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

Spring 2021
EDSE 634 001: Characteristics of Individuals with Autism
CRN 21998: , 3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Linn Jorgenson	**Meeting Dates**: 1/4/21 – 2/28/21
Phone: 703-993-4171 Office #	**Meeting Day(s)**: Online
E-Mail: ljorgen2@gmu.edu	**Meeting Time(s)**: NA
Office Hours: By appointment only	**Meeting Location**: NA
Office Location: N/A	**Other Phone**: (If applicable, if not 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 spectrum disorders 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 spectrum disorders. Analyzes perspectives from students, families, educational, community, and career personnel.

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 Student Services at (703) 348-5006 (Option 2) for assistance.

Advising Tip
Did you know that Mason email is the primary method of communication used by university offices including those arranging internships, reviewing records for graduation, etc.? Check your Mason email regularly or use the instructions at http://masonlive2.gmu.edu/tutorials/forwardemail.cfm to forward to an email account you check frequently.

Course Delivery Method
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

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via the Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available in accordance with the posted start date.

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 standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: Browser support (https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers)

  To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see: Tested devices and operating systems (https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems)

- 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:
  o Adobe Acrobat Reader (https://get.adobe.com/reader/)
  o Windows Media Player (https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player)
  o Apple Quick Time Player (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 11:55 p.m.
  Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.

- 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 disorder 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 spectrum disorder.
3. Examine the characteristics of individuals with autism spectrum disorder throughout their lifespans.
4. Describe the wide range of skills and diversity of individuals with autism spectrum disorder across their lifespans.
5. Describe and evaluate responsive, research-based instructional techniques for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
6. Review a variety of assessments to determine strengths and needs to formulate a comprehensive picture of an individual with autism spectrum disorder.
7. Distinguish between types of integration and activities that promote ideal sensory that promote ideal sensory levels with autism spectrum disorder.

Course Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations
This course is part of the George Mason University, School of Education (SOED), Special Education Program for the Teaching Students with Autism Graduate Certificate. This program complies with the skill competencies for professionals and paraprofessionals in Virginia supporting individuals with autism across the lifespan developed by the Virginia Autism Council. The competencies addressed in this class include General Autism Knowledge, Instructional Programming, and Social Skills.

Required Textbooks
Boucher, J. (2017). *Autism spectrum disorder: Characteristics, causes and practical issues*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA. ISBN: 9781446295670

Hall, L.J. (2018). *Autism spectrum disorders: From theory to practice (3rd ed.)*. Pearson: London. ISBN: 9780134461168

LaBarbera, R. (2019). *Educating students with autism spectrum disorders*: *Partnering with Families for Positive Outcomes.* Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA. ISBN: 9781506338866

Recommended Textbooks
American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

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

VIA 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 VIA (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 VIA.

For EDSE 634, the required PBA is the *Assessment Assignment*. Please check to verify your ability to upload items to VIA before the PBA due date.

Assignments and/or Examinations

Performance-based Assessment
(VIA submission required)

Media Perception Video Assignment
The major assignment in this course is a Media Perception Video assignment. This assignment will provide you with the opportunity to select a novel that focuses on a character with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), read the novel.

VIA Media Perception Video Assignment Part 1:
Once you have explored the character fully, you will prepare a video to share with the class in order to explain your synopsis of the book and a comparison of the character to the DSM 5.

Your video should include the following:
1. **Summary of book including**:
   a. Description of characters
   b. Background
   c. Setting
   d. Plot
2. **Characteristics of ASD**: Describe a minimum of three characteristics of ASD that are evident in the book's character. Include at least one social characteristic.
3. **Strengths:** Describe a minimum of three strengths that the book's character with ASD displays.
4. **Challenges:** Describe a minimum of three challenges that the book's character with ASD displays.
5. **Personal Reflection:** Provide a personal reflection of the book's content, including:
   a. Characters
   b. Plot elements
   c. How your values, experiences, beliefs, andunderstanding of ASD influence your response to the novel.

Book List:
- [Love Anthony](#) by Lisa Genova
- [Best Boy](#) by Eli Gottlieb
- [The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time](#) by Mark Haddon
- [Ginny Moon](#) by Benjamin Ludwig
- [House Rules](#) by Jodi Picoult
- [The Rosie Project](#) by Graeme Simsion

NOTE: Links are provided to the books in Amazon.com, but you are NOT obligated to purchase from there.

VIA Media Perception Video Assignment Part 2:

You will also be responding to two classmates' book analysis videos (please select those who do not yet have responses). Some possible items that you may choose to address in your response include:

- o Ask a follow-up question about the plot or characters in their book
- o Make a connection between your peers' content and your own
- o Comment on a specific piece of information from your peer's video

This assignment will be broken down into small chunks and you will be given guidance each week on which part of the assignment you should be completing.

