



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

Spring 2014

EDSE 744 001: Current Issues in Special Education

CRN: 10610, 3 - Credits

Instructor: Dr. Sheri Berkeley	Meeting Dates: 01/21/14 - 05/14/14
Phone: 703-993-9689	Meeting Day(s): Monday
E-Mail: sberkele@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 7:20 pm-10:00 pm
Office Hours: By appointment	Meeting Location: FINLEY 119

***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.*

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

Co-requisites: 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. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

Nature of Course Delivery

[Instructors, please revise in accordance with your specific course format]

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

Sorrells, A. M., Sindelar, P. T., & Rieth, H. J. (2003). *Critical issues in special education: Access, diversity, and accountability (4th edition)*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Digital Library Option

The Pearson textbook(s) for this course **may be** available as part of the **George Mason University Division of Special Education and disAbility Research Digital Library**. Please note that not all textbooks are available through this option. Visit the links below before purchasing the digital library to ensure that your course(s) text(s) are available in this format. The division and Pearson have partnered to bring you the Digital Library; a convenient, digital solution that can save you money on your course materials. The Digital Library offers you access to a complete digital library of **all Pearson textbooks** and MyEducationLabs used across the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research curriculum at a low 1-year or 3-year subscription price. Access codes are available in the school bookstore. Please visit <http://gmu.bncollege.com> and search the ISBN. To register your access code or purchase the Digital Library, visit:

<http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html>

- 1 year subscription \$200 ISBN-13: 9781269541411
- 3 years subscription \$525 ISBN-13: 9781269541381

- Individual e-book(s) also available at the bookstore link above or at <http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html>

****This is not required or recommended for this course.**

Recommended Textbooks

N/A

Required Resources

To be assigned.

Additional Readings

To be assigned (including student selected readings).

Course Relationships 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 standard that will be addressed in this class is Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- 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. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>]

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

Course Policies & Expectations

Attendance.

Students are asked to attend all classes on time, be prepared, post to Blackboard discussion board, and actively participate and support the members of the class learning community.

Late Work.

Late will not be accepted.

TaskStream Submission

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, *Critical Issues Assignment* to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete(IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you MUST use the login and password information that has been created for you. This information is distributed to students through GMU email, so it is very important that you set up your GMU email. For more TaskStream information, go to <http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream>

Grading Scale

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

F = <79%

GRADING

1. Participation	10 points
2. Blackboard Posts (4 x 5 points)	20 points
3. SPED Identification Paper	30 points
4. Synthesis Papers (3 x 10 points)	30 points
5. Presentation	10 points
TOTAL	100 POINTS

Assignments

Performance-based Assessment (TaskStream submission required).

Synthesis Papers (30 points)

For each of three topics identified as a current issue in special education, select a minimum of two (EDSE 744) 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. Each paper will be worth 10 points

Caution: This assignment is not about summarizing, it is about synthesizing. Think in terms of analyzing the content of the studies, determine how you want to approach a synthesis, and focus on that synthesis for a maximum of three pages.

Follow this format:

1st page: Cover sheet

2nd, 3rd, and 4th pages: Your Synthesis (use headings as appropriate, but be judicious)

5th page: References (there should be a minimum of three references)

6th page: Justification for the reliability of the three primary studies

Grading Rubric for Synthesis Papers

Exemplary paper (10 points): A thoughtful description of a significant issue in special education and why this issue is relevant for meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. In addition, the students should consider implications of this issue throughout the life of the person with a disability. Appropriate references are used and information presented is accurately synthesized (rather than only summarized). Any conclusions that are drawn include appropriate support (rather than solely based on student opinion).

Adequate paper (9 points): Good overall paper, lacking in one of the criteria for an exemplary paper.

Marginal paper (8 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style, or literature selected.

Inadequate paper (<8 points): Paper with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, synthesis, overall thoughtfulness. Contains little or no information of value to special education practice.

Unacceptable/no paper (0 points): No paper turned in or paper was not approved for this assignment.

Exemplary paper	Adequate paper	Marginal paper	Inadequate paper	No paper
10	9	8	<8	0

TaskStream Rubric

Evaluation Standards	Exceeds Expectations 3	Meets Expectations 2	Does Not Meet Expectations 1
Paper	Synthesis goes beyond the obvious. Suggestions are creative and realistic. Minimal writing errors.	Includes background information on the issue, explanation of the controversy, summary of pros/cons, and suggestions for policy/practice. Writes in an organized style using APA.	Fails to meet all elements of the stated expectations. Writing is mechanically unsound.
Overall Critical Issues Project	The project meets expectations and generates insightful suggestions for how special needs might be better met.	The project clearly identifies a significant issue AND provides clear connections to a need for lifelong learning.	This project fails to clearly identify a significant issue OR fails to provide clear connections to a need for lifelong learning.

Presentation of Synthesis Paper (10 points)

Select one current issue in special education that you researched for your synthesis paper, develop a class presentation, and lead a 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, post one recent research article that you would like everyone in the class to read prior to your Class Presentation. Build into your presentation at least one way to *briefly* 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.

Evaluation of Presentation

Presentations will be graded pass/fail.

TaskStream Rubric

Evaluation Standards	Exceeds Expectations 3	Meets Expectations 2	Does Not Meet Expectations 1
Presentation	Articulates novel implications for practitioners.	Presents a broad, interesting background. Summarizes and analyzes differing views. Presents in an organized style.	Presentation is disorganized or lacking key information.
Discussion	Encourages dialogue and novel thinking.	Proposes thought-provoking questions or discussion points. Clearly communicates key ideas.	Minimal efforts to engage the audience are made.
Link to CEC Standard 9	Clear reflection of professional and ethical desire to embrace ongoing learning and evidence-based practices.	Efforts to engage in an active learning community. Offers reflective ideas showing a desire to learn.	Minimal efforts to engage in learning demonstrated.

