



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

Fall 2020

EDSE 844 001: Current Issues in Special Education

CRN: 82546, 3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Nagro	Meeting Dates: 8/24/20 – 12/16/20
Phone: 716-572-4315	Meeting Day(s): Thursday
E-Mail: snagro@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 10:30 am – 1:10 pm
Office Hours: virtual hours by request	Meeting Location: Fairfax; Finley 119
Office Location: Finley 222	Other Phone: n/a

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

Prerequisite(s):

Admission to PhD in education program, or permission of instructor.

Co-requisite(s):

None

Course Description

Develops understanding of the role of convergent research evidence in addressing current issues in special education practice and policy. Describes 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 methodological strengths and weaknesses, and their part in providing convergent bodies of evidence that can be used for defining practice and policy.

Advising Contact Information

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress in your program. Students in Special Education and Assistive Technology programs can contact the Special Education Advising Office at 703-993-3670 or speded@gmu.edu for assistance. All other students should refer to their assigned program advisor or the Mason Care Network (703-993-2470).

Course Delivery Method

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

Professional Standards

Not applicable.

Required Texts

n/a

Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

It is critical for the special education program to collect data on how our students are meeting accreditation standards. Every teacher candidate/student registered for an EDSE course with a required Performance-based Assessment (PBA) is required to upload the PBA to VIA (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). A PBA is a specific assignment, presentation, or project that best demonstrates one or more CEC, InTASC or other standard connected to the course. A PBA is evaluated in two ways. The first is for a grade, based on the instructor's grading rubric. The second is for program accreditation purposes. Your instructor will provide directions as to how to upload the PBA to VIA.

For EDSE 844, the required PBA is (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE). Please check to verify your ability to upload items to VIA before the PBA due date.

Assignments and/or Examinations

**Performance-based Assessment
(VIA submission required)**

None

**College Wide Common Assessment
(VIA submission required)**

None

**Performance-based Common Assignments
(No VIA submission required)**

Assignments	Points
Integration and Synthesis Papers (x5)	50 points (10 points each)
Discussion Lead	10 points
Conference Proposal (including presenting work)	30 points
Participation and Professionalism	10 points
Total	100 points

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation

For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom (see Professional Disposition Criteria), and complete all assignments with professional quality in a timely manner. When absence from class is unavoidable, students are responsible for getting all class information (e.g., handouts, announcements, notes) from another class member prior to the class meeting that follows the absence. Be aware that points earned for participation activities during a time of absence will not be earned and typically cannot be reclaimed.

Late Work

Points will be deducted for work submitted late (up to 10% per day). This includes any items that are not submitted upon request due to class absence or tardiness. This includes items initiated or modified during class as well as those listed in the syllabus.

Other Requirements

APA Style

The standard format for any written work in the College of Education and Human Development is APA. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.) or to access one of the internet sites that provides a summary of this information. All work produced outside of class must be typed in APA style unless otherwise noted.

Academic Integrity

Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant. You must take great care to give credit to an author when you use either exact words or paraphrased ideas. Generally, if you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper citation. Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of cheating in this class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the registrar and Dean's office. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. The instructor reserves the right to submit your work to plagiarism detection services for an integrity assessment as needed.

Electronic Media.

The use of electronic devices that record class or photograph individuals or materials may not be used without instructor permission. Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration or other non-class activities during class time. Routine access (daily) to e-mail and Blackboard for communication and assignments is crucial to participation in this class. Retain electronic copies of all course products for use during the portfolio phases of the M.Ed. or Ph.D. programs.

Workload Expectation.

For each in-class hour devoted to this course content, students are expected to spend at least 3 hours outside of class on course-related assignments, which is a typical in-class to out-of-class ratio for graduate level coursework. Exemplary work should be considered for presentation or publication opportunities.

Grading Scale

(Traditional rounding principles apply)

A	=	95 – 100 percent	A-	=	90 – 94 percent
B+	=	85 – 89 percent	B	=	80 – 84 percent
C	=	70 – 79 percent	F	=	Below 70

***Note:** The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. See [Academic Integrity Site](https://oai.gmu.edu/) (<https://oai.gmu.edu/>) and [Honor Code and System](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/) (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>). Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code. “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” Work submitted must be your own new, original work for this course or with proper citations.

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See [Policies and Procedures](https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/) (<https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>).

Class Schedule

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Date	Critical Topics	Required Readings	Assignments Due
8/27/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome and Introductions 2. Overview of Course (syllabus) 3. Where are we today with special education? Historical Perspectives & Trends, Contemporary Issues and Equity in Special Education <p>View Together and Live Chat: Twenty-five Years After Willowbrook</p>		
9/3/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing Special Education IHE Faculty 2. Complexities of the Teacher Shortage <p>Guest Presenter: Anna Macedonia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read this special issue: The Nexus of Special Education Policy, Practice and Scholarship: Higher Education Special Educators Look to the Future in the Journal of Teacher Education and Special Education https://journals.sagepub.com/topic/collections-tes/tes-1-nexus_of_special_education_policy/tesa • <i>Teacher Demand, Supply, and Shortage in Special Education</i> in Handbook of Research on Special Education Teacher Preparation 	
9/10/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Different forms of articles 2. APA 7th edition 3. How to Synthesize for Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration and Synthesis Paper – Discussion Lead sign up 4. Identifying what's important to you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring Group Topics for proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook & Odom, 2013 • Odom et al., 2005 • View Vimeo on Different Types of Articles • View Vimeo on Peer Review Process • Review Research Basics • Read Writing a Literature Review 	