College Wide Common Assessment (VIA submission required)
N/A

Other Assignments

Modules
All modules will begin on Tuesdays at 12:01 a.m. and must be concluded with work submitted by Monday at 11:55 p.m. **Each module will have an assignment to complete by the end of the module based upon that week's learning. The assignments noted on the schedule are more labor intensive and are designated in bold so you can manage your time wisely.**

Course Policies and Expectations
Attendance/Participation
All course work will be online in an Asynchronous format. There will be no face-to-face meeting.

Late Work
Work is considered on time if it is submitted by 11:59 p.m. 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.

Other Requirements
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 (traditional rounding principles apply)
93-100% = A
90-92% = A-
87-89% = B+
83-86% = B
80-82% = B-
70-79% = C
< 69% = F

*Note: The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. See Academic Integrity Site (https://oai.gmu.edu/) and Honor Code and System (https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/). 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 new, original work for this course or with proper citations.

Professional Dispositions
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See Policies and Procedures (https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/.

Class Schedule

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

Module	Topics and Readings	Module Assignments
1	Characteristics See Blackboard module for readings	• Assigned Articles • Introductory Discussion • Getting to Know You • Characteristic of the Week • Knowledge Check
2	History	• A Look Into the World of Autism Discussion Board • Timeline Assignment • Media Perception Assignment, Part A • Characteristic of the Week • Knowledge Check
3	DSM 5	• DSM-5 Assignment • Characteristic of the Week • Knowledge Check
4	Assessment	• Characteristic of the Week • Knowledge Check • Mid-Course Survey
5	Perspectives in Media	• Media Perception Discussion Board • Characteristic of the Week • Knowledge Check
6	Social Play	• Language Simplification Discussion Board • Characteristic of the Week • Knowledge Check • VIA Media Perception Video Assignment Part 1 Due
7	Module 7 - Cognition	• Theory of Mind Journal • IRIS Video Compare/Contrast • Autism Reference Discussion Board • Characteristic of the Week • Knowledge Check • VIA Media Perception Video Assignment Part 2 Due
8	Module 8 – Sensory Integration	• Sensory Toolbox • Sensory Diet • Characteristic of the Week • End of Couse Evaluation

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: See Core Values (http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/).

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code. See Honor Code and System (https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/).

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See Responsible Use of Computing (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 Disability Services (https://ds.gmu.edu/).

- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to either Tk20 or VIA should be directed to Assessment support (https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments/).

- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to Blackboard Instructional Technology Support for Students (https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/).

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

- As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing the Title IX Coordinator (titleix@gmu.edu).

- For information on student support resources on campus, see Student Support Resources on Campus (https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus).

- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website College of Education and Human Development (http://cehd.gmu.edu/).

Appendix
Assessment Rubric(s)

VIA Rubric

	Does Not Meet Expectations 1 (1-5 points)	Meets Expectations 2 (6-9 points)	Exceeds Expectations 3 (10 points)
Summary of Book *Competency 1.1K and 5.1K*	Candidate fails to provide a clear description of the book, including a description of characters, background, setting and plot.	Candidate provides a clear description of the book, including a description of characters, background, setting and plot.	Candidate provides a highly detailed description of the book, including a description of characters, background, setting and plot.
Characteristics of ASD *Competency 1.1K and 5.1K*	Candidate fails to describe a minimum of three characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder that are evident in the book's character including at least one social characteristic.	Candidate describes a minimum of three characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder that are evident in the book's character, including at least one social characteristic.	Candidate describes more than three characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder that are evident in the book's character including at least one social characteristic.
Strengths *Competency 3.1K*	Candidate fails to provide a description of 3 strengths of the book's character with ASD.	Candidate provides description of 3 strengths of the book's character with ASD.	Candidate provides highly detailed description of more than 3 strengths of the book's character with ASD.
Challenges *Competency 3.1K*	Candidate fails to provide a description of 3 challenges of the book's character with ASD.	Candidate provides description of 3 challenges of the book's character with ASD.	Candidate provides highly detailed description of more than 3 challenges of the book's character with ASD.
Personal Reflection *Competency 1.1K and 5.1K*	Candidate fails to provide a personal reflection of book's content including (a) characters and (b) plot elements. Candidate fails to write about how their values, experiences, beliefs, and understanding of ASD influence their response to the novel.	Candidate provides a personal reflection of book's content including (a) characters and (b) plot elements. Candidate writes about how their values, experiences, beliefs, and understanding of ASD influence their	Candidate provides a highly detailed, personal reflection of the book's content including (a) characters and (b) plot elements. Candidate writes in great detail about how their values, experiences, beliefs, and understanding of ASD influence their response to the novel.

	Does Not Meet Expectations 1 (1-5 points)	Meets Expectations 2 (6-9 points)	Exceeds Expectations 3 (10 points)
		response to the novel.	

*Skill competencies are taken from the Virginia Autism Council Skill Competencies document