



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

Fall 2023

EDSE 452 001: Intersectionality and Disability

CRN: 75262, 3 – Credits

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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):

EDSE 201 Requires minimum grade of "C" or EDSE 201 "XS".

Co-requisite(s):

None

Course Description

Examines disability within a diversity and intersectionality context in K-12 schools. Analyzes how diversity and intersectionality informs the educational experience of individuals with and without disabilities to include race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and home/language and culture. Assesses how cultural competency and intersectionality awareness on the part of educators enhance the school success of all students. Develops educator capacity to implement trauma-sensitive interventions in diverse settings for all students.

Course Overview

EDSE 452 examines disability within a diversity and intersectionality context in K-12 schools. Analyzes how diversity and intersectionality informs the educational experience of individuals with and without disabilities to include race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status,

and home/language culture. Develops educator capacity to implement trauma-sensitive interventions in diverse settings for all students.

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 speced@gmu.edu for assistance. All other students should refer to their assigned program advisor or the Mason Care Network (703-993-2470).

Advising Tip

Take advantage of student resources like the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>), Learning Services (<https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>), Assistive Technology Initiative (<https://ati.gmu.edu/>), University Life (<https://ulife.gmu.edu/>).

Writing Intensive Designation

EDSE 452 has been approved by the Faculty Senate Writing Across the Curriculum Committee to fulfill the Writing Intensive (WI) requirement in the special education BSEd. WI-designated courses devote class time to instruction on how to complete assignments successfully, assign and grade a minimum of 3,500 words, provide constructive feedback on drafts, and allow revision of at least one graded assignment. The Intersectionality Project will be the key WI assignment. Students will engage in scaffolded research and writing by submitting benchmark components of the paper. The instructor will provide feedback at each benchmark point to ensure students are engaging in quality research and writing. It is to your benefit to study and incorporate instructor feedback, as each assignment builds to completion of the key assignment.

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 strengths and challenges in one's own cultural competency and develop critical consciousness about issues such as race, class, gender, culture, language, and educational equity.
2. Explain how K-12 student learning and behavior may be impacted by socioeconomic status, language/cultural background, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and trauma.
3. Demonstrate culturally sound and diversity-informed assessment and intervention practices for learning and behavior.

4. Recognize disability as a diversity construct and differentiate whether student academic or behavioral difficulties are due to disability and/or other diversity factors.
5. Apply an intersectionality framework to identify the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as disability, race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, that create overlapping and interdependent systems of privilege, discrimination, or disadvantage.
6. Use appropriate research methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles, and theories to an in-depth written analysis of individuals with disabilities and their support needs through the lens of intersectionality.
7. Understand instructional practices that are sensitive to culturally and linguistically diverse learners, including English learners, gifted and talented students, and students with disabilities.

Professional Standards

(Council for Exceptional Children [CEC] and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium [InTASC]). Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards: CEC Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences (InTASC 2,3); CEC Standard 2: Learning Environments (InTASC 3); CEC Standard 3: Curricular Content Knowledge (InTASC 4,5); CEC Standard 4: Assessment (InTASC 6); CEC Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies (InTASC 7,8); CEC Standard 6: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice (InTASC 9).

Required Texts

Pang, V. (2018). *Diversity and equity in the classroom*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-1305386471, ISBN-10: 9781305386471

Recommended Texts

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

Kendi, Ibram (2019). *How to be an antiracist*. New York: One World. ISBN 978-0-525-50928-8

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/SLL (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/SLL.

For EDSE 452: No requirement to upload a Performance-based Assessment (PBA) to VIA/SLL.

Assignments and/or Examinations

**Performance-based Assessment
(VIA submission required) N/A**

**College Wide Common Assessment
(VIA submission required) N/A**

Other Assignments

1. (*Designated Performance-Based Assessment; 35 points):

As a culminating activity (and the designated performance-based assessment), the **Intersectionality Project** offers an opportunity for students to engage in scholarly research and writing. Students will examine relevant scholarly literature to include at least two attributes of intersectionality that influence the education of individuals with exceptionalities. This project will address key issues discussed throughout this course, such as: How do diverse populations of individuals with exceptionalities experience special education or other community-based services in terms of identification and interventions? What do service providers need to understand about themselves and these diverse students and families in order to provide a Free, Appropriate, Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) as described by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?

