

**George Mason University**  
**Graduate School of Education**  
**Division of Special Education and disability Research**  
**Fall 2011**  
**EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education**

**Section:** 6P1

**Location:** Kelly Leadership Center (PW new admin building) in room 2202/2204

**Professor:** Sheri Berkeley, Ph.D.

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Phone:** 703-993-9689

**Office Location:** 212 Finley, Fairfax Campus

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

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Course Times:** 4:15 – 8:15 P.M. on Fridays; 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. on Saturdays

**Course Dates:** 9/9/11, 9/10/11, 9/23/11, 9/24/11, 10/7/11, 10/8/11

**Fieldwork:** Self-scheduled supplemental work for a minimum of 9 hours

### **Course Description**

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.

### **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

### **Learner 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 contribution 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 Courses to Professional Standards**

EDSE 501 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education. 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 Core 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)

### **Required Texts**

Hallahan, D.P., Kauffman, J.M., & Pullen, P.C. (2009). Exceptional learners: Introduction to special education (11/E). Merrill. ISBN-10: 0205571042 OR ISBN-13: 9780205571048  
Other assigned readings TBA.

### **Required Access to Course Blackboard Site**

Blackboard will be used to post important announcements for this course. In addition, you will need to login to Blackboard to upload assignments.

Access Blackboard **through myMason:**

- Go to the GMU homepage: <http://www.gmu.edu/>
- Click on MyMason on the top of the page.
- Enter your user login and password (this will be the same as your GMU email login and password)
- Click the “Courses” tab at the top of the screen
- Select your course from the middle column.

### **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 Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.
- 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.

### Other Course Expectations

1. **Professional Behavior:** For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, be prepared for class, demonstrate professional behavior (see *Professional Disposition Criteria* at <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions), and complete all assignments with professional quality in a timely manner. To successfully complete this course, students need to adhere to the due dates for specific readings and assignments to be completed. If you feel you cannot adhere to the schedule noted in the syllabus, please contact the Instructor immediately to discuss options for withdrawing and completing the course during another semester.
2. **Promptness:** All assignments must be submitted *on or before* the assigned due date. **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. Assignments will not be accepted more than 3 days late.**
3. **Written Products:** All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner following guidelines stated in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. All final products must be typed. Products that, in the judgment of the instructor, are unreadable or unprofessionally prepared will be returned un-graded or assigned a lower evaluation.
4. **Writing Support:** All assignments should reflect graduate 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>).
5. **Signature Assignment:** 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. In addition, students completing Midpoint and Final Portfolio courses will use Taskstream to create a full portfolio of their work based on assignments completed throughout their program. For this reason, students will need to retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE Special Education program. In addition to the signature assignment, products from this class can become part of your individual program portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards.

**\*\*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, a “one time” course, or part of an undergraduate minor).** TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). **Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.**

**\*\*Please note: if you do not upload your paper PRIOR to the final class, the instructor may not be able to change an assigned grade of IN until the next semester begins.\*\***

## ASSIGNMENTS

### **Regular Attendance & Participation**

Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, and stay for the duration of the class time. **Two or more absences will result in no credit for this course.** As you all lead active lives and circumstances sometimes happen at unfortunate times – so, if you are unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student. Students who are absent are held responsible for the material covered and assignments given and due. It is also recommended that you notify the instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence.

**\*\*Note:** Be aware that any points earned for participation in class activities during a time of absence will not be earned and cannot be made up.

Participation as described above is evidence of professional behavior, and as such, points will be deducted for missed class activities in the following manner:

- 1 missed activity = 5 point deduction (5% total)
- 2 missed activities = 5 point deduction (10% total and/or F for the course)

**Quizzes:** Students are expected to read text assignments by the date they are listed for discussion in class. Utilizing the companion website may be beneficial for some learners while others may benefit by taking notes, discussing, highlighting, or by marking key concepts with post-it notes. The goal is to convert your text into a valuable resource.

**Key course content from these readings will be assessed through 2 quizzes.** Key points of emphasis include the foundations of special education, procedures of special education, and the characteristics of each disability area.

**Exploratory Activities:** Each adult learner brings varying levels of experience to introductory courses such as this. In order to address your differing backgrounds, you will select activities from a menu of options so that you can tailor this portion of the course to address your own educational needs as you build an emerging philosophy of special education. **Your learning from these activities will be evaluated in your final paper.**

**\*Child Abuse Awareness Program:** Students will complete an online child abuse awareness training module at [http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va\\_teachers/](http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers/). The site includes the definitions and indicators 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. Quizzes and scenarios assess student understanding and a certificate of completion is awarded. **This is a signature assignment that needs to be submitted to TaskStream.**

**\*Comprehensive Final Paper:** A comprehensive final paper covering key course content will be administered. Key points of emphasis include the foundations of special education, procedures of special education, and the characteristics of each disability area.

### 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:

Regular Attendance & Participation	10%
Quiz 1	10%
Quiz 2	10%
Child Abuse Awareness Program*	20%
Final Paper	50%
Total	100%

#### Grading Criteria

90 – 100% = A

80 – 89% = B

70 – 79% = C

<70 = F

### COURSE TOPICS

Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments Due
9/9/11 FRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start of Class Logistics</li> <li>Introduction to Special Education</li> </ul>	
9/10/11 SAT (morning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundations of Special Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 1</li> </ul>
9/10/11 SAT (afternoon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Cycle of Special Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 2</li> </ul>
Online Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IRIS Module: What Do you See? Perceptions of Disability</li> </ul>	
Online Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow link in syllabus to complete the Child Abuse Awareness Program</li> </ul>	
9/23/11 FRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners with Low-Incidence, Multiple, and Severe Disabilities</li> <li>Learners with Physical Disabilities and Other Health Impairments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapters 13&amp;14</li> <li><b>Child Abuse Awareness Program Certificate Due</b> (Post to TaskStream under CEC #9)</li> </ul>

9/24/11 SAT (Morning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners with Learning Disabilities</li> <li>• Learners with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</li> <li>• Learners with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders</li> <li>• Learners with Communication Disorders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9</li> <li>• <b>QUIZ (chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14)</b></li> </ul>
9/24/11 SAT (Afternoon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities</li> <li>• Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapters 5 &amp; 12</li> </ul>
Online Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of Student with Disability</li> </ul>	
Online Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch TV/read magazines, Watch movies, Read Book</li> </ul>	
10/7/11 FRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing</li> <li>• Learners with Blindness or Low Vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapters 10 &amp; 11</li> </ul>
10/8/11 SAT (Morning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multicultural and Bilingual Aspects of Special Education</li> <li>• Parents and Families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>QUIZ (3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12)</b></li> <li>• Chapters 3 &amp; 4</li> </ul>
10/8/11 SAT (Afternoon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student Presentations</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Final Papers Due</b></li> </ul>

**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. Inclement weather cancellations will shift content to online delivery format and do not excuse students from completion of requirements.