



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

Summer 2024

EDSE 201 001: Introduction to Special Education

CRN: 43049, 3 – Credits

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|---|--|
| Instructor: Dr. Kristen O'Brien | Meeting Dates: 5/13/24 – 8/3/24 |
| Phone: 703-993-3917 | Meeting Day(s): N/A |
| E-Mail: kmerril2@gmu.edu | Meeting Time(s): N/A |
| Office Hours: By appointment | Meeting Location: N/A; Online |
| Office Location: Finley 208-B / Zoom | Other Phone: 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

Provides a survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Includes historical factors, legal aspects, etiology, characteristics, assessment, evidence-based practices, and support services for individuals with disabilities having needs for intervention ranging from mild to severe. Includes the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances.

Course Overview

EDSE 201 is a foundational course exploring essential concepts regarding individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. The course includes information about historical factors, legal aspects, etiology, characteristics, assessment, evidence-based practices, and support services for individuals with disabilities having needs for intervention ranging from mild to severe. Students will examine the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances.

Advising Contact Information

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress in your program. Students in Special Education and Assistive Technology programs can contact the Special Education Advising Office at 703-993-3670 or speced@gmu.edu for assistance. All other students should refer to their assigned program advisor or the Mason Care Network (703-993-2470).

Advising Tip

Educators Rising Collegiate is a student organization for undergraduate students dedicated to the promotion of matters that educators are facing today. Join at [Mason360](#).

Course Delivery Method

Learning activities include the following:

1. Readings, lectures, and discussions
2. Websites, videos, and other media-based course resources
3. Application activities and assignments
4. Quizzes and reflective activities
5. Performance-based assessments and certificates
6. Course feedback

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 on the posted class start date (May 13, 2024).

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/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support) (https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support)
- 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/](https://get.adobe.com/reader/)
- [Windows Media Player: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-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 12:00 a.m. ET, and finish on Mondays at 11:59 p.m. ET. The course includes 8 modules distributed across the semester so that modules are either one or two weeks (see Class Schedule below). All assignments in a given module are due on a Monday at 11:59 pm E.T., and the initial Discussion Board post within that module is due the Thursday before the module assignment due date at 11:59 pm E.T. (see Class Schedule below). Modules may be opened for your access earlier than scheduled, but no module assignments will be due earlier than the date and time noted on the Class Schedule.
- **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 ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Learner Outcomes

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

1. Explore historical perspectives, models, theories, philosophies, and trends that provide the basis for special education practice.
2. Examine legal aspects of special education regarding litigation, legislation, and expectations associated with the identification, education, and evaluation of students with disabilities.
3. Discuss current regulations governing special education policies and practices including rights, responsibilities, and legal status of all parties.
4. Recognize characteristics of children and youth with disabilities across all IDEA categories relative to age, varying levels of severity, and developmental differences manifested in cognitive, linguistic, physical, psychomotor, social, or emotional functioning.
5. Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
6. Describe the etiological factors and medical aspects associated with various disabilities.
7. Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including use of innovative technology.
8. Describe how to identify individual needs such as dyslexia and related evidence-based practices for intervention.
9. Discuss the dynamic influence of family systems relative to the education of students with disabilities.
10. Discuss the dynamic influence of culture and environmental settings relative to the education of students with disabilities.
11. Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children in context with professional standards of practice.
12. Describe how to recognize child abuse and prescribed research-based interventions to address abusive situations.

Professional Standards

This course is offered by George Mason University’s Division of Special Education and disAbility Research in the College of Education and Human Development. The goal of the special education programs is to improve the lives, productivity, and education of persons with

disabilities. Courses within the special education programs align with the standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major international special education professional organization, and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC). Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards: CEC Standard 1: Learner development and individual learning differences (InTASC 1, 2) & CEC Standard 3: Curricular content knowledge (InTASC 4, 5)

Required Texts

Friend, M. (2023). *Special education: Contemporary perspectives for school professionals* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Recommended Texts

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

Additional Readings

Additional readings will be provided via the course Blackboard site.

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/SLL (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/SLL.

For EDSE 201: No requirement to upload a Performance-based Assessment (PBA) to VIA/SLL.

