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

EDSE 634-5S1: *Characteristics of Students with Autism*
CRN: 73407, 3 - Credit(s)
Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. Heidi Graff	**Meeting Dates:** 08/27/12 - 12/19/12
Phone: (703) 993-8036	**Meeting Day(s):** Thursday
E-Mail: hgraff@gmu.edu	**Meeting Times:** 4:30pm - 7:10pm
Office Hours: Mondays, 3:00-4:00pm	**Meeting Location:** KAII 113

Course Description:
Describes varying characteristics of students labeled with a type of autism who receive special education services. Examines definitions, eligibility criteria, incidence rates, and etiology. Perspectives from students, families, educational, community, and career personnel are described.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Advising Contact Information:
Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. For assistance contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703)993-3145.

Nature of Course Delivery:
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:

- Identify and describe the evolution of autism as a disability category.
- Examine varying perspectives on the etiology of autism.
- Analyze individual as well as clusters of student behaviors to identify the label associated with the behaviors.
- Examine the diversity of definitions that apply to the wide range of skills associated with students who are labeled with autism.
- Describe how schools, families, and community agencies may collaborate in determining eligibility for students with autism as a primary disability label.
- Given specific student behaviors targeted for specialized services via special education, identify corresponding responsive instructional techniques and the research that supports those techniques.
- Describe the range of service delivery models for students with autism, and analyze the extent to which research-based practices are implemented in educational settings so that students are served in the least restrictive environment.

Required Textbooks:

Hall, L. J. (2013). Autism spectrum disorders: From theory to practice. (2nd ed.). Pearson.

Kluth, P. (2010). You're going to love this kid! (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Brookes.

Recommended Textbooks:

American Psychological Association (2009). Publication manual (6th ed., second printing). Washington, DC: Author.

Required Materials:

Additional Readings:

Peer-Reviewed Journal Readings (2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012)**:** To be determined and selected by students to support various assignments.

Course's Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program for the Teaching Students with Autism Graduate Certificate. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC Standards are listed on the following website:
http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalStandards/ The CEC standard that will be addressed in this class is Standard 2: Characteristics of Learners. *NOTE: NCATE Assessments (in many but not all courses) may address additional CEC standards.

Policies (Attendance and Late Work Policies):

Attendance Policy:

Understanding you are individuals with full and active lives, who have made the intellectual and financial commitment to regularly attend class, there may be an instance when you are not able to attend. If this unlikely event should occur, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student. Students who are absent are held responsible for the material covered and assignments due as if in attendance. You are required to notify the Instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Be aware any points earned for participation in class activities, during a time of absence, will not be earned and cannot be made up. If you need to miss, for any reason, more than two class sessions, contact the Instructor immediately to discuss options for withdrawing and completing the course during another semester.

Late Work Policy:

There are absolutely no "redo" and/or "retake" on assignments. Full earned credit given for assignments turned in on time (class start time for the due date, unless otherwise stated in this syllabus). Five points of the total assignment points are deducted for each 24-hour period that passes after the class starts time for the due date. All assignments must be typed. The APA format for clear and excellent written language and technical aspects for citations and formatting must be used. Refer to the APA Publication Manual 6th edition. A final grade of Incomplete will be considered only due to extreme extenuating circumstances; please contact the Instructor.

TaskStream Submission:

For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, all students are required to submit an NCATE assignment from selected Special Education courses to TaskStream. The NCATE assignment required for this course must be submitted electronically to Mason's NCATE management system, TaskStream: (https://www.taskstream.com).

Note: Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to submit NCATE assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/. Students who do not submit the required NCATE assignment to TaskStream will receive a grade of Incomplete (IN) in the course. The Incomplete (IN) will change to a grade of (F) if the required signature assignment has not been posted to TaskStream by the incomplete work due date listed in the current semester's Schedule of Classes.

Grading Scale:
95 - 100% = A
90 - 94% = A-
80 - 89% = B
70 - 79% = C

<70% = F

Schedule:

COURSE SCHEDULE

* Additional required readings, typically internet resources, will be announced either via Bb and/or during class sessions. These resources supplement the text(s) and facilitate your completion of activities during the semester. If a topic is not covered due to time limitations of a class session, that topic will be carried over to the next class. **Assignment due dates never change.**

