



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

Fall 2017

EDSE 634: Characteristics of Individuals with Autism

3 - Credits

Section DL1; CRN: 81321

Section 611; CRN: 82201

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Heidi Graff	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 08/28/17 – 12/20/17
<b>Phone:</b> 703 993-8036	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> N/A
<b>E-Mail:</b> hgraff@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> N/A
<b>Office Hours:</b> Mondays 2-3	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Online, Asynchronous
<b>Office Location:</b> Krug 110	<b>Other Phone:</b> N/A

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

**Prerequisite(s)** None

**Co-requisite(s)** None

**Course Description**

Describes the varying characteristics of individuals with autism across their lifespans including, (a) diagnosis, (b) early childhood, (c) school-age, (d) transition, (e) employment, and (f) aging. Examines definitions, eligibility criteria, incidence rates, and etiology of autism. Analyzes perspectives from students, families, educational, community, and career personnel. Offered by Graduate School of Education. May not be repeated for credit.

Registration Restrictions:

Enrollment limited to students with a class of Advanced to Candidacy, Graduate, Non Degree or Senior Plus.

Enrollment is limited to Graduate, Non-Degree or Undergraduate level students.

Students in a Non-Degree Undergraduate degree may not enroll.

Schedule Type: Lecture

**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 teacher candidates/students should

contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other teacher candidates/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, and later apply to a program? Students planning to complete a program should apply as soon as possible. Apply at <http://cehd.gmu.edu/admissions/steps>.

### **Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered online using 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 12:01 a.m. on August 25, 2017.

**Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.**

### *Technical Requirements*

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox is required (note: Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard).
- Students must maintain 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 course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <https://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/downloads/windows-media-player/>
  - Apple Quick Time Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

### *Expectations*

#### Course Week:

Because asynchronous courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will start on Tuesdays at 12:01 a.m., and finish on Mondays at 11:59 p.m.

### Log-in Frequency:

Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week.

### Participation:

Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing 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 who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.

### Technical Issues:

Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

### Workload:

Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

### Instructor Support:

Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

### Netiquette:

The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

### Accommodations:

Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services

## **Learner Outcomes**

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

1. Describe the characteristics and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders as defined by the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.
2. Discriminate between and analyze varying perspectives on the etiology and prevalence of autism.
3. Compare and contrast the characteristics of individuals with autism throughout their lifespans.
4. Describe the wide range of skills and diversity of individuals with autism across their lifespans.
5. Analyze how schools, families, and community agencies contribute to quality of life among individuals with autism across their lifespans.
6. Evaluate how the role of the family, guardian, and/or siblings changes over the lifespan of the individual with autism.
7. Describe and evaluate responsive, research-based instructional techniques for individuals with autism.
8. Distinguish between different service delivery models for school age children with autism and analyze the extent to which research-based practices are implemented in educational settings so that school age children are served in the least restrictive environment in accordance with federal educational law.

## **Course 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, as well as those established by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support consortium (InTASC). The standards addressed in this class include CEC Standard 2: Learning environments (InTASC 3).

## **Required Textbooks**

1. Boutot, E.A. (2016). *Autism spectrum disorders: Foundations, characteristics, and effective strategies* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Pearson. ISBN-13: 978-0133833690
2. Hall, L.J. (2018). *Autism spectrum disorders: From theory to practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780134461168
3. Quill, K.A., & Stansberry-Brusnahan, L. (2017). *Do-watch-listen-say: Social and communication intervention for autism spectrum disorder*. Brookes: ISBN-13: 978-1-59857-980-2

## **Recommended Textbooks**

1. American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
2. Crawford, M.J., & Weber, B. (2016). *Autism interventions every day: Embedding activities in daily routines for young children and their families*. Brookes. ISBN-13: 978-1598579284

## **Course Performance Evaluation**

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

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

It is critical for the special education program to collect data on how our students are meeting accreditation standards. Every teacher candidate/student registered for an EDSE course with a required Performance-based Assessment (PBA) is required to upload the PBA to Tk20 (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). A PBA is a specific assignment, presentation, or project that best demonstrates one or more CEC, InTASC or other standard connected to the course. A PBA is evaluated in two ways. The first is for a grade, based on the instructor's grading rubric. The second is for program accreditation purposes. Your instructor will provide directions as to how to upload the PBA to Tk20.

For EDSE 634, the required PBA is Interview Synthesis Paper. Failure to submit the assignment to Tk20 will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Teacher candidates/students have until five days prior to the University-stated grade change deadline to upload the required PBA in order to change the course grade. When the PBA is uploaded, the teacher candidate/student is required to notify the instructor so that the "IN" can be changed to a grade. If the required PBA is not uploaded five days prior to the University-stated grade change deadline and, therefore, the grade not changed, it will become an F. Please check to verify your ability to upload items to Tk20 before the PBA due date.

