



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

Summer 2015

EDSE 501 A01: Introduction to Special Education

CRN: 41369, 3 - Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Michael Repie	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 5/18/2015 - 6/20/2015
<b>Phone:</b> (703) 531-6115	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Asynchronous
<b>E-Mail:</b> mrepie@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> Asynchronous
<b>Office Hours:</b> 7 am – 4 pm Mon - Fri	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Internet

***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.*

**Course Description**

Surveys current knowledge of individuals with disabilities within context of human growth and development across life span. Examines historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies, assessment, and support services for individuals with disabilities ranging from mild and moderate to severe. Considers impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

**Co-requisite(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. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

**DELIVERY METHOD:**

This course will be delivered online using an asynchronous format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before “@masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on May 18, 2015.

### **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard;
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of the course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for Pcs and Macs respectively, available for free downloading by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player>
  - Apple QuickTime Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
- A headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool

### **EXPECTATIONS:**

- **Course Week:** Refer to the asynchronous bullet below as your course is asynchronous.
  - **Asynchronous:** Because online courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our course will **start** on Monday May 18, 2015 and **finish** on Saturday June 20, 2015.
- **Log-in Frequency:** Refer to the asynchronous bullet below as your course is asynchronous.
  - **Asynchronous:** Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, at a minimum this should be 3 times per week.
- **Participation:** Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which include viewing of all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance if they are struggling with technical components of the course. Contact ITU (<http://itservices.gmu.edu/help.cfm>) at (703) 993-8870 or [support@gmu.edu](mailto:support@gmu.edu).

- **Technical Issues:** Students should expect that they could experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- **Workload:** Expect to log in to this course **at least three times a week** to read announcements, participate in the discussions, and work on course materials. Remember, this course is self-paced. There are no specific deadlines and due dates, but there is a **SUGGESTED SCHEDULE** section of this syllabus to which you are encouraged to adhere. It is the student's responsibility to maintain sufficient progress relative to assigned topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

**Netiquette:** Our goal is to be **collaborative**, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. I suggest that you always re-read your responses carefully before you post them to encourage others from taking them as personal attacks. **Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words.** I will do the same. Remember, you are not competing with each other but sharing information and learning from one another as well as from the instructor.

### **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:

- 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, behavioral and academic characteristics associated with all disability areas.
- Describe historical points of view and contribution 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 use of innovative technology.
- Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.
- Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children.

### **Required Textbooks**

Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C., (2014). *Exceptional Learners: An introduction to special education, 13<sup>th</sup> ed.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson

### **Digital Library**

Effective summer 2015, the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research will discontinue the use of the Pearson Digital Library. No further registrations will be accepted. Students who hold current subscriptions will continue to have access to the library for the remainder of their subscription time. However, no further updates will be made to the digital library. During this time, should a textbook be revised or a new book is adopted for a class where the text is included in the digital library, Pearson will have options available to you and will provide you with an individual e-text or, if there is no e-text, a printed copy. Students, who have purchased a 3-year subscription directly through Pearson Education, will also have an option to obtain a prorated refund. However, 3-year subscription access cards purchased via the GMU bookstore will need to speak with a George Mason Bookstore Representative. Please be aware that the issuance of a refund, in this case, is at the discretion of the George Mason bookstore. Concerns or questions may be directed to Molly Haines at Molly.Haines@pearson.com.

### **Recommended Textbooks**

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.* (2009). Washington DC: American Psychological Association. (See course welcome section of the site of an online APA Style resource from APA).

### **Required Resources**

On Blackboard

### **Additional Readings**

On Blackboard

### **Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Special Education: Students with Disabilities who Access the General

Curriculum K-12. 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 that will be addressed in this class include Standard 1: Foundations, Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners, and Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences.

### **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- 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. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>]

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

## Course Policies & Expectations

### *Attendance.*

N/A Online Open May 18 – June 20, 2015

### *Late Work.*

All work for the course is due no later than 5 pm on Saturday June 20, 2015! No work will be accepted after that time!

