

**George Mason University  
Graduate School of Education  
Course Syllabus, Spring 2011**

**ESDE 620, Section 6M7: Managing Severely Challenging Behaviors  
and Applied Behavior Analysis**

**Professor:** Michael J. Romanelli, Ed.D.

**Office Hours:** By appointment

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**Course Times:** 4:30 - 9:00 p.m.

**Course Dates:** March 15, 2011 – May 17, 2011

**Course Location:** Administration Building

**Course Description:** The focus of this course is on applying behavior analysis principles and social learning theory to increase learning by students with special needs. Emphasizes single subject research designs.

**Evidenced-Based Practices**

This course will incorporate the evidence-based practices (EBPs) relevant to developing safe, effective learning environments, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and functional behavioral assessments and behavior plans. These EBPs are indicated with an asterisk (\*) in this syllabus. Evidence for the selected research-based practices is informed by meta-analysis, literature reviews/synthesis, the technical assistance networks which provide web-based resources, and the national organizations whose mission is to support students with disabilities. We address both promising and emerging practices in the field of special education. This course will provide opportunities for students to take an active, decision-making role to thoughtfully select, modify, apply, and evaluate EBPs in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

**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.

Kerr, M.M. & Nelson, C.M. (2010). *Strategies for addressing behavior problems in the classroom*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.

(Supplemental)

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

*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.

### **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.

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

### **Student Expectations**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and

check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.
- Students need to 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.

### **Campus Resources**

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

### **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. Please note 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**

Please do not use your computer during class. Notes will be shown during class and posted on Blackboard prior to class. Please keep your phones off or on vibrate during the class.

### **Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria**

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

|                                   |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Participation Activities          | 10%  |
| Quizzes                           | 20%  |
| Applied Behavior Analysis Project | 30%  |
| Article Critiques                 | 15%  |
| Oral Presentation                 | 10%  |
| Token Economy System              | 15%  |
| 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.

### **Token Economy System (15%)**

Using the principles of applied behavior analysis, develop a token economy system for use with your student(s). Include the following elements in your plan:

1. Set behavioral and/or academic goals for your token system
2. Set point or token value
3. Determine time interval for assessment
4. Keep track of points or tokens earned (data collection)
5. Develop reinforcement menu
6. Develop exchange rate
7. Set exchange times

Make all materials that you will use as part of this project. Write a two page report explaining how the token economy will operate for your student(s). In addition, write a letter to the parents of your students explaining the token economy system you are going to use in your class. Bring

the letter to class with your materials. You will be required to do a five minute presentation to your classmates explaining your token system.

**Quizzes: (20%)** Students will complete three 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 and discussed in class.

**Oral Presentation of ABA Project: (10%)** Prepare a 20 minute Powerpoint presentation of your ABA project to share with the class.

**Article Critiques: (15%)** The purpose of this assignment is to become more familiar with research on interventions that have been used to change a behavior or pattern of behaviors similar to the behavior you have identified as a possible target for your project. Students will read and critique two research studies in the area of applied behavior analysis. Read and respond with a three page summary.

When seeking additional information and/or a research-base for your program, it is essential that you access professional journals for current data. These journals can all be accessed through the ERIC database, which can be found on the Library website for George Mason University. Some suggestions include:

*Behavioral Disorders*                      *Beyond Behavior*                      *Exceptional Children*  
*Journal of Special Education*                      *Journal of Emotional and Behavior Disorders*  
*Teaching Exceptional Children*                      *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*  
*Intervention for School and Clinic*                      *Behavior Analyst*                      *Behavior Therapy*

**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.                   | 3/15/11     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Overview</li> <li>• Theoretical Models of Behavior Management</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Syllabus</li> <li>• Alberto Chapter 1</li> <li>• Kerr Chapter 1 and 2</li> </ul> |

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|----|---------|--|--|
|    |         |  |  |
| 2. | 3/22/11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional Behavior Assessment</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerr – Chapter 4</li> <li>• Alberto Chapter 2 and 12</li> </ul>                                     |
| 3. | 3/29/11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior Interventions</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberto p. 54-59</li> <li>• Kerr Chapter 7</li> <li>• <b>Due Article Critique 1</b></li> </ul>      |
| 4. | 4/5/11  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applied Behavior Analysis</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerr – Chapter 3</li> <li>• Alberto Chapter 3,4,5</li> </ul>  |
| 5. | 4/12/11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Token Economy</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberto – Chapter 6</li> <li>• <b>In-class Token Economy Project</b></li> </ul>                     |
| 6. | 4/26/11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis Prevention and Intervention</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerr – Chapter 9</li> <li>• <b>DUE Article Critique #2</b></li> </ul>                               |
| 7. | 5/3/11  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-injurious Behaviors (SIB)</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerr – Chapter 10</li> </ul>  |
| 8. | 5/10/11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethics and Use of Aversive Stimuli</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberto Chapter 12</li> <li>• Handout Readings</li> <li>• <b>Due Article Critique #3</b></li> </ul> |
| 9. | 5/17/11 | ABA Project Presentations  |  |
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*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.*