

**George Mason University  
Graduate School of Education  
Program: Special Education**

**Course/Section: EDSE 501 Introduction to Special Education / 6F1, Pre Cohort FX  
Spring 2010**

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Office Hours: By appointment

**Class Meeting Time and Place:**

Leis Room 1

Thursdays:

1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11

Classes meet 4:30-8:30 pm

**Course Description**

This course provides a survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Content includes historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies, including existing and emerging technologies, assessment and support services of/for individuals with disabilities ranging from mild and moderate to severe. The course will study the impact of disabilities on academic and social/emotional performance. Field experience is required. Prerequisites: none.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
- Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education.
- Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of special education.
- Describe research in etiological factors associated with all disability areas.
- Describe social, cognitive, intellectual, and academic characteristics associated with all disability areas.
- Describe historical points of view and contributions of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education.
- Describe the role of families in the educational process.
- Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including technological advances.
- Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation, litigation, and use of innovative technology.

**RELATIONSHIP OF COURSE TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

EDSE 501 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in special education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for

Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization in the United States. As such the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities from preschool through grade 12.

**The CEC standards are listed on the following web site:**

[http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf\\_based\\_stds/common\\_core\\_4-21-01.html](http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/common_core_4-21-01.html)

CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include some of the following CEC Core Standards:

***Standard 1: Foundations***

- Models, theories, and philosophies that form the basis for special education practice.
- Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management, planning, and implementation.
- Relationship of special education to the organization and function of educational agencies.
- Rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional learning needs.
- Issues with definition and identification of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Issues, assurances, and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement with a continuum of services.
- Family systems and the role of families in the educational process.
- Historical points of view and contributions of culturally diverse groups.
- Impact of the dominant culture on shaping schools and the individuals who study and work in them.
- Potential impact of differences in values, languages, and customs that can exist between the home and school.

***Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners***

- Typical and atypical human growth and development.
- Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities.
- Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the individual with exceptional learning needs and the family. Family systems and the role of facilities in supporting development.
- Similarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.
- Similarities and differences among individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Effects of various medications on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

***Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences***

- Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life.
- Impact of learners' academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.
- Variations on beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures and their effects on relationships among individuals with exceptional learning needs, family and schooling.
- Cultural perspectives influencing the relationships among families, schools, and communities as related to instruction.
- Differing ways of learning of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally diverse backgrounds and strategies for addressing these differences.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

### **Required text:**

Friend, Marilyn, (2008). Special Education: Contemporary Perspectives for School Professionals. (Second Edition). AB Longman. ISBN: 978020550319

**\*\* Several reading may also be assigned throughout the semester\*\***

## **NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

Learning activities include the following:-

- Class lecture, discussion and participation
- On-line e.g., Blackboard, web based modules
- Media and relevant media presentations
- Study and independent library research
- Application activities, including in-class evaluation of intervention research and materials
- Class presentations
- Written case study and observation report using American Psychological Association format

**NOTE: This course may have students actively participating via Video Streaming. Therefore, course delivery is flexible with synchronous and asynchronous formats**

## **EVALUATION**

- Class attendance and participation
- (Field based) Observation report
- On-line Assignments
- Case Study
- Journal Articles
- Final Exam
- Presentations (group presentations, book, article)

*It is recommended that students retain copies of all course products to document their progress through the GMU Special Education program. Products from this class can become part of your individual professional portfolio used in your portfolio classes to document your satisfactory progress through the GMU program and the CEC performance based standards.*

## GRADING CRITERIA

110-107 points	= A+
106-103 points	= A
102-98 points	= A-
97-94 points	= B+
93-90 points	= B
89-88 points	= B-
87-84 points	= C+
83-80 points	= C
79-77 points	= C-
< 76 points	= D

## Assignment Descriptions and Criteria for Evaluation

Requirement	Possible Points	My Points
Participation / Attendance / Class assignments	30	
Written Case Study **signature assignment**	20	
Case Study Presentation	5	
Field Observation	15	
Journal Articles (5 points each)	10	
Children's book presentation	5	
Disability Area Group Presentation	15	
Final Exam	10	
Total		

## ASSIGNMENTS:

**Students are required to read the assigned chapter and any other reading ahead of time in order to participate in class discussions and activities.**

All assignments are to be **typed, using APA style**. For more information on APA style, refer to the manual or go to [www.apastyle.org/previoustips.html](http://www.apastyle.org/previoustips.html) You are preparing to be a teacher, and you are expected to **use proper spelling, grammar, format, and punctuation**.