9/24/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 and School Delivery Models (face-to-face; virtual; learning pods; homeschool) <p>Subthemes can include but are not limited to: impacts to SWD; social-emotional student impacts; impacts to families; impacts to teachers (who are parents); attrition rates of teachers; state testing</p>	Choose Three Articles and One book Chapter	Synthesis Paper #1
10/1/20	Working Session – Identifying proposal topics and related research questions		Informal - Groups to present their topics and research question(s)
10/8/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Least Restrictive Environment <p>Subthemes can include but are not limited to: full inclusion; co-teaching; assessments; alternative programs such as vocational/like skills; impacts on disabled and non-disabled students</p>	Choose Three Articles and One book Chapter	Synthesis Paper #2
10/15/20	Working Session – write protocol for searching for answers and identify sample pool		10/14/20 - *Guest Lecture- Yaoying Xu International Research and Global Issues
10/22/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Quality <p>Subthemes can include but are not limited to: alternative routes to certification; elimination of “highly qualified” in ESSA; edTPA; measures of quality; removing obstacles vs. lowering standards; teacher licensure standards vs professional standards</p>	Choose Three Articles and One book Chapter	Synthesis Paper #3
10/29/20	Working Session – calculating IRR; writing Results		Present Progress

11/5/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportionality Subthemes can include but are not limited to: suspension and expulsion rates and implications; alternatives to suspension; oversimplification of the issue through a focus on frequency counts; Department of Education guidance and Administrative executive orders 	Choose Three Articles and One book Chapter	Synthesis Paper #4
11/12/20	Working Session – presentation techniques		
11/19/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successes and Failures of Public School System Subthemes can include but are not limited to: access and equity; vouchers; school choice; privatization; implications for students with disabilities; busing; role of unions 	Choose Three Articles and One book Chapter	Synthesis Paper #5
11/26/20	Thanksgiving	<u>No class</u>	
12/3/20			presentations
12/10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Steps: finding a conference, and writing a manuscript 		proposals

* Course Calendar Subject to Change

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: See [Core Values](http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/) (<http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>).

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code. See [Honor Code and System](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/) (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See [Responsible Use of Computing](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/) (<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. See [Disability Services](https://ds.gmu.edu/) (<https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to [VIA Help support@watermarkinsights.com](mailto:VIA_Help_support@watermarkinsights.com). Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to [Blackboard Instructional Technology Support for Students](https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/) (<https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>).

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

- As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing the [Title IX Coordinator](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu) (titleix@gmu.edu).
- **For information on student support resources on campus, see [Student Support Resources on Campus](https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus) (<https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>).**
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website [College of Education and Human Development](http://cehd.gmu.edu/) (<http://cehd.gmu.edu/>).

Appendix

Assessment Rubric(s)

Integration and Synthesis Paper Directions

There will be five integration and synthesis papers due throughout the semester. Everyone will focus on the same overarching topic, but each of you will explore one or more subthemes of interest to you. The course schedule includes a list of topics and suggested subthemes. For each paper, select a minimum of three related research articles written since 2012 and published in a major peer-reviewed journal and one book chapter or systematic literature review. Recommended peer review journals include the *Journal of Special Education*, *Teacher Education and Special Education*, *Remedial and Special Education*, *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, and *Journal of Teacher Education*. Each integration and synthesis paper should be two -three pages of narrative (plus a title page and a reference page). Please follow APA guidelines including double spacing, one-inch margins, and Time New Roman font. You cannot exceed three pages of narrative.

Guidelines and Suggestions:

1. Synthesizing is not summarizing. You should be explaining the topic and using the supporting literature to back-up your ideas. Do not simply write a paragraph summary for each reference. Weave (integrate) the articles and chapter together. Think of this as an introduction to a manuscript. Provide the reader with the broad overview of the topic and then narrow to the specific subtheme(s) you want to cover.
2. Pick one or more subthemes to explore. Share multiple perspectives on the topic. It is rare in research that there is consensus on a topic so be sure to present multiple viewpoints. This means finding different researchers who may be asking different questions or studying a subtheme using different approaches.
3. All of your integration and synthesis papers must include implications for teacher education. Teacher education is an umbrella term that can include both teacher preparation and professional development for in-service teachers. So you have a range of ways to include implications for teacher education by focusing on attracting, preparing, and/or retaining special education teachers.
4. While using three research articles and one book chapter or literature review, you can also include other sources such as guidance documents published by the U.S. Department of Education, federal statute, national organization position papers, or caselaw to provide a well-rounded synthesis of various perspectives on a topic. Historical perspectives and policy implications can help explain current trends.

Learning Goals for Your Writing:

1. Synthesize literature on a topic rather than summarizing or providing a laundry list of facts.
2. Differentiate between research studies, lit reviews and book chapters, and non-peer reviewed publications.
3. Present a balanced review of the literature that considers multiple perspectives.
4. Start with a broad overview of a current issue, and then choose and explore a subtheme in a coherent manner.

Integration and Synthesis Paper Rubric

Paper # _____	Total Points
1. The integration of the three research articles and one book chapter or literature review makes it clear which focus and subtheme(s) are being synthesized.	/3
2. There is a balanced presentation of multiple perspectives on the topic with a clear link to implications for teacher education.	/3
3. Written language is excellent. The paper has clear organization and is structured with a beginning, middle, and end.	/3
4. Technical APA (e.g., citations in the assignment, Reference section, headings/subheadings) is completely accurate	/1
Total points earned	/10