

# George Mason University

## Graduate School of Education

EDUC 301 Educationally Diverse Populations: Handicapped, Gifted,  
Multicultural

3 Credit Hours ~ Fall 2010 ~ Wednesday 7:20 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. ~ West  
1007

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Office Hours:	By Appointment

**Course Description:** This course introduces the psychological, sociological, educational, and physical aspects of diverse populations in today's schools for elementary and secondary education. An emphasis will be on litigation and legislation pertaining to the education of diverse populations. School-based field experience required during the course. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations are asked to notify the instructor immediately so that arrangements can be made.

**Nature of Course Delivery:** Students in this course will participate in individual and group activities structured around readings, discussions, and presentations.

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**Learning Outcomes:** At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. identify important historical, philosophical, and sociological concepts underlying the role, development, and organization of public educational practice as it relates to exceptional children and multicultural education;
  2. discuss laws related to exceptional children and diversity in schools;
  3. discuss the broader educational and social context which affects the work of the public school teacher working with educationally diverse students.
  4. identify policies, programs, and pedagogy that have proven effective in ensuring the academic achievement of students in diverse elementary/secondary classrooms and schools.
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### Readings and Materials:

Blackbourn, J. M., Patton, J. R., & Trainor, A. (2003). *Exceptional Individuals in Focus* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Perry, T., Steele, C., Hilliard, A. (2003). *Young, Gifted and Black*. Boston: Beacon Press.

## **Electronic Requirements**

Students must have access to email and the internet, either at home, work or GMU campus. GMU provides students with free email accounts which must be accessed for information sent from the university or the Graduate School of Education. Go to [Http://mason.gmu.edu/](http://mason.gmu.edu/) for information on accessing email.

### **George Mason University Honor Code:**

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set forth the following code of honor. Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or Website at [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu). Code in the University catalog can be found online at <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>.

### **George Mason University Policy on Disabilities:**

This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs, or activities of all State and local Governments. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as: learning, working, walking, speaking, hearing, breathing, and/or taking care of oneself. If a student has a disability and needs course adaptations or accommodations because of that disability, it must be established with the faculty, in writing, at the beginning of the semester so arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center for required documentation (703-993-2474). The Disability Resource Center website is at <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/>

*Students are asked to turn off all cell phones before the start of class.*

## **Course Outline/ Schedule**

*(Note: Readings and assignments are due on the day they are cited.)*

Sept 1                      Introductions; Review Syllabus; Discuss experiences with educational diversity, and how Virginia schools are held accountable for educating diverse students.

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 Sept 8           What is exceptionality? Programs and services available to special needs individuals. Sign-up for class presentation. Blackburn (Chaps.1-2).  
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 Sept 15           Learning and Behavioral Disorders: *Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*. Blackburn (Chaps. 3-4).  
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 Sept 22           Learning and Behavioral Disorders: *Emotional/Behavioral Disorders; Mental Retardation; Autism*. Blackburn (Chap 5-7)  
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 Oct 6             Physical, Sensory, and Communicative Impairments: *Physical & Health Impairments; Blindness; Deafness, Speech Disorders*. Blackburn (Chap. 8-11).  
**Thesis Essay Due. Be prepared to discuss your article.**  
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 Oct 13           Other Exceptional Areas/ Exceptional Perspectives: *Giftedness; Children & Youth Placed at Risk; Life-Span Service; Parent and Family Involvement* Blackburn (Chaps. 12-15).  
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 Oct 20           **Litigation Presentation Due**  
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 Oct 27           Multiculturalism: What is it? Who is it? How do schools support these students?  
**Research notes on multiculturalism (with quotes) due**  
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 Nov 3            Multiculturalism: Realities of schools today; Peer Panel Q & A **Teacher Interview Paper Due**  
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 Nov 10           *Young, Gifted, and Black: Theresa Perry, Up from the Parched Earth; Part 1: Freedom for Literacy and Literacy for Freedom*  
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 Nov 17           *Young, Gifted, and Black: Theresa Perry, Part 2: Competing Theories of Group Achievement; Part 3: Achieving in Post-Civil Rights America*  
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 Nov 24           Thanksgiving Break!  
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 Dec 1            *Young, Gifted and Black: Claude Steele, Stereotype Threat & African-American Student Achievement; Field Observation Journal Due*  
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 Dec 8            *Young, Gifted and Black: Asa G. Hilliard III; No Mystery: Closing the Achievement Gap between Africans and Excellence; Course Evaluations.*  
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 Dec 15           **Final Exam Essay Due (Objective Test In-Class)**