Assignments and/or Examinations

Performance-based Assessment

(VIA submission required)

N/A

College Wide Common Assessment

(VIA submission required)

N/A

Other Assignments

Checklists are provided for each module via Blackboard. The module checklists detail the assignments required for that module. Examples of graded elements in the course include assignments, discussions, quizzes, and reflections.

Assignment Summary

Below is a summary of the various kinds of work required for the course. Bear in mind that grading is primarily a judgment about your performance on a particular assignment. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.

| Graded Tasks Summary | Possible Points |
|---|-----------------|
| Module Assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cycle of Special Education (15 pts.)• Certificates (5 X 25 pts. each) | 140 |
| Discussions (8 X 20 pts. each) | 160 |
| Quizzes (8 X 15 pts. each) | 120 |
| Reflections (8 X 25 pts. each) | 200 |
| Total Possible Points | 620 |

Student Evaluations of Teaching:

The student evaluation of teaching, or SET, is an online course survey. You are strongly encouraged to complete this form for each course as this feedback helps instructors and administrators improve your class experiences. Towards the end of the course, you will receive email and Blackboard notifications when the evaluations open. Your anonymous and confidential feedback is only shared with instructors after final grades have been submitted. More information about the SET can be found on The Institute of Effectiveness and Planning website at <https://oiep.gmu.edu/set/>

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation

All coursework will be online in an asynchronous format. There will be no face-to-face meetings. However, engagement with all elements provided in each module and timely participation in interactive opportunities is the expectation.

Several assignments require participation from individuals and classmates by specific dates or in sufficient time for classmates' responses. To maximize your preparation and participation, it is recommended that you:

- Read all the way through each module and module checklist one time initially, so that you know what you need to focus on and prioritize (i.e., what's coming up soon? Later?).
- Develop a timeline for the assignments so you have plenty of time to post, respond to peers' posts, gather materials as needed for upcoming assignments, prepare assignment drafts, and refine assignments prior to submission for a grade.

- Pace yourself well; asynchronous online courses do not mean you can wait until the last minutes to get the work done. Peers are dependent on you at times, and your success is also dependent on your preparation to complete assignments well in advance of due dates.

Late Work

All assignments (e.g., quizzes, activities, assignments, discussions) must be submitted via Blackboard on or before the due date. In fairness to students who submit work on time, points will be deducted for late submissions (up to 10% per day). **Assignments will not be accepted more than 1 week late unless prior arrangements with the instructor have been made.**

Communication

The best way to contact me is through email, although I am happy to arrange phone calls or Zoom calls upon request. I will check email at least once a day on weekdays unless I notify you otherwise. I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. On the weekends, I will check email at least once, which could increase my response time. As communication is a two-way process, please plan to check your Mason email frequently. Please don't hesitate to reach out early and often if you have questions or concerns.

Grading (traditional rounding principles apply)

| | |
|----|---------|
| A | 95-100% |
| A- | 90-94% |
| B+ | 87-89% |
| B | 83-86% |
| B- | 80-82% |
| C+ | 77-79% |
| C | 73-76% |
| C- | 70-72% |
| D | 60-69% |
| F | <60% |

***Note:** The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. See [Academic Integrity Site](https://oai.gmu.edu/) (<https://oai.gmu.edu/>) and [Honor Code and System](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-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/policies-procedures/) (<https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>). Professional dispositions

are an essential function of a special educator’s job, indicating that these dispositions are critical to develop and assess in special education licensure programs. In the College of Education and Human Development, dispositions are formally and separately evaluated in VIA/SLL at least three points in each student’s program – a self-evaluation at the start of their program, a self-evaluation at the mid-point of their program, and a university supervisor’s evaluation during internship. In special education undergraduate licensure programs, the initial self-evaluation is completed in designated courses (EDSE 241, EDSE 361, EDSE 311), the mid-point self-evaluation is completed in designated courses (EDSE 445, EDSE 465, and EDSE 419), and the internship evaluation is completed by instructors in EDSE 482, EDSE 483, and EDSE 484. In addition to these three designated evaluation times, students, instructors, and/or mentor teachers may complete program disposition assessments as part of other courses. Instructors and mentor teachers may complete observer-rated disposition assessments other times throughout the program, as needed. When dispositions are assessed, it is important that for areas where a positive disposition is rated as “not proficient,” the student takes steps to grow as an educator.