### **Assignments and/or Examinations**

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

**Interview Synthesis:** This is your signature assignment for Tk20. 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. All individuals interviewed should know or work with the SAME person with ASD. The purpose of these interviews is to gather information from different sources to determine their views and experiences about educational programming for this 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 (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017) 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 **Educational Placement** synthesized; recent research or literature integrated (at least 2 research articles). (Two pages)
- Theme # 2 **Social Level** synthesized; recent research or literature integrated (at least 2 research articles). (Two pages)
- Theme # 3 **Behavioral Concerns** synthesized; recent research or literature integrated (at least 2 research articles). (Two pages)
- **Reflections** noted; recent research or literature integrated (1 or 2 research articles or literature). (Two pages)
- **References (7 minimum)**. (One page)

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

No other Common Assignment required.

**Other Assignments**

All modules will open on Tuesdays at 12:01 a.m. and must be concluded with work submitted by Mondays at 11:59 p.m. Please plan accordingly. Best practices will have you open the module on Tuesdays to review the content and check the assignments. Then, pace and participate accordingly for the rest of the week. All modules will be worth 30 points and the tasks will be listed on the first screen of each module.

Each module will include at least one assignment that will be due at the end of the module's week. These assignments will vary but may include research reviews, reading checks, or other assignments.

**Course Policies and Expectations**

**Attendance/Participation**

All course work will be online in an Asynchronous format. Optional Blackboard Collaborate sessions may be planned during the semester on an as-needed basis. There will be no face-to-face meetings.

**Late Work**

Work is considered on time if it is submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on the date that it is due. *Ten percent of the available points* for the assignment will be deducted each day for late submissions during the first week after the due date. **After one week from the due date, assignments will not be accepted.** Thus an assignment that is three days late is able to obtain only 70% of the points for the assignment regardless of the quality of the work. After one week, the assignment will no longer be accepted and a score of zero will be entered into the grade book for that assignment.

The date that the assignment was received by the instructor **via email or Blackboard** will be considered the date submitted. Submitting an assignment late does not alter the due dates of the other assignments and prevents timely feedback to students regarding their work that may be of value in later assignments. Strive to keep up with the assignment schedule so that you will be able to have appropriate formative evaluation and feedback from your instructor across the semester.

*Communication.*

The best way to contact me is through email. There is a Send Email icon on the left navigation bar in the course. My email (as well as the emails of your classmates) is located here. I will check email at least once a day on weekdays. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, if not sooner, on weekdays. On the weekends, I will check email on Sunday evening only.

**Grading Scale**

<b>A</b>	95 – 100%
<b>A-</b>	90 – 94%
<b>B</b>	80 – 89%
<b>C</b>	70-79%
<b>F</b>	69% and below

Please note, the graduate grading scale does not include a “D”.


*\*Note: The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code. “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” Work submitted must be your own or with proper citations (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).*

**Professional Dispositions**

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

**Class Schedule**

\*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

<b>Weeks and Beginning Dates</b>	<b>Module Topic</b> Please be aware that there will be additional assignments posted under each module. Key	<b>Readings</b>  Please be aware that there will be additional articles or reading information posted under each
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	assignments are noted below to help you structure your semester.	<b>module. The readings noted below are only from your texts.</b>
Week 1 August 28	Module 1- Introduction	✚ <b>Information Sheet Due</b>
Weeks 2 & 3 Sept 4 & 11	Module 2 - History	✚ Boutout, Chapter 1 - Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders
Weeks 4 & 5 Sept 18 & 25	Module 3 – DSM 5	✚ Hall, Chapter 1 - Classification and the Physiological Approach ✚ <b>Identify Interview Synthesis People</b>
Weeks 6 & 7 Oct 2 & 9	Module 4 - Assessment	✚ Hall, Chapter 2 – Assessment ✚ <b>Choose Media</b> ✚ <b>Begin conducting Interviews</b>
Weeks 8 & 9 Oct 16 & 23	Module 5 - Current Perspectives	✚ <b>Media Comparison and Contrast Due</b>
Weeks 10 & 11 Oct 30 & Nov 6	Module 6 – Social and Behaviors	✚ Hall, Chapter 8 - Focus on Communication ✚ <b>Social draft of Interview Synthesis Due</b> ✚ <b>Behavior draft of Interview Synthesis Due</b>
Weeks 12 & 13 Nov 13 & 20	Module 12 - Cognition and Evidence-Based Practices	✚ Quill, Chapter 1, Understanding the Complexity of Autism ✚ Hall, Chapter 3, Collaborating for Effective Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices ✚ <b>Educational Placement draft of Interview Synthesis Due</b>
Weeks 14 & 15 Nov 27 & Dec 4	Module 15 - Synthesis Sharing	✚ <b>Final Interview Synthesis Due</b> ✚ <b>Video Presentation Posted</b>

### Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and 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/>

### GMU Policies and Resources for Students

#### Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

## **Campus Resources**

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The 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/>).
- The 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/>.) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (see <http://caps.gmu.edu/>).
- The Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/>.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.

## **Appendix**

### **Assessment Rubric(s)**

All rubrics are posted on Blackboard.