Course Requirements:

1. Class Participation/Quizzes & In-Class Assignments (40pts.): Active participation in whole-group and small-group interactions is a crucial element of

this class. Your class participation grade will reflect the degree to which you participated in your group. Such participation can only occur when you are present and engaged. In this regard, quizzes and in-class assignments will be used to engage your thinking on the day's topic. (3 pts X 13 class periods + 1 pt bonus)

2. Complete one of the following 20 minute class presentations. Your topic should match one of the topics in the chapters being discussed the evening of your presentation. Prior approval required. See sign-up sheet. Topic suggestions and assignment rubrics posted on EDUC 301 Blackboard site. (20 pts):
  - A. Chapter Highlights: Highlight key points from a section in one of our texts. Your presentation should include a brief summary of the chapter(s), engage participants in a discussion of relevant topics and include an informative handout.
  - B. Great Resource: Share a really great book, selection of music, movie, or other resource for teaching about/with educationally diverse populations. Your resource should relate to the assigned chapters. Your presentation and handout should include complete bibliographic information, summary of resource, grade level, possible classroom application and/or curriculum connections.
3. Litigation Presentation: In a group of four/five, present information on a law and court case that has had an impact on educating exceptional children and/ or children from diverse backgrounds. Research the court case, present background information, judicial opinions, and the case's influence on education. Use a PowerPoint or provide informative handout. (25 points)
4. Thesis Essay (50 pts.): Choose a topic that interests you regarding educationally diverse populations. Read at least three professional journal articles on that topic. Write a four to five page essay synthesizing what you learned. Include comments on whether you believe the articles will influence your educational philosophy or practice. You will share your essay with classmates. Rubric posted on EDUC 301 Blackboard site.
5. Teacher Interview (50 pts.): Interview a teacher to learn how this educator addresses the needs of exceptional children in the classroom. Design a list of questions (5-8) around this topic. Take notes or record the interview. Write a paper where you explain (1) the grade level and demographics of the students with whom this teacher works; (2) the number of years and scope of experience this teacher has taught; (3) the teachers responses to the questions you prepared; (4) a discussion of how this teacher's responses connect to class discussions, your field observations and text information (5) synthesis of what you think teachers must do in order to effectively address the needs of their exceptional students. Teacher interviewed should not be the same person you observed for

the field observation, unless you observed more than one teacher. Assignment description and rubric are posted on EDUC 301 Blackboard site.

6. Multicultural Research (15 points): Read at least three professional journal articles on multiculturalism and be ready to discuss them in class. Make 3 note cards for *each* source with proper references; include one quote from each source worthy of class discussion.
7. Field Experience Journal (7-10 pages) (100pts.): Ten hours of field observation are required for this course. Document your activities and observations during your field experience. Write six REFLECTIVE journal entries. Include questions you have about what you observe, as well as comments regarding what you learn. Your reflections should draw on and incorporate appropriate class readings and/or discussions. Assignment description and rubric are posted on EDUC 301 Blackboard site.
8. Final Exam (100pts): **Part I: Objective test** on essential concepts and vocabulary. **Part II: Essay** - What policies and programs would you expect to see in a school that supports the academic achievement of an educationally diverse population? As a classroom teacher, what will you do to ensure that all students in your classroom are successful? (5-7 pages). Refer to each of the course texts, plus additional relevant sources, and include a works cited page. Assignment description and rubric to be posted on EDUC 301 Blackboard site.

[You may negotiate an extension for **one** assignment prior to its due date without penalty. Otherwise, one letter grade will be deducted for each day that an assignment is late.]

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Grading Scale: A=100-94; A- = 93-90; B+=89-87; B=86-83; B-=82-80; C+=79-77; C=76-73; C-72-70; D=69-65

A	400 - 376	C+	319 - 308
A-	375 - 360	C	307 - 292
B+	359 - 348	C-	291 - 280
B	347 - 332	D	279 - 260
B-	331 - 320		

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**Evaluation:** Grades will be based on the completion of course requirements and on the scope, quality, and creativity of the assignments. All assignments will be graded. All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

Each out-of-class assignment will be graded using a rubric. Assignment descriptions and rubrics are posted on EDUC 301 Blackboard site: <http://blackboard.gmu.edu>