Session / Date	Topics	Preparation* and *Assignments Due*
Class 1/ Aug. 30	• Facilitate introductions • Overview the syllabus • Discuss definitions and heterogeneity of students with autism • Guidelines for Observations	
Class 2/ Sept. 6	• Demonstrate Media Comparison/Contrast • Review definitions of autism • Describe the historical evolution of autism, including etiology and incidence rates behaviors	Ch. 1 of Hall Ch. 1 of Kluth
Class 3/ Sept. 13	• Identify assessment tools for autism diagnosis • Discuss the diversity of students who receive the label of autism • Media Comparison/Contrast presentations	DUE: *Media C/C (1-4)* Ch. 2 of Hall
Class 4/ Sept. 20	• Describe communication issues of students with autism and ways to assess/target a student's current performance level and instructional priorities	DUE: *Media C/C (5-8)* Ch. 8 of Hall Ch. 7 of Kluth
Class 5/ Sept. 27	• Describe play issues of students with autism and ways to assess/target a student's current performance level and instructional priorities	DUE: *Media C/C (9-12)* Ch. 9 of Hall
Class 6/ Oct. 4	• Describe the cognitive and affective variations of students with some type of autism label • Review Annotated Bibliography	*Annotated Bibliography* Ch. 2 of Kluth
Class 7/ Oct. 11	• Describe social-emotional development of students with autism and ways to assess/target a student's current performance level and instructional priorities	Ch. 6 of Kluth
Class 8/ Oct. 18	• Guest speakers • Family perspective	Ch. 4 of Kluth
Class 9/ Oct. 25	• Describe sensory-motor considerations for students with autism and ways to assess/target a student's current performance level	Blackboard discussion

Class 10/ Nov. 1	• Discuss the life-span issues that educators, students, and families that impact choices for instructional priorities	Ch. 10 of Hall
Class 11/ Nov. 8	• Describe the teamwork involved in diagnosing, assessing, and monitoring the progress for students with autism • Describe service delivery models • Review Observations	Ch. 12 of Kluth Ch. 3 of Kluth *DUE: Observation Assignment*
Class 12/ Nov. 15	• Discuss student behaviors that indicate variation in characteristics of students with autism • Peer review of Interview Drafts	Ch. 9 of Kluth *DUE: Review Draft Interviews*
Class 13/ Nov. 22	• No class Thanksgiving Break • Work on Interview Synthesis	*DUE: Interview Synthesis*
Class 14/ Nov. 29	• Modules Recognizing Autism http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/mod_list.php • Assessment for Identification • Restricted Patterns of Behavior, Interests, and Activities • No formal class-Meet with Professional Development group	Ch. 5 of Kluth
Class 15/ Dec. 6	• Professional Development Session presentations	*DUE: Professional Development Session*

Assignments:
1. **Annotated bibliography == 15 points**

Select five recent (2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012) professional-refereed journal article that focuses on characteristics of students with autism, identification issues, or a similar topic that is directly aligned with the competencies for this course. This project requires you to both summarize the article content and to describe your insights and reflections based on what you learned from reading the article. It is required that the article is an original research article (i.e., the research procedures and results are the focus of the article). The annotated bibliography must be formatted according to APA guidelines for clear and excellent written language and organized according to the headings provided. The annotated bibliography will be scored using the rubric provided in the syllabus. Also include each journal article itself with the annotated bibliography.

1. Cover sheet (one page)
   Your name, course title, semester, instructor's name.
2. Main Idea and Rationale (one paragraph)
   Identify and describe the major content that you derived from reading the author's work. Also describe your rationale for why you chose this author's work to summarize for this assignment.
3. Details (one paragraph)

Identify and describe one specific detail from the author's work. A suggestion is to narrow your focus so that you are paraphrasing content that seems most relevant or most unique or most interesting to you.
4. Reflections and Insights (one paragraph)
What did you learn from reading this article? How has the article content changed or expanded what you already knew about the topic? What might you do differently in the future as a result of what you learned from this article? What insights about students with autism and the people in their lives have you gained as a result of reading this article? This is paragraph worth the most points.
5. References (all references on one page)

Also submit the journal article itself. If the articles are also not submitted you will receive 0 credit for completing this assignment.

Scoring Rubric for Annotated Bibliography

1.	Format correct throughout and research article choice appropriate (.5 each).	**/2.5**
2.	Main idea and rationale for each article described clearly with excellent written language (.5 each).	**/2.5**
3.	One detail for each article described clearly with excellent written language (.5 each).	**/2.5**
4.	Reflection and insights for each article described clearly with excellent written language (1 each).	**/5**
5.	Technical aspects of APA accurate throughout (.5 each).	**/2.5**
TOTAL		**/15**

2. **Classroom Observations == 20 points**

Select two different types of students with autism to observe in their classroom setting for approximately 90 minutes each. These observations will most likely not occur in the same classroom nor at the same school site. Identify and describe each observation, and compare and contrast similarities and differences you notice between the student's characteristics, their educational programs, and the type of curriculum and interactions (with other students and adults) you observe. The observation must be formatted according to APA guidelines for clear

and excellent written language and organized according to the headings provided below. This assignment will be scored using the rubric provided in the syllabus.

