



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

Fall 2016

EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education, 3-Credits

Section DL1; CRN: 73191

Section 6V1; CRN: 82417

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Margaret Weiss	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 08/29/16 - 12/20/16
<b>Phone:</b> 703.993.5732	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Asynchronous
<b>E-Mail:</b> mweiss9@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> Asynchronous
<b>Office Hours:</b> By appointment	<b>Meeting Location:</b> NET

***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**

Survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Includes historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies, assessment, and support services for individuals with disabilities ranging from mild and moderate to severe. Includes the 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.

**Advising Tip**

Did you know that students in "quick admit" and non-degree status are restricted in the number of classes they can take? Students planning to complete a program should apply as soon as possible. Apply at <http://cehd.gmu.edu/admissions/steps>.

### **Nature of Course Delivery**

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Video and other media supports
4. Research and presentation activities
5. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

### **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 August 20, 2016.

### **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 if your course is asynchronous or the synchronous bullet if your course is synchronous.
  - **Asynchronous:** Because online courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will **start** on **Monday**, and **finish** on **Sunday**.

- **Synchronous:** Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meeting take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- **Log-in Frequency:** Refer to the asynchronous bullet below if your course is asynchronous or the synchronous bullet if your course is synchronous.
  - **Asynchronous:** Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor. At a minimum, to this 2 times per week.
  - **Synchronous:** Students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings. In addition, 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 **not** self-paced. There are **specific deadlines and due dates** listed in the **CLASS SCHEDULE** section of this syllabus to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of 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.

### **Learner Outcomes**

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

1. Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
2. Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education.
3. Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of special education.
4. Describe research in etiological factors associated with all disability areas.
5. Describe social, cognitive, behavioral and academic characteristics associated with all disability areas.
6. Describe historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education.
7. Describe the role of families in the educational process.
8. Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including use of innovative technology.
9. Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.
10. Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children.

### **Required Textbooks**

Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C. (2015). *Exceptional learners: An introduction to special education* (13<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.

### **Recommended Textbooks**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

### **Required Resources**

Blackboard Course site

### **Additional Readings**

Available 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: Learner development and individual learning differences; Standard 3: Curricular content knowledge.

### **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.*

This is an asynchronous course; however, students are expected to (a) check the Blackboard course site at least 2-3 times per week, (b) check Mason email at least once daily and respond within 48 hours to instructor emails (as required), and (c) complete all module lessons

and activities, even if not graded. “I didn’t see it” or “I didn’t check my Mason email” are not legitimate reasons to miss course correspondence.

*Late Work.*

Assignments are due on the date indicated in the syllabus. The schedule provides due dates for the entire semester. Please note these dates and notify me before the end of the first week if you have issues with a due date because of a major professional or personal event (e.g., getting married, having a baby, traveling for an international professional conference). Please do not leave assignments to the last minute. Invariably, something happens that will make it difficult for you to give your best effort on the assignment.

I will not accept late work. But I will always accept early work! In other words, the entire course will be available to you from the start date in August. If you would like to progress at a faster pace than has been assigned, you are welcome to do that. Just make sure you send me an email to let me know that you have submitted assignments for me to review.

*Written and oral language*

APA Style is the standard format for any written work in the College of Education. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) You are required to use APA guidelines for all course assignments. Please use the following website for APA format guidelines:

<http://apastyle.apa.org>.

We will use person-first language in our class discussions, written assignments, and ideally in our professional practice.

**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 *Final Paper* 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**

<i>Grade</i>	<i>%</i>
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B	83-89
B-	80-82
C	70-79
F	<70

## Evaluation

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Total</i>
Reading checks	16 @ 25 points each	400
Module assignments	4 @ 150 points each	600
Beyond the modules activities		100
		<b>1100</b>

### Assignments

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

The final Module 4 paper is the required performance-based assessment for EDSE 501. You must upload this final paper to the Assignments tab AND Tk20 link in the Assessments tab in our Blackboard course. More information is available in the course Blackboard site under Module 4 and under Assignments.

You will not receive a grade in the course until your Module 4 final paper is uploaded to Tk20.

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

None

#### **Other Assignments.**

You are required to provide evidence that you have completed the state-mandated Child Abuse Reporting education program for teachers. If you already have a teaching license that indicates you have completed the training, you may scan the license and upload it to the appropriate Assignments links in Blackboard. If you have not completed the training, the link to the training is provided in the course Blackboard site. You must complete the training and upload the certificate generated at the end of the training to the appropriate Assignments link in Blackboard.

#### *Reading Checks (16 at 25 points each/ 400 points)*

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 (4 at 150 points each/600 points; all directions and rubrics posted in Blackboard)*

Module assignments are a combination of independent and group work. Modules 1 and 4 require students to write 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 integrate information from all of their course experiences to write a paper about one disability area.

Assignments for Modules 2 and 3 are slightly different. Once you complete the Module lessons, you will choose a disability area from the Module and post your choice to the Discussion Board. (If there are already five students who have posted for a disability area, please choose another

one.) Once you have completed your worksheets for the Module, you will post them to the Assignments section and to your disability area Wiki. After posting your worksheets, 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.

*Beyond the Modules Activities (100 points)*

Responsiveness to emails and posted activities is essential for your success in this course; therefore, points are earned for completion of requested tasks that extend your learning beyond the modules. Examples of the *Beyond the Modules Activities* requiring your attention include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) Engage with instructor from GMU email, (b) Ask the Instructor Discussion Board, (c) Introductory Discussion Board, (d) Child Abuse/Neglect Recognition Certification posted to Blackboard, (e) Peer Interactions in Discussion Boards and Wikis, (f) Module 4 paper posted to Tk20, and (g) Feedback Surveys in BB. All of these items are already part of the course (see course schedule). This is your opportunity to earn points for your effort across all components of the course.

**Schedule**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Upload to?</b>
Course opens in Blackboard	8/24	
Introductory Activities (see Welcome)	9/4	Various
Child abuse and neglect certificate	9/18	Assignments tab
Module 1 lessons complete; assignment completed and uploaded	9/25	Assignments tab
Module 2 assignment choice	10/2	Discussion Board
Module 2 lessons complete; assignment completed and uploaded; midpoint survey due	10/23	Assignments tab; Disability wiki
Module 3 assignment choice	10/30	Discussion Board
Module 3 lessons complete; assignment completed and uploaded	11/20	Assignments tab; Disability wiki
Module 4 lessons complete; assignment completed and uploaded; final survey due	12/18	Assignments tab; Tk20
Beyond the Modules activities	Throughout the semester	