



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

Summer 2015

EDSE 401 C01: Introduction to Special Education

CRN: 41762, 3 – Credits

Instructor: Nadine Bolkhovitinov, NBCT, PhD	Meeting Dates: 6/29/2015 - 8/1/2015
Phone: (703) 203-9333 (text first please)	Meeting Day(s): Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays
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Office Hours: by arrangement	Meeting Location: Fairfax W 1008

***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

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

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-requisite(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. 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

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:

- 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, behavioral 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 use of innovative technology.
- Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.
- Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children.

Required Textbooks

Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C. (2015). *Exceptional learners: An introduction to special education*, 13th Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Digital Library

Effective summer 2015, the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research will discontinue the use of the Pearson Digital Library. No further registrations will be accepted. Students who hold current subscriptions will continue to have access to the library for the remainder of their subscription time. However, no further updates will be made to the digital library. During this time, should a textbook be revised or a new book is adopted for a class where the text is included in the digital library, Pearson will have options available to you and

will provide you with an individual e-text or, if there is no e-text, a printed copy. Students, who have purchased a 3-year subscription directly through Pearson Education, will also have an option to obtain a prorated refund. However, 3-year subscription access cards purchased via the GMU bookstore will need to speak with a George Mason Bookstore Representative. Please be aware that the issuance of a refund, in this case, is at the discretion of the George Mason bookstore. Concerns or questions may be directed to Molly Haines at Molly.Haines@pearson.com.

Required Resources

Students must establish access to their Blackboard account. Presentations and supplementary material for the class will be posted on Blackboard and students must be prepared to print presentations ahead of time of each class to take notes on the material presented. Articles and videos that are required will be handed out in class or posted on Blackboard.

Additional Readings

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard for each specific class. They must be printed or brought to the class via laptop as well as read ahead of each class in order for students to be able to actively participate in class discussions.

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 teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Special Education: Students with Disabilities who Access the General Curriculum K-12. 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 that will be addressed in this class include Standard 1: Foundations, Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners, and Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences.

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/the-mason-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 must attend class, participate in class discussions, and complete in-class activities, in order to receive points for class. Classes may only be made up by prior agreement, and by completing all on-line assignments and summary paper for the class. Emergencies will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Late Work.

Minus 10 points for every day submitted late for each of the major assignments (Child Abuse recognition certificate uploaded on Taskstream, DisAbility Specific topic paper, presentation, and final upload and release of DisAbility Specific Paper and Presentation on Taskstream). No credit for in-class if absent from class.

TaskStream Submission

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit these assessments, *Abuse/Neglect Certificate* and *DisAbility Specific Final Paper* 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

95-100%	= A
90 - 94%	= A-
87 - 89%	= B+
84 - 86%	= B
80 - 83%	= B-
77 - 79%	= C+
74 - 76%	= C
70 - 73%	= C-
60 - 69%	= D
< 70%	= F

Assignments

Performance-based Assessment (TaskStream submission required).

1. Child abuse awareness certificate of completion uploaded to Taskstream: 15 points
2. DisAbility Specific Paper: 25 points
3. DisAbility Specific Presentation: 10 points

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

Final Exam: 25 points

Other Assignments.

Attendance: 15 points (1 point per class)

Per class written assignments: (10 assignments at 1 point each): 10 points

Final Paper (Taskstream Assignment)

The final paper is an opportunity to show growth in your knowledge about learners with disabilities. You will select one disability area and demonstrate your knowledge of (a) the characteristics of the disability, (b) learning needs of individuals with the disability, (c) lifespan issues related to the disability (including impact of a disability on the individual and the family), and (d) how the disability is similar and different to other types of disabilities (e.g., mild, severe, sensory). To show this growth you will combine what you have learned from coursework (lectures, discussions, articles, and textbook readings) with independent learning activities (IRIS modules, field experiences, and exploratory activities). Your independent learning activities will include the following:

1. **The IRIS module *Perceptions of Disability*** located at <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/da/chalecycle.htm>

Start the module at “CHALLENGE.” Answer the questions under the headings of “Challenge,” “Assessment,” and “Wrap Up.”