## Evaluation

This course is set up in module form. Each module is focused on a certain topic in special education and contains a similar structure. Each module contains individual lessons and a module assignment. Each lesson includes a reading, lecture, video or media component, and a reading check. The course point breakdown is:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Points each</i>	<i>Total</i>
Reading checks	25	400
Module 1 Assignment	150	
Module 2 Assignment	150	
Module 3 Assignment	150	
Module 4 Assignment	150	
		600
Child Abuse training	REQUIRED	
<b>TOTAL POINTS FOR COURSE</b>		<b>1000</b>

## TaskStream Submission

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit these assessments, *Abuse/Neglect Certificate and Final Paper* to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete(IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you **MUST** use the login and password information that has been created for you. This information is distributed to students through GMU email, so it is very important that you set up your GMU email. For more TaskStream information, go to <http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream>.

## **Grading Scale**

95 – 100% = A

90 – 94% = A-

80 – 89% = B

70 – 79% = C

<70% = F

## **Assignments**

**Performance-based Assessment (TaskStream submission required).**

### **Child Abuse Training Module\*\***

All students must complete the online child abuse recognition training module available at [http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated\\_reporters/cws5691/index.html](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated_reporters/cws5691/index.html). **This is a mandatory requirement and you will not pass the class without completing this assignment.**

**The certificate of completion will need to be posted to your TaskStream account in order to receive your final grade in the course.** It is recommended that you post this at the start of your course. Please consult with your instructor as soon as possible if you have any questions about this assignment.

### **Module 4 Assignment\*\***

The final Module Assignment (or Final Paper) is an opportunity to show growth in your knowledge about learners with disabilities. You will **select one disability area** and demonstrate your knowledge of (a) the characteristics of the disability, (b) learning needs of individuals with the disability, (c) lifespan issues related to the disability (including impact of a disability on the individual and the family), and (d) how the disability is similar and different to other types of disabilities (e.g., mild, severe, sensory). See Appendix for more information on the Module 4 Assignment.

## **Performance-based Common Assignments (No TaskStream submission required).**

### **Reading Checks**

At the end of *each lesson*, there is a reading check assignment. In most lessons, these checks are 5-10 multiple choice questions. These reading checks assess your understanding and recall of the chapter in the textbook you were assigned. You may not use any materials such as books or notes to help you complete these checks but you may take each one multiple times.

### **Module Assignments**

Module assignments are a combination of independent and group work. Modules 1 and 4 require students to write two to four page papers individually. The paper in Module 1 is a personal philosophy statement. It also requires you to choose two activities from a list of school- and community-based options. You will include a summary of the activities in your paper. In Module 4, students must choose a topic related to special education, research the topic, and write about it. Assignments for Modules 2 and 3 are slightly different. At the beginning of the course, you will be randomly assigned to a disability group. Within your group, you will communicate using the Discussion Board so that each person completes his Module assignment worksheets with unique information. Once you have completed your worksheets, you will post them to your disability area Wiki. After completing the Module assignment, each person will choose a DIFFERENT disability area Wiki, read over the postings, and comment on the group information provided. Each comment should be posted to the group comment Wiki and include how the information related to at least one aspect of the Module.