Students will submit a proposal for the project to obtain prior approval. Students will engage in scaffolded research and writing using APA Style Guidelines by submitting benchmark components of the paper on the dates listed so the instructor can provide feedback to ensure students are engaging in quality research and writing. In addition to a written research paper of at least 3500 words, students will deliver a presentation during an assigned class session to their peers and the instructor about their intersectionality research and findings. In addition to explicit classroom instruction on writing requirements for each component of the paper, students will have multiple opportunities to revise their Intersectionality Project in accordance with Writing Across the Curriculum guidance as noted in the Course Topics section of the syllabus.

1. Identify at least two areas of diversity through which you will examine exceptionality through an intersectionality lens.

2. Find in a professional, peer-reviewed journal (your instructor will help you with your search) e.g., Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners, Teaching Exceptional Children, Learning Disabilities Research and Practice; Behavioral Disorders; Exceptional Children; Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; Journal of Special Education, Journal of Adolescence, Journal of

LGBT Youth); at least 4 research-based articles that focus on elementary, secondary, or postsecondary individuals with disabilities or their families.

2. Read the article(s) with the purpose of comprehending the research, then summarize. Discuss how the content relates to individuals with disabilities and what this means for teaching and learning.

4. Provide an introduction that links explicitly to course content and your own background of understanding and diversity affiliation(s)/biases.

5. Conclude with a summary of what the articles say *collectively* about your research;

6. Conclude with a section on how this research and course content will impact your ability to provide culturally sensitive and inclusive services to all individuals with disabilities, especially those with additional diversity profiles. Make recommendations to future service providers about what you've learned.

Other Assignments

2. Media Analysis Paper (25 points): Students will analyze a media source from a list provided by the instructor or receive preapproval for source of their own choosing. The media must be of significant weight; a book, in-depth investigative series, or documentary. Students will review the media in three sections: 1) An introduction to the media and its alignment with course content, 2) major findings or themes of the content, and their significance for educators of diverse students in diverse settings, and 3) how the media source changed student thinking and created understandings for future engagement with students and families.

Blackboard Discussion Boards (15 points): Throughout the semester, there will be three Blackboard discussion boards in response to selected readings. Students will provide a comprehensive response to the prompts and to at least 2 classmates' postings. Each discussion board will be worth 5 points, for a total of 15 possible points. To earn full credit, students must submit postings by the due date and time (9 am of the due date), and **no** late submissions will be accepted. Your response should address the discussion board topic AND include a thoughtful reaction to at least 2 of your classmates' postings. An assignment description and grading rubric will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

Professionalism (15 points): Attendance, punctuality, and active participation during each class session and assigned activity are expected. For each session, students will earn one Professionalism point for the following expectations:

1. **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, and remain in class for the duration of each session. Refer to the Attendance Policy below for detailed expectations.
2. **Participation & Professional Behavior:** Throughout all classes, students are expected to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior in the classroom and complete all assignments (including those completed in class, out of class, or on Blackboard) with professional quality, integrity, and in a timely manner. Students are expected to read

all assigned readings prior to class and to actively participate in discussions and activities during class sessions.

Assignment Summary

EDSE 452 Self-Monitoring Course Performance <i>Use this self-monitoring tool to track your performance throughout the semester</i>		
Assignment	Points Earned by Student	Total Points Possible
A. Professionalism (5 points for less than 3 absences) 10 points for quality 4 article summary drafts and 1 Introductions/1 Conclusion drafts		15
B. Blackboard Discussion Boards (3 discussions, 5 points each) Must be written professionally and include responses to 2 classmates		15
C. Media Analysis Paper		25
D. Intersectionality Project		35
E. Intersectionality Project Presentation		10
Total	Total points earned	100

Student Evaluations of Teaching:

The student evaluation of teaching, or SET, is an online course survey. You are strongly encouraged to complete this form for each course as this feedback helps instructors and administrators improve your class experiences. Towards the end of the course, you will receive email and Blackboard notifications when the evaluations open. Your anonymous and confidential feedback is only shared with instructors after final grades have been submitted. More information about the SET can be found on The Institute of Effectiveness and Planning website at <https://oiep.gmu.edu/set/>

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation

Class attendance and professional participation at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) remain in class for the duration of each session, (d) actively participate and demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom, and (e) complete all assignments with professional quality and on time. All assigned readings should be completed prior to class (Note: assigned readings may be added or removed as the semester progresses).