2. **At least one field experience** designed to further your understanding on the impact of a disability on a student’s learning, his/her family, and his/her school experience. These experiences might include:
 - a. Observation of a student with a disability. If you are already teaching, take this opportunity to explore a disability with which you are less familiar (in other words, do not observe your own classroom).
 - b. Interview of a parent, administrator, or teacher of a student with a disability.
 - c. Completion of additional IRIS modules (<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources.html>)
 - d. Other instructor approved activity.

Note: Most students in this class make arrangements on their own for the field based activity (e.g., observing in a school where they are working, interviewing someone they already know who is a teacher or parent of a child with a disability, making arrangements with a peer in class, or completing additional IRIS modules). IF you would like to complete a field experience in a K-12 setting (and you don’t have your own contacts), you **must** work through GMU’s Field Placement Office. Please do **NOT** make “cold calls” to schools/families asking to observe or interview. Instead, please fill out the request form at the link below.

Mason is required to track when and where Mason students complete any field experiences. Consequently, EACH PERSON ENROLLED in this course must access this link <http://cehd.gmu.edu/endorse/ferf> at the beginning of the semester (if not before) and complete the information requested REGARDLESS if one needs assistance in finding an individual for the project/case study or not.

3. **At least one exploratory activity** designed to better understand the experience of having a disability. These activities might include watching a full length movie or several episodes of a television show, reading a book (e.g. fictional/memoir), or

reviewing how disability is represented in the media that help you explore of the impact of a disability on a person's life. Your exploratory activity sources might include:

- a. Movies
- b. Television
- c. Books
- d. Media (e.g., newspapers, Internet)

Please see Blackboard for the list generated on the first night of class. You may also choose to visit the following websites for

ideas: http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resource_TOOL_film/film.html http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resource_TOOL_irismedia/irismedia.html <http://www.nlcd.org/resources-books-movies-disability.html> <http://lits.columbiasc.edu/edenslibrary/disabilities.htm>

Paper Guidelines

Your paper should be approximately 10 pages long (without references and appendix). The format for the paper is fairly flexible. You may choose to describe the characteristics and the impact of the selected disability and make connections to how you experienced or observed this in your field experience and exploratory activity. You may choose to describe meaningful experiences from your field experience and exploratory activity and explain how that connects with the content you have learned in the course. You can also come up with an alternative format of your choice. However, please be sure to refer to the grading and Taskstream assignment rubrics to make sure that you have addressed all required topics.

Your goal is to clearly show how your own perceptions of disability have changed and evolved this semester AND demonstrate that you clearly understand the important content you have learned. Regardless of how you choose to approach this assignment, your paper should address the following areas:

A. Disability Characteristics

What are some characteristics of the disability, for example:

- What is its prevalence? Is it a high- or low- incidence disability?
- How is it diagnosed?
- Are physical/medical issues associated with this disability?
- Are there social or behavioral implications associated with this disability?

B. Learning Needs

How does the disability affect learning? For example:

- What areas of learning might be impacted by this disability?
- What teaching strategies might benefit learners with this disability?
- What IEP considerations might be needed?
- What accommodations might students with this disability need?
- Where might a student with this disability receive services? (Think LRE.)
- What skills will teachers need to work with students who have this disability?

C. Lifespan Issues (including Impact on Individual and Family)

How does having this disability impact an individual? For example:

- What are early childhood issues that need to be considered?
- What are community issues that need to be considered?
- What are post-secondary (after high school – job, college, independent living) factors that need to be considered?
- What impact does having this disability have on social relationships?
- What is the impact of the disability on family? For example:
- What daily living skills might be impacted by this disability?
- How does this disability impact family dynamics?
- What information do families need to advocate for their children who have disabilities?

D. Similarities and Differences to Other Disabilities

How is this disability similar and different to other disabilities (or other disability areas)?

For example:

- Is there a difference in the prevalence of the chosen disabilities?
- What are differences in possible school placements for students with the selected disabilities?
- What types of instructional strategies or accommodations/modifications may be different for students with the chosen disabilities?

Note: For this category, you should contrast your selected disability with **TWO** other disabilities or disability areas. For example, if my paper were on students with ADHD (mild disability), I might contrast it to severe disabilities (or a specific disability such as Cerebral Palsy) **AND** sensory disabilities (or a specific disability such as blindness).