**All assignments are due on the dates indicated. In fairness to students who make the effort to submit papers on time, points will be deducted for work submitted after the due date.**

### Participation / Attendance (30 Points)

Class attendance and participation is demonstrated by attending class and being psychologically available to learn, completing and handing in weekly class assignments, and participating in class discussions/activities throughout the semester. Points are negatively affected by being late to class, demonstrating a disinterest in the material/discussions (e.g., reflection activities, small group activities, discussions, etc.), and/or absences. Points are positively impacted by thoughtful contributions made in class, listening to the ideas of other peers, respectively, and demonstrating an enthusiasm for learning.

Each class (10 sessions; points earned if assigned tasks are completed): .5 = prompt; .5 = psychologically invested, prepared, and present; 2.0 = participation, thoughtful contributions, completed in-class assignments). (3 points possible per class session)

**(Each of the assignments below will be elaborated in class sessions.)**

### **I. JOURNAL ARTICLES: Due 1/21/10 (10 Points)**

Read and respond, in no more than 4 total pages each, to 2 journal articles that focus on instructional strategies for students with disabilities. Some journals to explore:

- Teaching Exceptional Children
- Intervention in School and Clinic
- Teaching K – 12
- Phi Delta Kappan
- Exceptional Children
- Reading Teacher
- Instructor
- Special Education

**Select an article from a professional journal and have it approved.** The focus of the article must include support for an instructional strategy (ies) for teaching reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, and social skills for individuals with disabilities; *or* the focus must be on cognitive strategies in self-regulation and metacognition, study skills, attention, memory, or motivation for individuals with mild disabilities. Please see instructor for assistance in selecting an article and you must select your article by the third class. The important part is that your article must be approved prior to beginning your assignment. You may want to email or call the instructor with the complete article citation and a brief description first.

**Read the article thoroughly.** As you read the article, think about the following: Describe the instructional strategy, how it was used, the intended audience or grade level, and implementation and success of the strategy.

**Your response must include:** the APA citation, summary of the strategy, how it is used, intended audience or grade level, and implementation and success of the strategy.

**Cite** the article. For the citation of the article use APA format. This web site is an APA reference <http://linguistics.byu.edu/faculty/henrichsenl/apa/apa01.html>

### **II. FIELD OBSERVATION & REPORT: Due (15 Points)**

An observation of student with disabilities in a school setting will be completed. A structured observation report format and rubric will be provided.

### **III. CASE STUDY: Due 2/25/10(20 Points)**

A comprehensive case study on a student with disabilities will be completed. The case study will include the following components:

- Student's demographic data
- Description of school and neighborhood

- Educational history (schools attended, reason for referral, placement)
- IEP goals and objectives, classroom accommodations
- Observational information
- Teacher interviews
- Additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications
- Summary and synthesis (Comparison of student's characteristics with those described in the textbook, i.e., which characteristics were identified in your student? Integrate sources from the literature with what you observed in your case study.)
- **Case Study Presentation (5 Points)**

#### **IV. DISABILITY AREA PRESENTATION: (15 Points)**

Presentation: As a member of a group of three, describe the major characteristics associated with five common disability areas. Discuss in-depth the issues regarding assessment, identification, educational interventions, and strategies in one of the following areas:

- Other Health Impairment due to ADD or ADHD (1/14/10)
- Deafness and Hearing Loss ( 1/21/10)
- Visual Impairments (2/4/10)
- Physical and Health Disabilities (2/4/10)
- Gifted and Talented (2/18/10)

Please plan on a 50-minute presentation with an additional 5 minutes for questions. Please do not exceed the time limit. Presentations should use visual aids. If you need the use of a computer and/or a projector, please let the instructor know so that arrangements can be made. The presentation should address the following:

- Historical information regarding the disability
- Characteristics of persons with the disability including cognitive/academic, processing deficits or issues, social, communicative, and behavioral aspects
- Past, present, and possible future models of assessment and identification, including any technological advances. Please relate these to instruction (not a list of the assessments that determine the disability – remember your audience – impact on education)
- Current thinking on intervention models and strategies (relate these to what is going on in FCPS)
- Current trends and issues surrounding the education of students with the disability (relate these to what is going on in FCPS)

Handouts: Each group should prepare handouts to accompany the presentation. Please bring enough handouts so that everyone in the class (including the instructor) may have a set.

