



**College of Education and Human Development
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research**

EDSE 744-6E7: *Current Issues in Special Education*

CRN: 80901, 3 - Credit(s)

Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. Teresa Hopkins	Meeting Dates: 09/12/12 - 11/14/12
Phone: 540.419.9544	Meeting Day(s): Wednesday
E-Mail: thopkin2@gmu.edu	Meeting Times: 4:30pm - 8:30pm
Office Hours: by appointment	Meeting Location: Bldg. 100, Room 30

Course Description:

Helps students develop an understanding of the role of convergent research evidence in addressing current issues in special education practice and policy. Familiarizes students with current issues in special education and the group experimental, single subject, and qualitative research designs used to address these current issues. Students evaluate research studies in terms of their methodological strengths and weaknesses and their part in providing convergent bodies of evidence that can be used for defining practice and policy.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Advising Contact Information:

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. For assistance contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703)993-3145.

Nature of Course Delivery:

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Learner Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Identify current issues in special education.
- Explain the historical, educational, and philosophical roots of current issues.
- Explain the multiple perspectives on the topic.
- Propose implications for policy and practice.

Required Textbooks:

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual* (6th ed.). Washington, DC

Recent (2008 to 2011) additional readings will be required, and the majority will be acquired by students in the course. Most readings will be original research articles from peer-reviewed journals. Numerous supporting documents (e.g., research articles, federal statutes and regulations, case studies, recent reports from organizations such as <http://www.projectforum.org/>) will be posted on the class Blackboard site and/or otherwise assigned.

Recommended Textbooks:

(Boudah, D. H. (2011). *Conducting educational research: Guide to completing a major project*. Los Angeles: Sage

“Recommended” means you do not need to have these to do well in the course, but if you’d like to have these as resources to use this semester and in the future, consider acquiring now. Because we will be discussing current issues in special education from a research perspective, you need some understanding of basic research. The intent with these recommendations is to provide graduate and doctoral students in this course some basic resource materials about research. The text by Boudah can be acquired directly from the publisher <http://www.sagepub.com/authorDetails.nav?contribld=631797>

Required Materials:

N/A

Additional Readings:

As assigned by the instructor

TaskStream:

For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, all students are required to submit an NCATE assignment from selected Special Education courses to TaskStream. The NCATE 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 NCATE 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 NCATE 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.

Course's Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program for Special Education Leadership Graduate Certificate. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC Standards are listed on the following website:

<http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalStandards/> The CEC standard that will be addressed in this class is Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice. *NOTE: NCATE Assessments (in many but not all courses) may address additional CEC standards.

Policies (Attendance and Late Work Policies):

Attendance:

Understanding you are individuals with full and active lives, who have made the intellectual and financial commitment to regularly attend class, there may be an instance when you are not able to attend. If this unlikely event should occur, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student (it is recommended that you have two colleagues in the course for this).

If you need to miss, for any reason, more than two class sessions, contact the Instructor immediately (within 48 hours) with notification of when your course withdrawal will be completed. If you realize after the first session that this course's requirements are not a match for you for this semester, process your withdrawal immediately (within 48 hours) and notify the Instructor.

Late Work Policy:

Students who are absent are held responsible for the material covered and assignments due as if in attendance. Please be sure to notify the classmate(s) in sufficient time for them to be of assistance for you. Recommended, but not required, is that you notify the Instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Be aware any points earned for participation in class activities, during a time of absence, will not be earned and cannot be made up.

Course Assignments:

Blackboard Interactions/Discussions (15 points - 7.5 each)

On two occasions across the semester, questions or points-of-view or a brief reading will be posted on Bb for you to discuss. Specific directions for what you need to do will be posted on Bb. Follow the directions for each Bb posting to earn the maximum points available for that Bb assignment.

Synthesis Papers on Current Research Topics (15 points - 5 each)

For each of three topics identified as a current issue in special education, select a minimum of two recent (2008 or later) research articles published in peer-reviewed journals on that topic. On no more than three pages (double-spaced, 1" margins, 12 point font), **synthesize the three research studies**. Each person may be choosing different articles, or if the same articles are selected, the way in which each person synthesizes can vary.

Follow this format:

- 1st page: Cover sheet
- 2nd, 3rd and 4th pages: Your Synthesis (use headings as appropriate)
- 5th page: References (there should be only three references)

Class Presentation (35 points)

Select one current issue in special education on which to conduct a literature review, develop a class presentation, and lead an in-class discussion.

Develop a 20- minute presentation that synthesizes the most current research and/or policies (as appropriate) related to the topic. Prepare a handout that goes with your presentation, and include a Reference page with all sources cited accurately in APA style.

At least two weeks before your Class Presentation, submit the recent research articles that all will read prior to your Class Presentation to the instructor electronically. The instructor will post two of your articles on the Bb site for class colleagues to read in advance of your presentation. Build into your presentation at least one way to *briefly* (two minutes maximum) engage class colleagues in a discussion related to these articles during your presentation. Additionally, *at the conclusion* of your presentation, identify an open-ended question or thought that leads to a brief class discussion, and elicit/answer questions regarding the issue.

Controversial Current Issue (35 points)

Identify one controversial issue in special education. Briefly describe the history of the issue, then use research and other types of professional sources to describe what the controversy is

about. Focus on at least two advantages/positives/pros and two disadvantages/negatives/cons of the issue. Use a minimum of six sources; more if necessary.

Because you are identifying this as a current issue, ensure some (at least two) of your sources are current (2010, 2011, 2012). As with the Synthesis Papers you wrote for this course, aim your focus in writing more on integrating, analyzing, and synthesizing than on identifying and describing (although you will be identifying and describing to some extent). Follow this format:

- 1st page: Cover sheet
- Body of the Paper (use these as your major headings):
 - History of Issue (to include cause of controversy) – 1 page
 - Advantages of the Issue – 3 pages
 - Disadvantages of the Issue – 3 pages
 - Conclusion (to include both a summary and implications, such as for practice or policy) – 2 pages
 - Last page: References

Note: page numbers are approximate; more important than quantity of pages is the quality of the messages

Grading Scale:

- 95 - 100% = A
- 90 - 94% = A-
- 80 - 89% = B
- 70 - 79% = C
- <70% = F

Schedule:

Class # and Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments Due
Class # 1 9/12	Introductions Overview of Course Review of Syllabus Group Suggestions for Current Issues and Controversies	
Class # 2 9/19	Historical Perspectives (TH assigns readings) Students identify their (a) Issue Topic and (b) Class	Historical readings Readings for Current Issues 1 and 2

	<p>Presentation Topic. For each, students gather recent research for all to read.</p> <p>Describe differences between summarizing and synthesizing. Practice writing synthesis paragraphs based on readings for this session.</p>	
Class # 3 9/26	A new Course Schedule will be distributed for classes 3-10	
Class # 4 10/3		Synthesis #1 due by midnight
Class # 5 10/10		
Class # 6 10/17		
Class # 7 10/24		Synthesis #2 due by midnight
Class # 8 10/31		
Class #9 11/7		
Class # 10 11/14		Synthesis #3 due by midnight

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:

- a.* Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- b.* Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- c.* 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.
- d.* 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/>].

- e.* 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/>].
- f.* Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g.* 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/>].

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/Revised 06/25/12](http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/Revised%2006/25/12)

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Note: *This syllabus may change according to class needs. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.*