

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development

EDUC 301 Educationally Diverse Populations: Handicapped, Gifted, Multicultural
3 Credits ~~ Spring 2010 ~~ Thursdays ~~ 7:20 - 10:00 p.m. ~~ Robinson A 206

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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.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. identify important historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations underlying the role, development, and organization of public educational practice as it relates to exceptional children and multicultural education;
2. identify components of elementary/ secondary school curriculum and different aspects of an educationally diverse elementary/secondary school classroom environment;
3. discuss laws related to exceptional children and diversity in schools;
4. examine the broader educational and social context which affects the work of the public school teacher.

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 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/>

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 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. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or website at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/deanofstudents/honorcode>

Electronic Devices

Students are asked to turn off all cell phones and other devices before the start of class.

Course Requirements

Class begins promptly at 4:30 p.m. Consistent, on-time attendance is expected. Weekly assignments will be collected at the beginning of each class and will not be accepted any other time. Students will not receive credit for bringing weekly assignments unless they stay for class. A reflection of the class experience will be collected at the end of class. If absent, it is the student's responsibility to find out what was missed.

Readings and Materials

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

Kugler, E. (2002). *Debunking the Middle-Class Myth: Why Diverse Schools are Good for All Kids*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.

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

Course Outline/ Schedule

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

Jan. 21 Introductions; Review Syllabus; Discuss experiences with educational diversity, and how Virginia schools are held accountable for educating diverse students.

Jan. 28 What is exceptionality? Programs and services available to special needs individuals. Sign-up for class presentation. Blackbourn (Chaps.1-2).

Feb. 4 Learning and Behavioral Disorders: *Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*. Blackbourn (Chaps. 3-4).

Feb. 11 Learning and Behavioral Disorders: *Emotional/Behavioral Disorders; Mental Retardation; Autism*. Blackbourn (Chap 5-7)

Feb. 18 Physical, Sensory, and Communicative Impairments: *Physical & Health Impairments; Blindness; Deafness, Speech Disorders*. Blackbourn (Chap. 8-11).

Professional Article Summaries Due. Be prepared to discuss your article.

Feb. 25 Other Exceptional Areas/ Exceptional Perspectives: *Giftedness; Children & Youth Placed at Risk; Life-Span Service; Parent and Family Involvement* Blackbourn (Chaps. 12-15).

March 4 **Law Presentations Due**

March 11 **Spring Break**

March 18 *Debunking the Middle Class Myth: Part 1: The Myths that Poison Our Thinking about Diverse Schools*

March 25 *Debunking the Middle Class Myth: Part 2: The Realities of Diverse Schools and of Our Society; Teacher Interview Paper Due*

April 1 *Debunking the Middle Class Myth: Part 3: How to Reap the Rich Harvest of Our Diverse Schools*

April 8 *Young, Gifted, and Black: Theresa Perry, Up from the Parched Earth; Part 1: Freedom for Literacy and Literacy for Freedom*

April 15 *Young, Gifted, and Black: Theresa Perry, Part 2: Competing Theories of Group Achievement; Part 3: Achieving in Post-Civil Rights America*

April 22 *Young, Gifted and Black: Claude Steele, Stereotype Threat & African-American Student Achievement; Field Observation Journal Due*

April 29 *Young, Gifted and Black: Asa G. Hilliard III; No Mystery: Closing the Achievement Gap between Africans and Excellence; Course Evaluations.*

May 6 **Multicultural Education Paper Due (FINAL)**

Course Assignments:

1. Class Participation/Quizzes & In-Class Assignments (50pts.): 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 15 class periods + 5 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 are posted on EDUC 301 Blackboard site. (25 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. Professional Article Summary (50 pts.): Read an article that deals with exceptional children. The article must be at least five pages long and published in a professional education journal. Write a two-three page summary of the article including appropriate citations. Comment on whether the article is useful in your views about teaching and why or why not. Include a copy of the original article. You will share your summary 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. 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.

7. Multicultural Education Paper (100pts): Part of this class is designed to provide you with opportunities to explore conceptual, theoretical, and philosophical issues in multicultural education. With this in mind, you will write a 5-7 page, scholarly paper that addresses your clarification of these issues as well as the implications this knowledge has on your beliefs about American schools and the role you may play in young people's lives. Refer to each of the course texts and include a works cited page. Assignment description and rubric are posted on EDUC 301 Blackboard site.

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

B 347 – 332

C 307 – 292

A- 375 – 360

B- 331 – 320

C- 291 – 280

B+ 359 – 348

C+ 319 – 308

D 279 – 260

Note: 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.

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>