E. Appendices

In addition, you should provide the following artifacts within an appendix:

- 1) Your response to the **required IRIS module**- Perceptions of Disability
- 2) Evidence of your chosen **field experience**.
 - This might include notes from an interview, drawings/notes from a classroom observation, responses to a relevant IRIS module (other than Perceptions of Disability), and your field experience paper (detailed below).
- 3) Evidence of completion of at least one **exploratory activity** related to how disability is portrayed in the media:
 - **Movie(s):** Evidence would include the name of the movie, the date the movie was watched, a brief summary of the plot (including type(s) of disabilities portrayed), and a personal reflection that makes connections to the course lectures and readings.

- **Television:** Evidence would include the name of the television show(s), all dates shows were watched, a brief summary of the plot (including type(s) of disabilities portrayed), and a personal reflection of all shows that makes connections to the course lectures and readings.
- **Book:** Evidence would include the name of the book, an indication of the type of book (fiction, biography, junior fiction), a brief summary of the plot (including type(s) of disabilities portrayed), and a personal reflection that makes connections to the course lectures and readings.
- **Media:** Evidence would include a log of the title of each article, the date it was located, a brief description of the content of the article (including type(s) of disability portrayed), and a personal reflection of all articles that makes connections to the course lectures and readings.

Note: Appendices do not need to be typed.

Grading Rubric

Requirement	Points (out of 25)
Disability Characteristics Salient characteristics of the disability are clearly described. Requirements related to identification for special education are included.	<u> </u> /5
Learning Needs Learning needs associated with the chosen disability are clearly described including relevant IEP considerations.	<u> </u> /5
Lifespan Issues (including Impact on Family) A clear description of the impact of the disability across the lifespan is provided.	<u> </u> /5
Similarities and Differences to Other Disabilities The paper compares and contrasts the chosen disability with <u>2</u> other disabilities (or disability categories: mild, severe, or sensory).	<u> </u> /5
Information Synthesis Student demonstrates personal growth in knowledge about learners with disabilities. Student demonstrates completion of independent learning activities (IRIS modules, field experiences, and exploratory activities) by integrating what was learned through these experiences with learning from other coursework (lectures, discussions, articles, and textbook readings).	<u> </u> /4
APA Style Writing is clear and easy to understand. There are few to no grammar errors/typos. References are correctly cited in APA format.	<u> </u> /1
Total Points	/25

Disability Specific Paper Presentation Rubric: 10 points possible

Name/Topic:

Criteria	Benchmarks			Points	
	UNSATISFACTORY	MINIMAL	GOOD	OUTSTANDING	
Organization Content Knowledge	<p>Listener cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information. Does not engage the audience.</p> <p>Students do not have grasp of information; students cannot answer questions about subject.</p>	<p>Listener has difficulty following presentation because presenters jump around. Does not engage most of the audience.</p> <p>Students are uncomfortable with information and are able to answer only rudimentary questions.</p>	<p>Students present information in engaging and logical sequence which audience can follow.</p> <p>Students are at ease with content, but fail to elaborate.</p>	<p>Students present information in engaging, novel, and logical sequence which audience can follow.</p> <p>Students demonstrate full knowledge with explanations and elaboration. Address the needs of culturally, linguistically and ability diverse young children and their families</p>	5
Visual, Media, Strategies Mechanics	<p>Student used no visuals/media/strategies.</p> <p>Student presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.</p> <p>Two or fewer sources in APA style.</p>	<p>Student occasionally used visuals/media/strategies that rarely support text and presentation.</p> <p>Presentation has no more than three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.</p> <p>Three + sources in APA style.</p>	<p>Visuals/media/strategies related to text and presentation.</p> <p>Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors. Four + sources in APA style.</p>	<p>Student used visuals/media/strategies to reinforce screen text and presentation.</p> <p>Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.</p> <p>Five + sources in APA style.</p>	3
Delivery	<p>Students' presentation is poorly organized, does not demonstrate a knowledge of the topic. No evidence of keeping presentation to time limit.</p>	<p>Student presentation lacks organization, there is little evidence of collection of information, limited demonstration of topic knowledge, presentation is either too long/short.</p>	<p>Students' presentation is organized, student demonstrates knowledge of topic, presentation is within time limit.</p>	<p>Student presentation is well organized, student demonstrates exceptional knowledge of topic and presentation is kept within time limit.</p>	2