Grading: The presentation, overview/summary, and handouts are worth a total of 15 points. The following is how the grade will be established:

## **V. CHILDREN'S BOOK: Due 2/11/10 (5 Points)**

Find a children's book that features a child with a disability as the main character. Provide a brief synopsis of the story and be prepared to answer the following questions.

- Was the person with disabilities portrayed in a positive or negative light?
- How did you feel about the way the character(s) was depicted? Explain.
- After reading the book, do you believe readers come away having a better understanding of the disability and the challenges it presents? Why or why not?
- How would you recommend using this book with teachers and students?

## **VI. FINAL EXAM: Due 3/11/10: (10 Points)**

The final exam will be given to assess knowledge and understanding of the student outcomes.

**The exam will be take-home and in a short answer and essay format.**

Since it is take-home, please write the Honor Code on the front and sign it. **You may not communicate with each other about the examination, but you may use any other source of information.**

If you wish to receive written feedback on your examination, please supply a self-addressed stamped envelope with your completed exam.

### **HONOR CODE:**

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

### **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:**

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc> or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

### **TASKSTREAM**

For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, students will be required to submit a signature assignment from each of their Special Education courses to TaskStream, an electronic portfolio system. In addition, students completing Midpoint and Final Portfolio courses will use TaskStream to create a full portfolio of their work based on assignments completed throughout their program. For this reason, students will need to retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE Special Education program. In addition to the signature assignment,

products from this class can become part of your individual program portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards.

### COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

<b>Class</b>	<b>Readings for Class</b>	<b>Topics and Due Dates</b>
1/7/10	Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Chapter 3	Key Concepts for Understanding Special Education Personnel and Procedures of Special Education Multicultural and Bilingual Perspectives
1/14/10	Chapter 4 Chapter 5 Chapter 6	Creating Partnerships through Collaboration Learning Disabilities Students with Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder ( <i>Group 1</i> )
1/21/10	Chapter 7 Chapter 9	Students with Emotional and Behavior Disorders Students with Speech and Language Disorders ( <i>Group 2</i> ) <b>Due: Journal Articles</b>
1/28/10	Chapter 8 Chapter 14	Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities ( <i>Guest Speaker</i> ) <b>Due: Field Observation Report</b>
2/4/09	Chapter 10 Chapter 11	Students with Deafness and Hearing Loss ( <i>Group 3</i> ) Students with Visual Impairments ( <i>Group 4</i> ) Students with Physical and Health Disabilities ( <i>Group 5</i> )
2/11/10	Chapter 12	Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders ( <i>Guest Speaker</i> ) <b>Due: Children's book Presentations</b>
2/18/10	Chapter 13 Chapter 15	Students Who are Gifted and Talented ( <i>Group 5</i> ) Students with Physical and Health Disabilities ( <i>Group 6</i> )
2/25/10		<b>Case Studies Due</b> <b>Case Study Presentations</b>
3/4/10		<b>Case Study Presentations</b> <b>Hand out final exam</b>
3/11/10		<b>Final Exam Due</b> <b>Wrap up</b>

**NOTE:**

This syllabus may change according to class needs. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with the instructor or need special arrangements, please call and/or make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.

## FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

**Objective:** Complete one observation report and be able to contribute meaningful information to class discussions, based on personal experience and observation.

**Activity:** Conduct one classroom observation in a disability area **other than the one in which you currently teach**. The observation must be at least 30 minutes in length. Complete and submit the report based on the structured observation form and be ready to contribute to class discussion on the night the observed disability area is discussed.

**Due Date:** Due date 1/28/10

<b>Field Observation Scoring Rubric</b>				
NAME: _____		OBSERVATION NUMBER: _____		SCORE: _____
Exemplary	Adequate	Acceptable	Inadequate	Unacceptable
15-13	12-10	9-7	6-5	< 4

*Points will be given and deducted based on the following criteria:*

**Exemplary:** The composition of students and adults is clearly described. Activities observed and instructional materials used are specifically identified. Observer identifies technology in evidence and describes relevance to activities. Observer describes how staff does/does not adjust instruction to address individual differences. The observer displays reflection and perspective when describing reactions and impressions. Writing mechanics and style are error-free.

