

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM – SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Syllabus for EDSE 401-C01: Introduction to Special Education**

(3 credits)

Semester and Year: Summer 2011

Course days: Monday – Thursdays

Course time: 9:30 A.M. - 11:45 A.M.

Course location: Loudoun 1 232

**Professor:**

Brittany Hott

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Office hours: Mondays after class, Wednesdays after class, and by appointment

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**Course Description**

*Course Description from the GMU catalog*

Prerequisites: None

Survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Includes historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies, assessment, and support services for individuals with disabilities ranging from mild and moderate to severe. Includes the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances. Field experience required.

**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 401 is part of the George Mason University, College of Education and Human Development, 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](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, D., Kauffman, J., & Pullen, P. (2009). *Exceptional learners: An introduction to special education* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

### *Blackboard*

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

### *TaskStream*

The signature assignments required for this course must be submitted electronically to Mason's NCATE management system, TaskStream via <https://www.taskstream.com>. Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to begin submitting 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/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream may result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). See <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/taskstream/> for detailed steps.

### **Supplemental Materials (as needed)**

When seeking additional information and/or a research-base for your program, it is essential that you access a variety of professional journals for current data. Some suggestions include:

*Beyond Behavior*

*Teaching Exceptional Children*

*Intervention School and Clinic*

*Exceptional Children*

*Behavioral Disorders*

*Focus on Exceptional Children*

*Remedial and Special Education*

*Assessment for Effective Intervention*

*Journal for Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*

*JABA (Journal of Applied Behavioral Analysis)*

*Learning Disabilities Quarterly*

*LD Forum*

*Journal of Special Education*

*Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*

## **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 encouraged to establish a GMU email account as important university correspondence 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://blackboard.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/> 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.

*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, always provide your G number to her.

*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 (5th ed.) or to access one of the internet sites that provides a summary of this information. All work produced outside of class must be typed unless otherwise noted.

*APA Formatting Guidelines:* <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>. This website is offered as a companion to the APA style manual. However, it should not be considered a substitute for directly consulting the APA manual, 5<sup>th</sup> edition for standard of procedures for applying APA style.

*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.com**, a plagiarism detection service, for an integrity assessment as needed.

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS** *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.

### *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/>].

### **Important Notes:**

- The use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (i.e., cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to vibrate before the start of class.
- Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration, e-mail work, or other non-class activities during class time.
- Routine access (several times each week) to electronic mail and Blackboard for communication and assignment updates is crucial to participation in this class. For each in-class hour devoted to this course content, students are expected to spend 2.5 hours outside of class on course related assignments, which is a typical in-class to out-of-class ratio for a undergraduate level course.

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

Below are the basic weights of the various kinds of work required for the course; but, students should always keep 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.

All assignments should be typed (submitted as hard copy and to Blackboard please) and are due at 9:30 A.M. on the dates indicated. In fairness to students who make the effort to submit work on time, 5% of the total assignment points will be deducted each day from your grade for late assignments. Please retain a copy of your assignments in addition to the one you submit. All assignments should reflect university level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you are deficient in any of these areas, you will need to document your work with the GMU writing center during this course to improve your skills (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

In order to maximize your learning and success in this course, the instructor is available to review drafts of any assignments prior to the due date for submission. The goal in doing this is to provide guidance in terms of the content of the assignment, not to edit writing mechanics. Drafts must be sent via email or provided in person at least 3 days prior to the assignment due date to allow sufficient time to provide constructive feedback in a timely manner.

Assignment	Weight
Dialogue Folder	10%
Child Abuse Training Module	10%
Quizzes	10%
Exploratory Activities/Field Experiences Project	30%
Disability Information Paper	20%
Presentation	10%
Final Examination	10%
Total	100%

**It is recommended that students retain electronic and hard copies of ALL course products. 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.**

## Overview of Assignments

### 1. **Dialogue Folder (10 points)**

The dialogue folder is designed to serve as one means of ongoing communication between the instructor and student during the semester. During the semester, students will complete a series of reflections via the dialogue folder. Topics may include concepts presented in class or in readings, case studies, research articles, and critical legislation.

### 2. **Child Abuse Training Module (10 points)**

Students will complete the Virginia online child abuse training module available at <http://www.vcu.edu/vista/training/va> as well as related online tests on the definitions 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. **This Child Abuse Training Module is signature assignment. You should print, scan, and submit your**

**certificate to TaskStream for evaluation. Failure to submit a signature assignment to TaskStream by the assignment due date will result in a grade of “0” for the assignment.**

### **3. Quizzes (10 points)**

Eight quizzes based on course readings will be completed online or in class over the course of the semester. The five highest scores will be factored in the student grade. (5 quizzes- 2 points each)

### **4. Exploratory Activities/Field Experience(s) Project (30 points)**

#### ***Pre-Exploratory Reflection Paper (5 points)***

Select aspects of special education field that you wish to explore. Compose a 2-3 page paper reflecting on your knowledge of the special education field, why you wish to work in the special education field, and your current learning needs. At the conclusion of the paper, identify three to five activities that you will complete over the course of the semester to enhance your knowledge of the special education field. *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 of a student with a disability
- 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)
- 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
- Learn how to conduct (by observation) one of an assessment
- Attend an eligibility meeting for a student
- Attend a child study team meeting
- Attend staff development presentations
- Examine media-based resources (maximum of 2 hours allowed; e.g. journals, documentaries, webquest, etc.)
- Other (ask instructor to confirm acceptability/assist with ideas)

#### ***Field Experience(s) (25 points)***

Thoughtfully review instructor feedback provided on your reflection paper. With instructor approval, complete your selected field activities. Write a summary and reflection (2-4 pages) for **each** activity selected. Document the location, date, and time spent engaged in each activity and submit the log with each of your papers. Make sure there is a link between the activities and your self-identified learning need(s). At least ten hours of direct observation must be completed as a component of your observations and activities.