Schedule

Class	Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings to do for that class
1	6/30	Introductions Course Overview Assignment/Blackboard/Taskstream Explanation Introduction to the Field		
2	7/2	History of Special Education Legislation. Understanding the IEP process	Select Disability Paper topic	Chapters 1 & 2
3	7/4	Eligibility Families, Communities, Multicultural and Bilingual Aspects of Special Education (BLACKBOARD CLASS)		Chapters 3 & 4
4	7/7	Learners with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities		Chapter 5
5	7/9	Learners with Learning Disabilities (BLACKBOARD CLASS)		Chapters 6
6	7/11	Learners with ADHD Learners with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (BLACKBOARD CLASS)	Child Abuse Awareness Certificate uploaded to Taskstream (15 points)	Chapter 7 & 8
7	7/14	Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders	Disability Specific Paper SafeAssign(20 points)	Chapter 9
8	7/16	Learners with Communication Disorders		Chapter 10
9	7/18	Learners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Presentation Disability Specific Papers (3-5 students)	Chapter 11
10	7/21	Learners with Blindness or Low vision	Presentation Disability Specific Papers (3-5 students)	Chapters 12
11	7/23	Learners with Low-Incidence, Multiple, or Severe disabilities	Presentation Disability Specific Papers (3-5 students)	Chapters 13

12	7/25	Learners with Physical Disabilities and Other Health Impairments	Presentation Disability Specific Papers (3-5 students)	Chapter 14
13	7/28	Learners with Special Gifts and Talents Final Exam distributed	Field Experience Paper with Documentation to SafeAssign	Chapter 15
14	7/30	Review Discussion Summary of learning (work on Final Exam)		
15	8/1	LAST CLASS Course Evaluations (online)	Disability Specific Paper and Presentation DUE on Taskstream Final Examination DUE on Blackboard (25 points)	

Appendix

TaskStream Assignment Evaluation Rubric

Your paper will be evaluated based on the following rubric for accreditation purposes. Your scores here will be used for program improvement purposes and will not impact your grade in the course. However, if you “do not meet competency” in any area, you should continue to focus on this area in future coursework as this is an important competency in special education.

	1 Does Not Meet Competency	2 Meets Competency	3 Exceeds Competency
Disability Characteristics	Information on salient characteristics of the chosen disability is missing or inaccurate. Information on requirements related to identification for special education services is missing or inaccurate.	Indicates clear understanding of the salient characteristics (physical, medical, learning, and/or social/emotional as appropriate) of the chosen disability that are required for eligibility for special education services. Demonstrates understanding of legal aspects and regulatory requirements in special education (e.g., laws and regulation; evaluation issues, etc.).	Includes all criteria for “Meets Competency.” In addition, indicates an understanding of historical and/or contemporary issues related to the chosen disability.

Learning Needs	Information on learning needs (academic, social, and/or behavioral as appropriate) associated with the chosen disability is missing or inaccurate.	Indicates clear understanding of learning needs (academic, social, and/or behavioral as appropriate) associated with the chosen disability. Demonstrates understanding of IEP considerations for learners with the disability (e.g., least restrictive environment; academic, social, and/or behavioral services; related services; transition needs, etc.).	Includes all criteria for “Meets Competency.” In addition, indicates a clear understanding of teaching practices that are effective for students with the chosen disability.
Lifespan Issues (including Impact on Family)	Information on impact of the disability across the lifespan is missing or inaccurate.	Indicates clear understanding of the impact of the disability across the lifespan (e.g., IFSP, transition, post-secondary concerns, etc.).	Includes all criteria for “Meets Competency.” In addition, indicates understanding of impact on the individual’s family (e.g., family dynamics, due process, advocacy, etc.).
Relationship to other Disabilities	Chosen disability is not compared and contrasted with <u>2</u> other disabilities (or category of disabilities) or information presented is inaccurate.	Demonstrates understanding of range of disability categories by comparing and contrasting the chosen disability with <u>2</u> different disabilities (or disability categories: mild, severe, or sensory).	Includes all criteria for “Meets Competency.” In addition, addresses similarities and differences in teaching practices across populations.