**Adequate:** Good overall report, lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary observation. Not entirely reflective or thoughtful. Minor writing style errors may be present.

**Acceptable:** Acceptable, but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have some substantial problems with observations made, writing style, or reaction to the activity.

**Inadequate:** Report has substantial problems in important areas such as writing, completeness, impressions, and overall thoughtfulness.

**Unacceptable:** Does not complete or submit a report. What is submitted has no comments relative to the assignment. Little or no evidence that a complete observation period was experienced.

## **FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT**

(This is a structure for the information required in the report; **do not** turn this in for your observation)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Disability Area \_\_\_\_\_

Class Composition: Classroom observed, content area, grade level of students (1 points)

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Staffing: Number of teachers, IAs, and students (demographics) (1 points)

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Activity(ies): Describe activity observed (3 points)

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Instructional Materials, Use of Technology: (2 points)

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Evidence of Individualization/Differentiation: (3points)

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Describe your reactions and impressions of your observation: (3 points)

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Writing mechanics, use of APA, correct punctuation and spelling: (2 points)

**CASE STUDY RUBRIC**  
**Due 2/25/10**

<u>Evaluation Standards</u>	<u>Exceeds Expectations</u>	<u>Meets Expectations</u>	<u>Below Expectations</u>
Introduction <b>(1 points)</b>	Introduction provides general context with citations and areas to be covered	Introduction provides general context and areas to be covered	Introduction does not identify areas to be covered and/or provides general context
Description of school and neighborhood <b>(1 points)</b>	Provides detailed description of school and neighborhood including important and relevant details	Provides description of school and neighborhood including some important and relevant details	Provides general description of school and neighborhood including very few or no important and relevant details
Student's demographic data <b>(2 points)</b>	Provides detailed description of student demographic data with specific examples that illustrate each point	Provides description of student demographic data with a few examples that illustrate points	Provides general description of student demographic data with no examples that illustrate points
Educational history <b>(2 points)</b>	Clear, concise, and detailed information provided on the following: schools attended, reason for referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multidisciplinary evaluation, special education classification, placement	The following are noted: schools attended, reason for referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multidisciplinary evaluation, special education classification, placement	Incomplete information on the following: schools attended, reason for referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multidisciplinary evaluation, special education classification, placement
IEP goals, objectives, and classroom accommodations <b>(2 points)</b>	Clear, concise, and detailed description of IEP goals, objectives, and classroom accommodations	Description of IEP goals, objectives, and classroom accommodations	Vague or incomplete description of IEP goals, objectives, and classroom accommodations
Observational information <b>(2 points)</b>	Detailed observational information from a variety of sources specifically related to student IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations	Observational information from a variety of sources related to student IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations	Observational information not focused on student IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations
Your additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications <b>(2points)</b>	Logical recommendations with thorough and detailed support based on observations, interview, and literature. Recommendations highlight critical issues	Logical recommendations with some support based on observations, interview, and literature	Illogical recommendations with little or no support based on observations, interview, and literature
Summary and synthesis <b>(3points)</b>	Thorough and detailed comparison of student characteristics with those described in the textbook and greater than three additional sources from the literature	Comparison of student characteristics with those described in the textbook and three additional sources from the literature	General and/or incomplete comparison of student characteristics with those described in the textbook and fewer than three additional sources from the literature

**Grading: Total of 15 points Written Case Study**  
*APA should be used in the format of the case study*

## DISABILITY AREA PRESENTATION

<b>Group Disability Area Presentation</b>		
<i>Components</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Handouts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual layout</li> <li>• Appropriateness to the presentation</li> <li>• Clarity</li> <li>• Usefulness</li> </ul>	/3	
<b>Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content</li> <li>• Sequence of Presentation</li> <li>• Use of Visual Aids</li> <li>• Speaking/Presentation Style</li> <li>• Overall impression of Presentation</li> </ul>	/10	
<b>Collaborative Efforts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone has a clear and important role for the development/participation of presentation</li> <li>• Professionalism of the presentation</li> </ul>	/2	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/15</b>	