### **5. Disability Information Paper (20 points)**

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 and provide research-based information about the identification, implications, and impact of that disability: medical, physical, social, educational, etc. across the lifespan (birth through adulthood). 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.

**6. Presentation (10 points)**

Students will develop and present a 10-minute class presentation focused on their disability information paper.

**7. Final Examination (10 points)**

A final examination will assess student knowledge and understanding of critical course concepts. The examination will include a variety of multiple-choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions.

**The final exam is considered a signature assignment and must be submitted to Task Stream.**

**Grading Scale**

The course letter grade will be determined by a point system in which the following thresholds will be used:

A	=	93 - 100 percent
A-	=	90 - 92 percent
B+	=	87 - 89 percent
B	=	83 - 86 percent
B-	=	80 - 82 percent
C+	=	77 - 79 percent
C	=	73 - 76 percent
C-	=	70 - 72 percent
D	=	65 - 69 percent
F	=	< 64.5 percent

*A final grade of Incomplete will be considered only due to extreme extenuating circumstances; please contact the instructor.*

**COURSE TOPICS**

Date	Reading Due	Concepts	Assignments Due
July 5		Introduction, syllabus, review expectations for course requirements	
July 6	Chapter 1 BB Readings	Context of special education	Signup for research paper topic
July 7	Chapter 2 BB Readings	Inclusive practices, person first language	Pre-exploratory reflection paper due
July 11	Chapter 3 BB Readings	Multicultural and bilingual aspects of special education	
July 12	Chapter 4 BB Readings	Parents and families	
July 13	Chapter 5 BB Readings	Developmental disabilities,	



		Intellectual disabilities, Student presentations	
July 14	Chapter 6 BB Readings	Learning disabilities, Student presentations	Child abuse certification due
July 18	Chapter 7 BB Readings	Attention deficit disorders, Student presentations	
July 19	Chapter 9 BB Readings	Speech and language disorders, Student presentations	
July 20	Chapter 8 BB Readings	Emotional or behavioral disorders, Student presentations	
July 21	Chapter 12 BB Readings	Autism spectrum disorders, Student presentations	
July 25	Chapter 10 BB Readings	Deaf or hard of hearing disabilities, Student presentations	
July 26	Chapter 11 BB Readings	Blindness, Low-vision, Student presentations	
July 27	Chapter 13 BB Readings	Severe disabilities, Student presentations	
July 28	Chapter 14 BB Readings	Physical impairments, Health impairments, Student presentations	Disability information paper due
August 1	Chapter 15 BB Readings	Gifted and talented, Student presentations	Field experiences project due
Date	Reading Due	Concepts	Assignments Due
August 2	BB Readings	Exam review Course reflections	
August 4		Final Exam	

\* Readings are should be completed prior to attending the course session listed.

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**NOTE:**

This syllabus may change according to class needs. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with instructor or special needs arrangements, **please call and/or make an appointment with instructor as soon as possible.**

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**Disability-Specific Information Paper Rubric**

	<b>5 Exemplary</b>	<b>4 Good</b>	<b>3 Acceptable</b>	<b>2 Inadequate</b>	<b>1 Unacceptable</b>
<b>Introduction</b> Description of specific disability is presented and linked with appropriate federal category 3 points					
<b>Body</b> Paper describes: manifestation, identification, physical/cognitive implications, educational impact, and life-span implications and prognosis 4 points					
<b>Resources</b> Linkages to supporting resources, organizations, initiatives, programs, and Research are provided 10 points					
<b>Format</b> Clear, concise, and comprehensive. 1 points					
<b>Writing</b> Paper is written to graduate-level standards in APA and there are <u>very few</u> writing or printing errors. 2 points					

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**EDSE 401: INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**DISABILITY PRESENTATION  
PEER REVIEW**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes    No            Adhered to 10 minute time limit

Yes    No            Information was accurate and applicable to my practice/future practice

**Glows (list at least 3)**

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**Grow(s) (list 1 or 2)**

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**Field Exploratory Activities Rubric**

	Exemplary	Good	Acceptable	Inadequate	Unacceptable
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<p><b>Teaching Situation</b> Describes experiences with the special education field. Includes information regarding the types of learners. Describes background experience relative to exceptional learners. Includes idea of long-term goals in this field (1 point: Pre-exploratory Paper)</p>					
<p><b>Personal Philosophy of Special Education</b> Discusses reasons for entering profession and beliefs about teaching the exceptional learner and how one should approach this profession (2 points: Pre-exploratory Paper)</p>					
<p><b>Learning Needs</b> Identifies direction for rest of exploration of the field of special education. Match activities chosen to complete the remainder of project (2 points: Pre-exploratory Paper)</p>					
<p><b>Reflection of Activities</b> For each (minimum 3) 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. (24 points)</p>					
<p><b>Writing</b> Paper is written to APA &amp; graduate-level standards and there are <u>very few</u> writing or printing errors. (1 point)</p>					

