principles apply (i.e. .5 rounds up)*

## Course Schedule

<b>Class Session</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
1.	3/17/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start of class logistics</li> <li>• Course instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete enrollment materials</li> </ul>
2.	3/24/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior management</li> <li>• Roots of ABA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martella – Chapters 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Alberto – Chapter 1</li> </ul>
3.	3/31/10	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
4.	4/7/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioral objectives</li> <li>• Data collection &amp; graphing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberto – Chapters 2,3, &amp; 4</li> <li>• Martella – Chapter 9</li> <li>• <b>DUE</b> 1<sup>st</sup> article critique</li> </ul>
5.	4/14/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single subject designs</li> <li>• Functional behavioral assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberto – Chapters 5,6</li> <li>• Martella – Chapter 10</li> </ul>
6.	4/21/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-line class</li> <li>• Schoolwide organizational systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Blackboard quiz</b></li> <li>• Martella – Chapters 3, 4</li> <li>• Complete data collection activity</li> </ul>
7.	4/28/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranging consequences that decrease/increase behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberto – Chapters 7, 8</li> <li>• Martella- Chapters 11,12</li> <li>• <b>DUE</b> 2<sup>nd</sup> article critique</li> </ul>
8.	5/5/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differential reinforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberto – Chapter 9</li> </ul>
9.	5/12/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching students to manage their own behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Blackboard quiz</b></li> <li>• Alberto – Chapter 11</li> </ul>
10.	5/19/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-line class</li> <li>• Classroom organizational systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martella – Chapters 6, 7</li> </ul>
11.	5/26/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABA projects - discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Final Exam</b></li> </ul>
<p><i>NOTE: Syllabus is subject to change as needed. Common sense and instructor discretion will be the governing forces in dealing with any circumstances that may arise that are not explicitly addressed in this syllabus.</i></p>			