Class Schedule

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

Note: In the class schedule below, all due dates are at 11:59 pm Eastern time. DB = Discussion Board.

| Module and Due Dates | Topics | Deliverables |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Module 1</p> <p><i>Week 1</i> Module Opens: 5/13/24 Initial Post to DB1 Due: 5/16/24 Module 1 Due: 5/20/24</p> | <p>Getting Started</p> <p>Foundations of Special Education: Historical Perspectives, Legal Mandates, Personnel, Procedural Safeguards, and Ethical Practices</p> | <p>Complete all elements of the Module 1 Checklist (provided overview section of Module 1)</p> <p>Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 1</p> |
| <p>Module 2</p> <p><i>Weeks 2 & 3</i> Module Opens: 5/21/24 Initial Post to DB2 Due: 5/30/24 Module 2 Due: 6/3/24</p> | <p>The Cognitive Continuum: Exploring Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Multiple Disabilities, and Giftedness</p> | <p>Complete all elements of the Module 2 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 2)</p> <p>Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 2</p> |
| <p>Module 3</p> <p><i>Week 4</i> Module Opens: 6/4/24 Initial Post to DB3 Due: 6/6/24 Module 3 Due: 6/10/24</p> | <p>The Dynamic Duo: Exploring Specific Learning Disabilities (LD) and Emotional and Behavior Disorders (EBD)</p> | <p>Complete all elements of the Module 3 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 3)</p> <p>Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 3</p> |

| Module and Due Dates | Topics | Deliverables |
|--|---|---|
| Module 4 <i>Week 5</i> Module Opens: 6/11/24 Initial Post to DB4 Due: 6/13/24 Module 4 Due: 6/17/24 | Spectrum of Considerations: Exploring Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) | Complete all elements of the Module 4 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 4) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 4 |
| Module 5 <i>Weeks 6 & 7</i> Module Opens: 6/18/24 Initial Post to DB5 Due: 6/27/24 Module 5 Due: 7/1/24 | The Physical Realm: Exploring Orthopedic Impairments (OI) and Other Health Impairments (OHI) including Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) | Complete all elements of the Module 5 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 5) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 5 |
| Module 6 <i>Weeks 8 & 9</i> Module Opens: 7/2/24 Initial Post to DB6 Due: 7/11/24 Module 6 Due: 7/15/24 | The Sensory Arena: Exploring Visual Impairments (VI) including Blindness, Hearing Impairments (HI), Deafness, and Deaf-Blindness | Complete all elements of the Module 6 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 6) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 6 |
| Module 7 <i>Week 10</i> Module Opens: 7/16/24 Initial Post to DB7 Due: 7/18/24 Module 7 Due: 7/22/24 | Creating Opportunities for All Learners: Exploring: Exploring Multicultural Perspectives and Collaboration in Special Education | Complete all elements of the Module 7 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 7) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 7 |
| Module 8 <i>Weeks 11 & 12</i> Module Opens: 7/23/24 Initial Post to DB8 Due: 7/25/24 Module 8 Due: 8/2/24 | Review and Wrap-up: The Past, the Present, and the Future | Complete all elements of the Module 8 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 8) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 8 |

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/) (<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/) (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
 - When explicitly stated by the instructor, Generative AI tools are allowed on the named assignment. Students will be directed if and when citation or statement-of-usage direction is required. Use of these tools on any assignment not specified will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Academic Integrity. Use of Generative AI tools will sometimes be in alignment with the learning outcomes for this course; when meeting the outcome requires original human action, creativity or knowledge, AI tool use would not align with the stated course goals. Student work may be analyzed using an originality detection tool focused on Generative AI tools.
- 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/) (<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/) (<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 VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <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/) (<https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>).

- [Learning Services \(learningservices@gmu.edu\)](mailto:learningservices@gmu.edu) - Provides a variety of experience-based learning opportunities through which students explore a wide range of academic concerns. Services include support to students with learning differences, individual study strategy coaching, individualized programs of study, and referrals to tutoring resources. Presentations on a variety of academic topics such as time management, reading, and note taking are available to the university community. The programs are open to all George Mason University students free of charge.

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

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 the [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 or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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

Appendix

Assessment Rubric(s)

All rubrics are posted on Blackboard.