

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
EDSE 501**

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**EDSE 501: INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**TIME:** 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** Prince William County Schools Administrative Complex  
Building 100 – Room 32

**DATES:** Saturday, May 8, 15, 22; June 5, 12

**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. The course will study the impact of disabilities on academic and social/emotional performance. Field experience is required as well as 15 hours on *Blackboard*.

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 and litigation, and use of innovative technology.

**RELATIONSHIP OF COURSE 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 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 are listed on the following web site:

[http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf\\_based\\_stds/common\\_core\\_4-21-01.html](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 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 with 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.
- Importance 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

### **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 individual 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 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:

- 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 the American Psychological Association format.

### **The Graduate School of Education Statements 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](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](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](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

### **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. Taskstream information is available at:

<http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/taskstream/>

Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream may result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN).

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Hallahan & Kauffman

Exceptional Learners: Introduction to Special Education

Pearson Publishers, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition

### **EVALUATION**

Participation in In-Class Workshops	5%
Group Presentations:	
o Human Growth & Development – graded by group	10%
o Disability Area – graded by individual	15%
• Blackboard	15%
• Disability Paper	15%
• Field Observation Reports (2)	15%
• Exam	15%
• Child Abuse Online Training	5%
• Quiz (no make-up)	5%

**Note:** All assignments should be typed and are due on the dates indicated. In fairness to students who make the effort to submit papers on time, points will be deducted for work submitted after the due date.

***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.***

### **GRADING CRITERIA**

95 – 100	A
90 – 94	A-
85 – 89	B+
80 – 84	B
70 – 79	C
< 70	F

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. Weekly readings from the text and other sources will be required. The student is expected to share acquired information and participate in In-class Workshops.
2. Group presentations will be required. The Human Growth and Development presentation will identify the major developmental milestones met at various age levels. The disability area presentation will enable students to identify the major characteristics associated with common disability areas in a group presentation. Rubrics will be provided.

3. Blackboard.com will be used for 15 hours of class contact hours. Various assignments related to course reading and requirements will be completed online. A rubric will be provided.
4. A six page double-spaced paper on one of the low incidence disabilities will be completed. This paper will be written according to APA style and will include specific components including the prevalence of the disability, characteristics of the disability, types of educational programs available in schools for students with the disability including kinds of assistive technology used, transition programs available for students as they prepare to leave high school and supports/services that individuals might require as adults. A rubric will be provided.
5. The final exam and the child abuse online training are the signature assignments for this class. The child abuse online training can be found at: [http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va\\_teachers/](http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers/).
6. Two 30 minute classroom observations will be required. If possible, the special education program observations will occur in a disability other than one in which the student is currently working. Students will complete a structured observation form and will share their experiences during class discussion.