



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

Summer 2016

EDSE 634 001: Characteristics of Students with Autism

CRN: 42308, 3 - Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Heidi Graff	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 05/16/16 - 08/06/16
<b>Phone:</b> (703) 993-8036	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Asynchronous
<b>E-Mail:</b> hgraff@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> Asynchronous
<b>Office Hours:</b> By appointment	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Internet

***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**

Describes varying characteristics of students labeled with a type of autism who receive special education services. Examines definitions, eligibility criteria, incidence rates, and etiology. Perspectives from students, families, educational, community, and career personnel are described.

Schedule Type: LEC

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3

Hours of Lab or Studio per week: 0

**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

## DELIVERY METHOD:

This course will be delivered online using an **asynchronous** format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before “@masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on May 15, 2016.

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard;
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of the course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for Pcs and Macs respectively, available for free downloading by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player>
  - Apple QuickTime Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
- A headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool

## EXPECTATIONS:

- **Course Week:** Refer to the asynchronous bullet below if your course is asynchronous or the synchronous bullet if your course is synchronous.
  - **Asynchronous:** Because online courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will **start** on Wednesdays, and **finish** on Tuesdays.
- **Log-in Frequency:** Refer to the asynchronous bullet below if your course is asynchronous or the synchronous bullet if your course is synchronous.
  - **Synchronous:** Students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings. In addition, students must actively check the course Blackboard site

and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, at a minimum this should be 3 times per week.

- **Participation:** Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which include viewing of all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance if they are struggling with technical components of the course. Contact ITU (<http://itservices.gmu.edu/help.cfm>) at (703) 993-8870 or [support@gmu.edu](mailto:support@gmu.edu).
- **Technical Issues:** Students should expect that they could experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- **Workload:** Expect to log in to this course **at least three times a week** to read announcements, participate in the discussions, and work on course materials. Remember, this course is **not** self-paced. There are **specific deadlines and due dates** listed in the **CLASS SCHEDULE** section of this syllabus to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

**Netiquette:** Our goal is to be **collaborative**, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. I suggest that you always re-read your responses carefully before you post them to encourage others from taking them as personal attacks. **Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words.** I will do the same. Remember, you are not competing with each other but sharing information and learning from one another as well as from the instructor.

### **Learner Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the evolution of autism as a disability category.
2. Examine varying perspectives on the etiology of autism.
3. Analyze individual as well as clusters of student behaviors to identify the label associated with the behaviors.
4. Examine the diversity of definitions that apply to the wide range of skills associated with students who are labeled with autism.
5. Describe how schools, families, and community agencies may collaborate in determining eligibility for students with autism as a primary disability label.

6. Given specific student behaviors targeted for specialized services via special education, identify corresponding responsive instructional techniques and the research that supports those techniques.
7. Describe the range of service delivery models for students with autism, and analyze the extent to which research-based practices are implemented in educational settings so that students are served in the least restrictive environment.

### **Required Textbooks**

Wheeler, J. J., Mayton, M. R., & Carter, S. L. (2015). *Methods for teaching students with autism spectrum disorders: Evidence-based practices*. Pearson.

Kluth, P. (2010). *You're going to love this kid! (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Baltimore: Brookes.

### **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 the Teaching Students with Autism 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 2: Characteristics of Learners.

### **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 George Mason University Disability Services and inform their instructor, in writing, as soon as possible. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. [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.*

All course work will be online in an Asynchronous format. There will be no face-to-face meetings.

#### *Late Work.*

All modules are due as noted on the course site and below in the schedule. No late work can be submitted.

### **Tk20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement**

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit the *Classroom Observation* to Tk20 through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Tk20 through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Tk20 (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Tk20 submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

### **Grading Scale**

A = 380 - 400  
A- = 365 - 379  
B+ = 354 - 364  
B = 344 - 353  
C = 330 - 343  
F = < 329

## Assignments

### **Performance-based Assessment (Tk20 submission required).**

This is your signature assignment for Tk20. Conduct in-person interviews with three people, one of which must be the parent/guardian of a student with autism. When appropriate, the individual with autism may be one of the three people interviewed. At least one school professional (i.e., general education teacher, special education teacher, speech-language therapist, principal) must be interviewed. Depending on who you choose to interview, it may also be appropriate to select a professional from a community agency. All individuals interviewed should know or work with the SAME person with ASD. The purpose of these interviews is to gather information from different sources to determine their views and experiences about educational programming for this student with autism. Questions asked during the interview *must be approved in advance*, and you should definitely follow-up on individual's responses to questions as appropriate during the interview. Synthesize the information you elicited from the interviews (be sure you do not simply identify the responses; synthesis must be evident), and connect information you elicited from a minimum of TWO recent (2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016) per theme of research (or literature) from peer-reviewed professional journal articles. Use pseudonyms for school personnel, schools, or towns. Emphasize with interviewees that (a) interviews are a course assignment and (b) confidentiality of responses is assured.

























- Cover sheet. (One page)
- **Method** identified: Insert a one-page that tells how you explained the interview to people (including your welcome), terms defined prior to the interview, the specific questions asked, and pseudonyms for each interviewee with their position title after the name. (One page)
- Theme # 1 **Educational Placement** synthesized; recent research or literature integrated (at least 2 research articles). (Two pages)
- Theme # 2 **Social Level** synthesized; recent research or literature integrated (at least 2 research articles). (Two pages)
- Theme # 3 **Behavioral Concerns** synthesized; recent research or literature integrated (at least 2 research articles). (Two pages)
- **Reflections** noted; recent research or literature integrated (1 or 2 research articles or literature). (Two pages)
- **References (7 minimum)**. (One page)

### **Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required).**

### **Other Assignments.**

All modules will begin on Wednesdays and must be concluded with work submitted by Tuesday at 9pm. **Each module will have an assignment to complete by the end of the module based upon that week's learning. The assignments noted on the schedule are more labor intensive and are designated in bold so you can manage your time wisely.**

### Schedule

Weeks and Beginning Dates	Module Topic	<b>Readings</b>  Please be aware that there will be additional articles or reading information posted under each module. The readings noted below are only from your texts.
Week 1 May 18	Module 1- Introduction and Characteristics of ASD	 Kluth Ch. 1  Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Ch. 1
Week 2 May 25	Module 2- Classroom	 Kluth Chs. 2 & 5  Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Ch. 2
Week 3 June 1	Module 3- Assessment and DSM V	 Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Ch. 3  <b>Choose Media</b>
Week 4 June 8	Module 4- Family and Collaboration	 Kluth Chs. 3 & 4  Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Chs. 4 & 8  <b>Begin Interviews</b>
Week 5 June 15	Module 5- Current Perspectives	 <b>Media Comparison and Contrast Due</b>
Week 6 June 22	Module 6- Communication	 Kluth Ch. 7  Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Ch. 5
Week 7 June 29	Module 7- Social	 Kluth Ch. 6  Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Ch. 6
Week 8 July 6-	Module 8- Behaviors	 Kluth Ch. 9  Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Ch. 7
Week 9 July 13	Module 9- Cognition and Evidence-Based Practices	 Kluth Chs. 10 & 11  Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Ch. 9
Week 10 July 20	Module 10- Sensory System	 Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Ch. 10
Week 11 July 27	Module 11- Lifespan	 <b>Interview Synthesis Paper Due</b>  Kluth Ch. 12  Wheeler, Mayton, & Carter Chs. 11 & 12
Week 12 August 3	Module 12- Synthesis Sharing	 <b>Video Presentation Posted</b>