



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

Fall 2016

EDSE 501 001: Introduction to Special Education

CRN: 71627, 3 - Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Kurt Lazaroff	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 08/29/16 - 12/20/16
<b>Phone:</b> 336-707-7480 text or talk	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Thursday
<b>E-Mail:</b> klazarof@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> 4:30 pm - 7:10 pm
<b>Office Hours:</b> by appointment, just ask!	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Fairfax, West 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**

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.

**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.

**Advising Tip**

Did you know that students in "quick admit" and non-degree status are restricted in the number of classes they can take? Students planning to complete a program should apply as soon as possible. Apply at <http://cehd.gmu.edu/admissions/steps>.

## **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:

1. Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
2. Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education.
3. Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of special education.
4. Describe research in etiological factors associated with all disability areas.
5. Describe social, cognitive, behavioral and academic characteristics associated with all disability areas.
6. Describe historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education.
7. Describe the role of families in the educational process.
8. Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including use of innovative technology.
9. Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.
10. Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children.

## **Required Textbooks**

Friend, M. (2014). *Special Education: Contemporary Perspectives for School Professionals* (4th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780133400823

## **Required Resources**

Access to the internet and GMU library resources

## **Additional Readings**

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard by week or by topic.

## **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: Learner development and individual learning differences; Standard 3: Curricular content knowledge.

### **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.*

This class meets only once a week and each class member's attendance is important to their learning and in the collaborative work which is at the core of class structure. Make every possible attempt to attend every class. After missing one class there will be a deduction of half a letter grade from the final course grade for the student for every class missed thereafter. IF you know you will be missing a class you should notify the instructor prior to class time.

Arriving late to class. Please text the instructor or another student in the class if you are going to be late.

#### *Late Work*

Because a large amount of the grade bearing assignments become the topic of discussion for in-class collaborative work, assignments must be completed on time. Work not completed by the due date and time will mean a 10% grade penalty for every 24-hour period following that time. No work will be accepted after the final day of classes.

#### *Expectations*

This course meets only once a week and therefore the time spent in class must be focused and productive. The normal out-of-class study load for a graduate-level class is considered to be three hours for every credit hour. That means 9 hours of reading and studying per week. You must come prepared to participate in this class. Assigned readings should be completed prior to class. Technology that allows access to the internet should be brought to class in ready-to-use condition.

Course members 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.

***Warning!! Blackboard will be monitored for student log-in and activity.***

#### **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 *Final Paper* 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.

#### **Abuse/Neglect Certificate**

Every student registered for any Special Education course is required to submit the *Abuse/Neglect Certificate* to Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Failure to submit the abuse/Neglect certificate to 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 submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/guidance/health/child\\_abuse\\_intervention\\_training.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/guidance/health/child_abuse_intervention_training.pdf)

## Grading Scale

100-93%	A
92-90%	A-
89- 83%	B
82-80%	B-
79-70%	C
69-0%	F

## Assignments

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

## Final Paper

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/chalcycle.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). Contact your instructor if you have questions.

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_film/film.html)

[http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resource\\_TOOL\\_irismedia/irismedia.html](http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resource_TOOL_irismedia/irismedia.html)

<http://www.nlcdd.org/resources-books-movies-disability.html>

<http://lits.columbiasc.edu/edenslibrary/disabilities.htm>

### **Final Paper Guidelines**

Your paper should be 5 to 10 pages. 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 Blackboard/TK20 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), etc.
- 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.

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

*Disability category wiki group project.* Class members will be formed into groups of 4-5 students. Each group will construct a wiki on Blackboard for every category of disability that will include a description of the categories social, cognitive, behavioral and academic characteristics, etiology, prevalence, intervention strategies, and a compendium of web-based resources for parents, teachers, students, and administrators.

*Discussion/Journaling.* Class members will post their ideas and thoughts regarding the topics from class discussion on weekly discussion boards in Blackboard. A prompt will be posted but everyone is encouraged to pursue expanded topics of their choice that are related to the class discussion.

*Comprehensive disability category case-studies.* Class members will write 2 (two) different comprehensive responses to instructor supplied case studies of students with a specified categories of disability. Disability categories will be: Specific Learning Disability, Autism, Other Health Impaired, and Developmental Disability.

*Brief disability case-studies (3).* Class members will write a brief response to a case study that will be discussed in an in-class group discussion and become part of a group response presentation of the case study. Each student must post their brief response and participate in discussion and presentation of their group's response.

*Class participation.* Participation in discussions both in-class and online that includes giving feedback to others, presenting ideas and opinions based on readings and verifiable sources, and listening intently and respectfully to others.

*Exams.* There will be a pre-test(ungraded) and final exam (post-test).

## Evaluation

Rubrics for assignments and details of assessments will be posted to Blackboard.

<b>Assignment/Assessment</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
Participation	Last day of class	250
Brief Case Studies (3)	#1 Sept. 17, #2 Sept. 29, #3 Oct. 20.	3@ 33.33 = 100
Abuse/Neglect Certificate	Last Day of Classes	100
Discussion/journal writings on BlackBoard (10)	Posted weekly on Tuesday nights by 11:59pm from Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> until November 15th	10@ 10 = 100
Wiki Group Project	Last Day of Classes	150
Comprehensive Case Studies (2)	#1 November 17 <sup>th</sup> #2 Day of Final Exam	<u>2@ 50 = 100</u>
Final Paper	Last Day of Classes	100
Final Exam	TBA	100
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>

## Schedule

Class	Date	Text Ch.	Text topic	Assignment and assessments due dates	Topic read/respond after class
1	Sept. 1	Ch.1	Understanding Special Education		What is special education?
2	Sept. 8	Ch 2	Personnel and procedures of SpEd.	BB response #1	The history of special education
3	Sept. 15	Chs. 3 - 4	Multicultural and Collaboration	Brief Case study #1; BB response #2	Collaboration
4	Sept. 22	Ch. 5	Specific Learning Disabilities	BB response #3	Parents
5	Sept. 29	Ch. 6	ADD-ADHD	Brief Case study #2; BB response #4	Response to Intervention (RTI)
6	Oct. 6	Ch. 7	Emotional and Behavioral Disorders	BB response #5	The Common Core
7	Oct. 13	Ch. 8	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	BB response #6	The IEP
8	Oct. 20	Ch. 9	Speech and Language Disorders	Brief Case study #3; BB response #7	Placement
9	Oct. 27	Ch. 10	Autism Spectrum Disorder	BB response #8	Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
10	Nov. 3	Ch. 11	Deafness and Hearing Loss	BB response #9	Disproportionality
11	Nov. 10	Ch. 12	Visual Impairments	BB response #10	Disability and Discipline
12	Nov. 17	Ch. 13	Orthopedic, TBI, and OHI (other than ADD-ADHD) Impairments	Comp. Case Study #1; BB response #11	Transition
No Class	Nov. 24		A feast and celebration of thanks		
13	Dec. 1	Ch. 14	Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities		Topic of choice: What to explore?
14	Dec .8		The future of special education	Group WIKIs Due	
Final Exam	TBA			Comp. Case Study#2 /Final Paper DUE	