



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

Summer 2024

EDSE 844 A01: Current Issues in Special Education

CRN: 43528, 3 – Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Grace Francis	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 5/13/24 – 6/22/24
<b>Phone:</b> Zoom link (we will use this for the synchronous portions of our course): <a href="https://gmu.zoom.us/j/7709556612">https://gmu.zoom.us/j/7709556612</a>	<b>Instructional Method:</b> Mix of online synchronous and asynchronous online instruction. See the synchronous online video meeting dates below. The synchronous online video meetings will be supplemented by asynchronous online coursework.
<b>E-Mail:</b> gfranci4@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Day &amp; Time:</b> Tuesdays; 5 pm – 7:40 pm
<b>Office Hours:</b> By appointment	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Fairfax; Finley 114/Online **I will offer weekly in-person options for attendance.

**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):**

Admission to PhD in education program, or permission of instructor.

**Co-requisite(s):**

None

**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.

### **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](mailto:speced@gmu.edu) for assistance. All other students should refer to their assigned program advisor or the Mason Care Network (703-993-2470).

### **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

A percentage of this course will be delivered online using [select either a synchronous or 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](mailto:@masonlive.gmu.edu)) and email password. The course site will be available on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

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:**  
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 2 times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.
- **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 Service.

### **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.

### **Professional Standards**

Not applicable.

### **Required Texts**

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

### **Recommended Texts**

None.

### **Additional Readings**

See weekly course content folders on Blackboard.

### **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 844: No requirement to upload a Performance-based Assessment (PBA) to VIA/SLL.

## Assignments and/or Examinations

### Performance-based Assessment (VIA submission required)

None.

### College Wide Common Assessment (VIA submission required)

None.

## Other Assignments

\*All assignments will be submitted via OneDrive.

### Manuscript Outline (10 Points)

The main focus of this course is to create and submit for publication a practitioner-focused manuscript on a topic of your choosing. Students will be tasked with selecting a topical area relevant to their research/teaching interests, research the existing literature on this topic, and then craft an idea or argument around which the paper will be based. To support this objective, students will submit a full outline for their proposed manuscript prior to drafting. Students are permitted to work on this assignment individually, in pairs of two, or in a small group of three. Please refer to Blackboard for the assignment rubric.

### Revise and Resubmit Drafts (20 Points)

Students will submit *two* drafts of their manuscript over the course of the semester. For the first submission, students will submit a draft of their paper with the finalized outline. For the second submission, students will submit their paper with an accompanying rejoinder letter detailing the edits made based on instructor feedback from their first submission. Each draft submitted will be worth 10 points. Please refer to Blackboard for the assignment rubric.

### Practitioner Manuscript (20 Points)

Students will create a finalized manuscript, including artifacts necessary for scholarly writing, including a cover letter, title page, abstract, body of the paper, references, figures, and tables. Please refer to Blackboard for the assignment rubric.

## Assignment Summary

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Manuscript Outline	10 points	5.28
Manuscript Draft 1	10 points	6.4
Manuscript Draft 2	10 points	6.11
Final Manuscript	20 points	6.21
Total points	50	

## 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**

Students are expected to attend all synchronous sessions and engage in all asynchronous meetings/work, as determined a group (as appropriate).

### **Late Work**

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.

### **Grading**

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/) (<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/>). «Expanded\_Dispositions»

### **Class Schedule**

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

Date	Content	Assignment Due
5.14	Course overview Selecting an enduring issue Publishing practitioner manuscripts Selecting a journal	
5.21	Authorship/Co-writing Purpose statements Outlining Productivity strategies Writing seminar	
5.28	Introductions APA Writing seminar	Outline
6.4	Reviewer feedback Rejoinder tables Practitioner figures/tables Cover letters Writing seminar	Draft 1 with finalized outline
6.11	Reviewer feedback Submitting manuscripts	Draft 2 with rejoinder table
6.18	1:1 meetings with the Editor Writing seminar	Final due on June 21 <sup>st</sup>

### 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/>).
- 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](mailto: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](mailto: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)**

See Blackboard.