Students earn attendance and participation points each class (i.e., Professionalism described in the Assignments section above); these points can only be earned if the student is in attendance and actively participates in class activities. Please notify me in advance by email or phone if you will not be able to attend class. When absence from class is unavoidable, it is the student's responsibility to plan to obtain notes, handouts, and/or lecture details from another student prior to the class meeting that follows the absence. Students will lose 5 points off their final grade for each additional absence if they miss more than 3 classes (for a 15-week course) unless there are significant and documented issues.

Late Work

To successfully complete this course, students need to adhere to all due dates for readings and assignments. All assignments should be submitted *on or before* the assigned due date, unless the professor has agreed to an extension (which may be used one time only and only for one assignment) which cannot be used past the last day of class. The maximum extension is 7 days, after which the assignment is not awarded any points toward a final grade. (Note that all Discussion Board assignments are due by 9 am on the due date and are not eligible for extensions). On all assignments, full credit is available for those submitted on time. For late assignments a 10%-point reduction will be enforced for late papers each day.

Communication

Your GMU email address and the instructor's GMU email address are the only email addresses that will be used for communication in this course. Student email is accessed at <http://masonlive.gmu.edu>. All communications are sent to students via their Mason email accounts, and students are held responsible for this information.

Grading

Letter Grade	% of Points
A	95-100%
A-	90-94%
B+	87-89%

B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

***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/policies-procedures/) (<https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>). Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See Policies and Procedures (<https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>). Professional dispositions are an essential function of a special educator’s job, indicating that these dispositions are critical to develop and assess in special education licensure programs. In the College of Education and Human Development, dispositions are formally and separately evaluated in VIA/SLL at least three points in each student’s program – a self-evaluation at the start of their program, a self-evaluation at the mid-point of their program, and a university supervisor’s evaluation during internship. In special education graduate licensure programs, the initial self-evaluation is completed in designated courses (EDSE 241, EDSE 361, EDSE 311), the mid-point self-evaluation is completed in designated courses (EDSE 445, EDSE 465, and EDSE 419), and the internship evaluation is completed by instructors in EDSE 482, EDSE 483, and EDSE 484. In addition to these three designated evaluation times, students, instructors, and/or mentor teachers may complete program disposition assessments as part of other courses. Instructors and mentor teachers may complete observer-rated disposition assessments other times throughout the program, as needed. When dispositions are assessed, it is important that for areas where a positive disposition is rated as “not proficient,” the student takes steps to grow as an educator.

Class Schedule

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

Week	Date	Topics	Readings Due by Next Class Session	Assignments Due for this Class Session
1	8/22 and 8/24	<p>Course Overview & Syllabus Review Introduction to Disability and Diversity: Exploring the intersectionality between disability and other aspects of diversity.</p> <p>WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum Skill): Understanding research methods and accessing quality research</p>	<p>Ensure successful access for Blackboard for this course</p> <p>Pang: Chapters 1 & 2</p>	
2	8/29 and 8/31	<p>Understanding Equity vs. Equality: Educator implicit bias and the impact of privilege, diversity, and culture on education</p> <p>WAC: Writing a research article summary using APA</p>	Pang: Chapter 3	Discussion Board 1 (5 points possible)
3	9/5 and 9/7	<p>Equity and the achievement gap for underrepresented groups including students with disabilities.</p> <p>WAC: Writing a proposal that will also serve as your Intersectionality Project introduction</p>	Pang: Chapter 11	Discussion Board 2 (5 points possible)
4	9/12 and 9/14	<p>Trauma in the school setting and the impact of trauma on learning and development</p>	Pang: Chapter 9	Proposal for Intersectionality Project Due