1. Cover sheet with your name, course title, semester, instructor's name, header with page # begins here. (refer to APA – most of this information is noted in the middle of the cover page)
2. Description of Student 1: Description of the first student (grade, age, sex), the service delivery model (e.g., self-contained, general education), and characteristics of the student (i.e., behaviors you observe during the time you are there; be objective in these descriptions). (One page maximum)
3. Description of Classroom 1: Describe the first instructional setting (e.g., grouping arrangements, what is being taught, behavior management system; be objective in these descriptions). (One page maximum)
4. Description of Student 2: Description of the second student (grade, age, sex), the service delivery model (e.g., self-contained, general education), and characteristics of the student (i.e., behaviors you observe during the time you are there; be objective in these descriptions). (One page maximum)
5. Description of Classroom 2: Describe the second instructional setting (e.g., grouping arrangements, what is being taught, behavior management system; be objective in these descriptions). (One page maximum)
6. Similarities: Note the similarities you observed between the student's characteristics. (One page maximum)
7. Differences: Note the differences you observed between the service delivery models, educational programs, and the type of curriculum and interactions you observed. (Two pages)
8. Reflections and Insights: Reflect on what you learned from these observations, including what you liked and what you would change if you were the instructor, areas you have questions about that you want to further explore in the future, and insights you gained from this experience about the variance in these students who have an autism label. (Two pages)

Scoring Rubric for Classroom Observations

1.	Format correct throughout and observation students/sites selected are appropriate.	**/1**
2.	Descriptions of the students are clearly described with excellent written language.	**/3**
3.	Descriptions of the instructional settings are clearly described with excellent written language.	**/3**
4.	Similarities between the students are clearly described with excellent written language.	**/4**

5.	Differences (refer to # 7 items in assignment description) are described with excellent written language throughout.	/4
6.	Reflections about and insights gained from these two observations are clearly described with excellent written language (refer to # 8 items in assignment description).	/5
TOTAL		**/20**

3. Interview Synthesis == 20 points

This is your signature assignment for TaskStream. Conduct in-person interviews with three people, one of which must be the parent/guardian of a student with autism. When appropriate, the individual with autism may be one of the three people interviewed. At least one school professional (i.e., general education teacher, special education teacher, speech-language therapist, principal) must be interviewed. Depending on who you choose to interview, it may also be appropriate to select a professional from a community agency. The purpose of these interviews is to gather information from different sources to determine their views and experiences about educational programming for the student with autism. Questions asked during the interview *must be approved in advance*, and you should definitely follow-up on individual's responses to questions as appropriate during the interview. Synthesize the information you elicited from the interviews (be sure you do not simply identify the responses; synthesis must be evident), and connect information you elicited from a minimum of TWO recent (2009, 2010, 2011, or 2012) per theme of research (or literature) from peer-reviewed professional journal articles. Use pseudonyms for school personnel, schools, or towns. Emphasize with interviewees that (a) interviews are a course assignment and (b) confidentiality of responses is assured.

- Cover sheet. (One page)
- Method identified: Insert a one-page that tells how you explained the interview to people (including your welcome), terms defined prior to the interview, the specific questions asked, and pseudonyms for each interviewee with their position title after the name. (One page)
- Theme # 1 synthesized; recent research or literature integrated (at least 2 research articles). (Three pages)
- Theme # 2 synthesized; recent research or literature integrated (at least 2 research articles). (Three pages)
- Theme # 3 synthesized; recent research or literature integrated (at least 2 research articles). (Three pages)
- Reflections noted; recent research or literature integrated. (Three pages)
- References (**6 minimum**). (One page)

Rubric for Interview Synthesis

1) Three people interviewed, with appropriate set-up for interview occurring, terms defined well prior to interview, and quality questions identified; excellent written language on the one-page document (which was photocopied and provided to interviewees during the interview).	**/2.5**
2) Identify and describe Theme # 1 with excellent written language and integration of recent research or literature.	**/2.5**
3) Identify and describe Theme # 2 with excellent written language and integration of recent research or literature.	**/2.5**
4) Identify and describe Theme # 3 with excellent written language and integration of recent research or literature.	**/2.5**
5) Describe what you learned from the Interview and how you plan to use the information you learned with excellent written language and integration of recent research or literature.	**/5**
6) References and narrative use accurate APA technical format throughout.	**/5**
TOTAL	**/20**

4. Media Comparison/Contrast == 15 points

Read a book (fiction or non-fiction) featuring a main topic or character with autism or watch a movie featuring a main character with autism. Book and movies **must get prior approval** by the instructor for this assignment. This assignment will be scored using the rubric provided in the syllabus. In a 20 minute presentation to the class:

- Summary plot or main point of material.
- Present two comparisons and two contrasts with evidence presented from class lectures or readings.
- Show or read a sample five minute segment to exemplify a contrast or comparison.
- Personal reflection of material.

