



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

Summer 2016

EDSE 844 A02: Current Issues in Special Education

CRN: 42585, 3 - Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Margaret Weiss	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 05/16/16 - 06/18/16
<b>Phone:</b> 703.993.5732	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Mon., Wed., & Fri (online)
<b>E-Mail:</b> mweiss9@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
<b>Office Hours:</b> By appointment	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Robinson A 247

***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**

Develops understanding of the role of convergent research evidence in addressing current issues in special education practice and policy. Describes current issues in special education and the group experimental, single subject, and qualitative research designs used to address these current issues. Students evaluate research studies in terms of methodological strengths and weaknesses, and their part in providing convergent bodies of evidence that can be used for defining practice and policy.

Prerequisite(s): Admission to PhD in education program, or permission of instructor.

Schedule Type: SEM

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3

Hours of Lab or Studio per week: 0

**Prerequisite(s):** Admission to PhD in education program, or permission of instructor

**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.

### **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:

1. Identify current issues in special education.
2. Explain the historical, educational, and philosophical roots of current issues.
3. Explain the multiple perspectives on the topic.
4. Propose implications for policy and practice.

### **Required Textbooks**

Bateman, B., Lloyd, J. W., & Tankersley, M. (2015). *Enduring issues in special education: Personal perspectives*. New York: Routledge.

Cooper, H. (2017). *Research synthesis and meta-analysis: A step-by-step approach* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### **Additional Readings**

Available on Blackboard

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

Course Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations This course is part of the George Mason University, College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), Graduate School of Education, Special Education, CEHD PhD in Education Program. This program complies with university and program standards.

### **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 George Mason University Disability Services and inform their instructor, in writing, as soon as possible. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. [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.*

In this course, we will be learning and discussing issues together. Your participation is critical to our ability to understand and critique the work we examine. Therefore, students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time, (d) show evidence of having read/studied material, and (e) complete all in-class

assignments. If you have an emergency that will keep you from being in class, please contact me as soon as possible.

### *Late Work.*

Assignments are due on the date indicated in the syllabus. If we change the due date for reasons related to student need in the course, the change will be discussed in class, posted on the Blackboard site, and confirmed in an email to all students. This course is focused on the development of your analysis skills and the grading will reflect that. I will not accept late work; however, once we begin our work on the literature review, what you turn in (e.g., task 1) will develop and improve over time. So, turn in what you have, get feedback, and you may resubmit one additional time (tasks 1-3), if necessary. If you do not turn in anything on the due date, you will not have the option to resubmit.

### **Communication with Dr. Weiss**

The most efficient way to contact me is through email. I check email daily at least at 9am and 2pm Monday through Friday. If your email has reached me by either of those times, I will respond immediately. Otherwise, I will respond within 24 hours during the week. On weekends, I check my Mason account on Sunday evenings around 7pm and will respond to all received then. If you would prefer to meet with me either before or after class (or at another time during the day), please do not hesitate to contact me.

### **Evaluation**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
Abstracts	5 @ 8 points each	40
Task 1	Research Question	15
Task 2	Working Bibliography	15
Task 3	Coding Guide	15
Task 4	Presentation	15
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Tk20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement**

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit the (*NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE*) to Tk20 through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Tk20 through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Tk20 (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Tk20 submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

## Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	92-100%
A-	90-91.9%
B	82-89.9%
B-	80-81.9%
C	70-79.9%
F	Below 70%

## Assignments

### Performance-based Assessment (Tk20 submission required).

None required

### Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required).

None required

### Other Assignments.

You will complete five (5) abstracts for discussion in class. You will post these in our Blackboard space and bring them with you to class for discussion (paper or electronic). Due dates are listed in the syllabus. We will sign up for topics. There is a template and grading rubric for your Abstract in Appendix A.

Tasks 1-4 are related to your development of an exhaustive literature search/review on a topic of your choosing. Each task will follow reading and instruction on the how-tos during the previous course session. You will then submit your task to the Assignment section of Blackboard for feedback and review by me. We will begin each session during the literature review portion of the course with a discussion by you about your progress, questions, and/or ideas. You will then receive feedback from your peers as well. On the final day of the course, you will informally present your process, progress, and preliminary findings to your classmates.

## Schedule

Date	Topic	Required Readings	Assignments Due
5/16	Introductions and definitions	BLT chp 1, chp 27	
5/18	What is special education; Searching databases (Anne Driscoll)	One chapter from section I in BLT	Abstract 1
5/20	Who should receive and provide special education?	One chapter from section II in BLT; Online discussion and posting	Abstract 2

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Readings</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
5/23	Where should special education happen?	One chapter from section III in BLT	Abstract 3
5/25	How should special education be practiced?	One chapter from section IV in BLT	Abstract 4
5/27	When should special education begin and end?	One chapter from section V in BLT Online discussion and posting	Abstract 5
<b>5/30</b>	<b>Memorial Day</b>	<b>No class</b>	
6/1	Conducting a literature review	C chp 1, 2	Task 1
6/3	Searching the literature	C chp 3 Online discussion and posting	
6/6	Preliminary working bibliography		Task 2
6/8	Coding	C chp 4	
6/10	Work/consultation day		Task 3
6/13	Coding and preliminary analysis	C chp 8	
6/15	Work/consultation day		
6/17	Final meeting/presentations		Task 4

**Appendix A**  
**Abstract**

Directions: In the first half of our class, we will be discussing issues and historical perspectives in special education. We will begin our discussions by each reading one chapter out of each section of the Bateman, Lloyd, and Tankersley (2015) text and writing an abstract of that chapter for our classmates. You will use the template below for your abstract and post it on Blackboard in the Abstract section before you get to class.

<b>Citation</b>	
<b>Topic or issue</b>	
<b>Who is speaking?</b>	
<b>Why do you think this person was included in the book?</b>	
<b>Main ideas or concepts conveyed</b> (with one piece of evidence from text)	
<b>Questions for group discussion</b>	
<b>One related citation</b>	

<p><b>What more needs to be known?</b> (review research questions/study research questions)</p>	
<p><b>How does this impact your thinking about the issue?</b></p>	

Grading Rubric

Item	Description	Marginal	Competent	Advanced
<p><b>Citation (up to .5)</b></p>	<p>In APA style</p>			
<p><b>Topic or issue (up to .5)</b></p>	<p>Main topic or issue of discussion in the chapter Subtopics may be included</p>			
<p><b>Who is speaking? (up to .5)</b></p>	<p>Identify author and their role in the field</p>			
<p><b>Why do you think this person was included in the book? (up to 1)</b></p>	<p>Provide specifics about the research conducted by this author during their career Link that research to the topic or issue Identify the perspective the author would take on the issue</p>			
<p><b>Main ideas or concepts conveyed (with one piece of evidence from text) (up to 1)</b></p>	<p>Identify main ideas conveyed by the author related to the topic identified above Cite evidence or quote from the chapter to support</p>			
<p><b>Questions for group discussion (up to 1.5)</b></p>	<p>Identify at least 3 questions for the group related to the topic and the author's presentation of it</p>			



Item	Description	Marginal	Competent	Advanced
<b>One related citation (up to .5)</b>	Provide one citation in APA format that is related to the topic but not listed in the references or in the citations			
<b>What more needs to be known? (up to 1.5)</b> (review research questions/study research questions)	Identify two research questions (either at the study level or the literature review level) that you believe need to be addressed after reading this chapter/article			
<b>How does this impact your thinking about the issue? (up to 1)</b>	Provide a personal description here, giving a brief overview of your thinking about the topic before reading the chapter and then your thinking after reading it			