Week	Date	Topics	Readings Due by Next Class Session	Assignments Due for this Class Session
5	9/19 and 9/21	Race and Ethnicity: implications for access and equity in school WAC: Feedback on Project Proposal and Revision	Pang: Chapters 4 & 5	Discussion Board 3 (5 points possible)
6	9/26 and 9/28	Socio-economic status and the impact of poverty on student achievement	Pang: Chapter 6	Article 1 Summary for Intersectionality Project (2 points)
7	10/3 and 10/5	Cultural and linguistic diversity in the community and in the classroom. WAC: Revision feedback on Proposal and Article Summary	Pang: Chapters 8 & 10	Media Assignment Proposal Due
8	10/12 (no class on 10/10)	Gender and Sexual Orientation: how are these impacted by educational practices?	Pang: Chapter 7	Article 2 Summary for Intersectionality Project (2 points)
9	10/17 and 10/19	Culturally-responsive practices with families and community members of underrepresented populations WAC: Feedback/Revision of Article Summaries	Media Assignment Reading/Viewing: <i>Watch: Teach Us All</i> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6588332/ <i>Read: Culturally Responsive Teaching</i> https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/culturally-responsive-teaching.pdf	
10	10/24 and 10/26	Understanding the impact of disability and diversity on assessment and ensuring bias-free and culturally responsive assessment practices WAC: Feedback/Revision of Article Summaries	Media Assignment Reading/Viewing	Article 3 Summary for Intersectionality Project (2 points)

Week	Date	Topics	Readings Due by Next Class Session	Assignments Due for this Class Session
11	10/31 and 11/2	Culturally responsive teaching and restorative evidence-based practices in elementary school	Media Assignment Reading/Viewing	Article 4 Summary for Intersectionality Project (2 points)
12	11/7 and 11/9	Culturally responsive teaching and restorative evidence-based practices in secondary school WAC: Feedback/Revision of Article Summaries. How to write an effective conclusion to the Intersectionality Project		Media Assignment Paper Due (25 points possible)
13	11/14 and 11/16	Future directions in American education to ensure educational equity and inclusive education for all students WAC: Feedback/Revision of Article Summaries		Intersectionality Introduction and Conclusion due (2 points)
14	11/21 (no class on 11/23)	work on final papers and presentation		Final Intersectionality paper due
15	11/28 and 11/30	Course reflections & wrap-up Presentations of Intersectionality Projects WAC: Feedback/Revision of Entire paper		Intersectionality Project Presentations (5 points possible)

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 viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>.
- 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/>).
- [Learning Services](mailto:learningservices@gmu.edu) (learningservices@gmu.edu) - Provides a variety of experience-based learning opportunities through which students explore a wide range of academic concerns. Services include support to students with learning differences, individual study strategy coaching, individualized programs of study, and referrals to tutoring resources. Presentations on a variety of academic topics such as time management, reading, and note taking are available to the university community. The programs are open to all George Mason University students free of charge.

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

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 the [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 or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
<p>Background/Introduction</p> <p>Student provides a clear and focused introduction to two areas of diversity through which intersectionality with disability will be examined as well as linkages to course content and student’s own background of understanding and diversity affiliation(s)/biases (10 points)</p>			
<p>Summaries of Research:</p> <p>Each of 4 research-based articles is thoroughly yet concisely described and conclusions are drawn about each study with respect to individuals with disabilities and teaching and learning. Citations are accurate, studies/articles are current (10 points)</p>			

<p>Summary/Conclusions</p> <p>Summarizes conclusions about what the research articles say collectively, AND Concludes with a section on how this research and course content will impact one’s ability to provide culturally sensitive and inclusive services to all individuals with disabilities, especially those with additional diversity profiles. Make recommendations to future service providers about what you’ve learned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth of reflection & depth of linkages to other course readings, course content, and teaching in general. <p>(10 points)</p>			
<p>Writing</p> <p>Reflection is written to professional standards, in APA style, and there are <u>very few</u> writing or editing errors. (5 points)</p>			