Rubric for Media Comparison/Contrast

1. Summary plot or main point of material. (5 minutes)	**/2.5**
2. Present two comparisons and two contrasts with evidence presented from class lectures or readings. Individuals' assigned to present in class 2 or 3 will get assistance from the instructor with this section. (5 minutes)	**/5**
3. Show or read a sample five minute segment to exemplify a contrast or comparison. (5 minutes)	**/2.5**
4. Personal reflection of material. (5 minutes)	**/5**

TOTAL	**/15**

5. 30-minute Professional Development Session == 15 points

Design a professional development activity that is **based upon research**. The purpose of this assignment is twofold: (1) expand your knowledge of current research in the field of autism; and (2) to develop a 30 minute staff development presentation, which will be presented to the class. This project will introduce the staff development process, best practices, and provide the opportunity to lead a dynamic group. The presentation should deal specifically with some aspect of autism. **Your presentation should include handouts, PowerPoint, a list of references of 5-10 articles/books, an agenda or outline, and definitions of related terms that might be unfamiliar to your audience.** All materials and activities should reflect key concepts in the presentation. Students will be required to work in groups.

Presentation Rubric

	UNSATISFACTORY	MINIMAL	GOOD	OUTSTANDING	
Organization Content Knowledge	Listener cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information. Does not engage the audience. Students do not have grasp of information; students cannot answer questions about subject.	Listener has difficulty following presentation because presenters jump around. Does not engage most of the audience. Students are uncomfortable with information and are able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Students present information in engaging and logical sequence which audience can follow. Students are at ease with content, but fail to elaborate.	Students present information in engaging, novel, and logical sequence which audience can follow. Students demonstrate full knowledge with explanations and elaboration.	5
Visual, Media, Strategies Mechanics	Students used no visuals/media/strategies. Students' presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors. Two or fewer sources in APA style.	Students occasionally used visuals/media/strategies that rarely support text and presentation. Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors. Three + sources in APA style.	Visuals/media/strategies related to text and presentation. Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors. Four + sources in APA style.	Students used visuals/media/strategies to reinforce screen text and presentation. Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors. **Five + sources in APA style.**	5
Delivery	Students' presentation outside acceptable time limits (+-20 minutes). Shows no evidence of	Students' presentation outside acceptable time limits (+-15 minutes). Shows limited evidence	Students' presentation outside acceptable time limits (+-10 minutes). Shows some evidence of	Students' presentation within 30 minutes. Shows significant evidence of rehearsal.	5

	rehearsal	of rehearsal	rehearsal		
				Total---->	**15**

6.   Participation, Attendance, & In-Class Activities == 15 points (.5-1.5 per class)

Students are expected to attend class and actively participate in all assignments, group activities, and class discussions. Active participation includes the asking of questions and the presentation of one's own understanding with regard to the readings and lectures as well as interactive discussion and participation in activities with other class members. This will require all students to complete the required readings, activities, and assignments for that specific class meeting.

Additionally, during a few class sessions there will be the opportunity to earn point(s) for successful completion of graded in-class activities. **If you are not in attendance, thus not able to participate and contribute to class when these activities occur, assigned points will not be earned and cannot be made up at another time.** Students will meet during class in small groups to analyze and discuss instructor-provided materials. Points are based upon: being present, being prepared with textbook or other relevant material (please bring readings or assigned material to class, as these are used for in-class discussions as well as course lectures), and participating the entire time period during the in-class activities. Occasionally, during an in-class activity, there will be the option to accumulate bonus points. These points may be used to offset any points deducted on an assignment.

1. Annotated Bibliography   **15** points
2. Classroom Observations   **20** points
3. Interview   **20** points
4. Media Comparison/Contrast   **15** points
5. Professional Development Session   **15** points
6. Activities During Class   **15** points

   TOTAL   **100 points**

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURES FOR STUDENTS:

a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See
     http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/].

b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See
     http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html].

c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their
     George Mason University 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.

d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff
     consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and
     counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group
     counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal
     experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].

e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered
     with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and

inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].

f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/Revised 06/25/12

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See http://gse.gmu.edu/].

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