### **Other Assignments.**

N/A



## Schedule

*This is a SUGGESTED schedule for your work.*

Timeframe	Topic:	Material:
Week 1	Blackboard overview <i>Module 1: History of special education and disability, legislation, and issues and services</i> Lesson 1: History of special education and disability Lesson 2: Legislation Lesson 3: Issues and services	Child Abuse Training Certificate posted to TaskStream All reading checks and Module 1 assignment completed
Week 2	<i>Module 2: Higher incidence disabilities</i> Lesson 1: Students with Intellectual Disabilities Lesson 2: Students with Learning Disabilities Lesson 3: Students with speech/language impairments Lesson 4: Students with emotional/behavioral disorders Lesson 5: Students with autism spectrum disorders	All reading checks complete. Module 2 worksheets posted for comment in disability Wiki. Comments for Module 2 complete
Week 3	<i>Module 3: Lower incidence disabilities</i> Lesson 1: Students with Other health impairments Lesson 2: Students with visual impairments, including blindness Lesson 3: Students with hearing impairments or who are deaf Lesson 4: Students with severe/multiple disabilities, including deaf/blindness or TBI Lesson 5: Students with orthopedic impairments	All reading checks complete. Module 3 worksheets posted for comment in disability Wiki.
Week 4	<i>Module 4: Issues and Collaborations</i> Lesson 1: Students with special gifts and talents Lesson 2: Parents and families Lesson 3: The future of special education	Comments for Module 3 complete <b>FINAL DUE DATE</b> All Course Material should be completed Module 4 Assignment (Final Paper) Due Course evaluation completed

## Appendix

### Module 4 Assignment

The final Module Assignment is an opportunity to show growth in your knowledge about learners with disabilities. You will be assigned one disability area and demonstrate your knowledge of (a) the characteristics of the disability, (b) learning needs of individuals with the disability, (c) lifespan issues related to the disability (including impact of a disability on the individual and the family), and (d) how the disability is similar and different to other types of disabilities (e.g., mild, severe, sensory).

To show this growth you will combine:

1. what you have learned from coursework (e.g., lectures, videos, articles, and textbook readings),
2. independent learning activities you have completed (e.g., IRIS modules, field experiences), and
3. the exploratory activity you completed in this Module.

#### **Paper** **Guidelines**

Your paper should be 5 to 10 pages. The format for the paper is fairly flexible. You may choose to describe the characteristics and the impact of the selected disability and make connections to how you experienced or observed this in your field experience and exploratory activity. You may choose to describe meaningful experiences from your field experience and exploratory activity and explain how that connects with the content you have learned in the course. You can also come up with an alternative format of your choice. However, please be sure to refer to the grading and Taskstream assignment rubrics to make sure that you have addressed all required topics.

**Your goal is to clearly show how your own perceptions of disability have changed and evolved this semester AND demonstrate that you clearly understand the important content you have learned.** Regardless of how you choose to approach this assignment, your paper should address the following areas:

#### **A. Disability Characteristics**

What are some characteristics of the disability, for example:

- What is its prevalence? Is it a high- or low- incidence disability?
- How is it diagnosed?
- Are physical/medical issues associated with this disability?
- Are there social or behavioral implications associated with this disability?

#### **B. Learning Needs**

How does the disability affect learning? For example:

- What areas of learning might be impacted by this disability?

- What teaching strategies might benefit learners with this disability?
- What IEP considerations might be needed?
- What accommodations might students with this disability need?
- Where might a student with this disability receive services? (Think LRE.)
- What skills will teachers need to work with students who have this disability?

### **C. Lifespan Issues (including Impact on Individual and Family)**

How does having this disability impact an individual? For example:

- What are the early childhood issues that need to be considered?
- What are community issues that need to be considered?
- What are post-secondary (after high school – job, college, independent living factors that need to be considered?
  - What impact does having this disability have on social relationships? What is the impact of the disability on family? For example:
    - What daily living skills might be impacted by this disability?
    - How does this disability impact family dynamics?
    - What information do families need to advocate for their children who have disabilities?

### **D. Similarities and Differences to Other Disabilities**

How is this disability similar and different to other disabilities (or other disability areas)? For example:

- Is there a difference in the prevalence of the chosen disabilities?
- What are differences in possible school placements for students with the selected disabilities?
- What types of instructional strategies or accommodations/modifications may be different for students with the chosen disabilities?

**Note:** For this category, you should contrast your selected disability with **TWO** other disabilities or disability areas. For example, if my paper were on students with ADHD (mild disability), I might contrast it to severe disabilities (or a specific disability such as Cerebral Palsy) **AND** sensory disabilities (or a specific disability such as blindness).