Performance-based Common Assignments (No TaskStream submission required).

N/A

Other Assignments.

Participation (10 points)

Students are asked to attend all classes on time, be prepared, and actively participate and support the members of the class learning community. This includes being prepared for and actively participating in student lead discussions.

Rubric for Participation

- **Exemplary (A):** The student attends all or almost classes (student may miss one class with notice to instructor), is always on time, and is prepared (including posting in time to Blackboard); the student completes field based activity; and the student actively participates and supports the members of the learning group and the class.
- **Marginal (C):** The student is usually on time, usually prepared for class, and participates in group and class discussions, but may be miss participation points due to absence (two absences), failure to prepare for a class activity (such as posting for one Blackboard activity), or failure to complete the field based activity.
- **Inadequate (0 points):** The student is frequently late for class. Student misses numerous participation opportunities due to absence (3 or more) or failure to prepare for class activities (such as posting for two or more Blackboard activities). Instructor is not

notified of absences. The student does not actively participate in discussions. The student may fail to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. **Excessive absences can result in additional penalties and potential withdrawal from class.**

Blackboard Posts (20 points)

Students will locate and post to Blackboard one peer-reviewed article or policy document from a reliable source (e.g., CEC) related to your self-selected topic and one of the areas that we are discussing for classes indicated on the syllabus:

- Eligibility & Labelling
- Free & Appropriate Education (FAPE)
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Continuum of Placement

There will be four required Blackboard posts (5 points each). Postings should be made by the start of class time.

Grading Rubric

This requirement will be graded as pass/fail.

SPED Identification Paper (30 points)

Students will self-select a special education (SPED) population for this paper, and describe issues related to identification of this SPED population. Students must include a discussion of issues for this population related to a minimum of 4 of the following topics:

- Eligibility & Labelling
- Free and Appropriate Education
- Individualized Education Plans
- Continuum of Placement
- Access to General Curriculum
- Accountability for Student Learning

You should plan to have a minimum of 8 citations for this assignment (which can include the textbook for the course, and articles posted by classmates for discussion). Your paper should be 8-10 double spaced pages (not including references), and include a reference page(s).

Rubric for SPED Identification Paper

Exemplary paper (27-30 points): A thoughtful description of issues related to identification of the selected SPED population is provided. Four or more required topics are included in the discussion. Appropriate references are used and information presented is accurate. Any conclusions that are drawn include appropriate support (rather than solely based on student opinion).

Adequate paper (24-26 points): Good overall paper, lacking in one of the criteria for an exemplary paper.

Marginal paper (21-23 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style, or literature selected.

Inadequate paper (<21 points): Paper with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, synthesis, overall thoughtfulness. Contains little or no information of value to special education practice.

Unacceptable/no paper (0 points): No paper turned in or paper was not approved for this assignment.

Exemplary paper	Adequate paper	Marginal paper	Inadequate paper	No paper
27-30	24-26	21-23	<21	0

Schedule

CLASS TOPICS & DUE DATES

Date	Class Topic & Reading Assignments	Due Dates
1/27/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Overview • Identification of Students with Disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Public Policy: From Access to Accountability in Special Education</i> 	
2/3/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility & Labeling • Free & Appropriate Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Historical Contexts of Special Education: Framing our Understanding of Contemporary Issues</i> ○ <i>Classification Issues in Special Education for English Language Learners</i> ○ Additional Readings TBA • Group Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Reading Selection Due
2/10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized Education Plan • Continuum of Placement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Trends in Placement Issues</i> ○ Additional Readings TBA • Group Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Reading Selection Due
2/17/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Work • Student Lead Discussions (student selected topics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Reading Selection Due
2/24/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the General Curriculum • Accountability for Student Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Contemporary Legal Issues in Special Education</i> ○ Additional Readings TBA • Group Work 	

3/3/14	SPRING BREAK	
3/10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Lead Discussions (student selected topics) • Peer Review of Papers 	• Paper DRAFT Due
3/17/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education: Interventions and Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional Readings TBA 	• Paper Due
3/24/14	ONLINE CLASS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating Resources for Practitioners 	
3/31/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic & Behavioral Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Instructional Interventions for Students with Learning Disabilities OR Trends and Issues in Behavioral Interventions</i> ○ <i>Additional Student Selected Readings</i> • Class Activity (create a rubric for different types of practitioner resources) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Reading Selection (“How To” Practitioner Article) Due • 744: Synthesis Paper #1 Due • 844: Draft Practitioner resource rubrics due (online class assignment)
4/7/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition: Early Childhood & post-secondary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Issues, Trends, & Challenges in Early Intervention OR Transition Issues: Process, Practices, and Perspectives</i> ○ <i>Additional Student Selected Readings</i> 	
4/14/14	FIELD BASED ACTIVITY	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>844 Students</u>: Final Project Work Time • <u>744 Students</u>: Synthesis Paper Work Time 	
4/21/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and Related Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Trends and Issues in Instructional and Assistive Technology OR Contemporary Issues in Rehabilitation Counseling: Interface with and Implications for Special Education</i> ○ <i>Additional Student Selected Readings</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>844 Students</u>: Draft Presentations Due • <u>744 Students</u>: Synthesis Papers #2 & 3 Due
4/29/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 744 PRESENTATIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>744 Students</u>: Presentations Due
5/5/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 844 PRESENTATIONS & CELEBRATION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>844 Students</u>: Presentations Due
5/12/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONFERENCES 	

NOTE: This syllabus may change according to class needs.

Appendix