



**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
Graduate School of Education  
Special Education Program  
Fall 2011**

**Instructor:** John B. W. Simpson, Ph.D.  
**Phone:** 703-728-3192  
**Email:** Jsimpso4@gmu.edu

**EDSE 501 - 6V1: INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**CLASS TIME:** Mondays 4:30 – 7:10 PM; August 29, 2011 through December 12, 2011. Blackboard Discussion in lieu of September 5, 2011 class session.

**LOCATION:** Kellar Annex

**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. Field experience required. Prerequisites: none.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES**

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

Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “typical” and “atypical” behaviors.

Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education.

Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of special education.

Describe research in etiological factors associated with all disability areas.

Describe social, cognitive, intellectual, and academic characteristics associated with all disability areas.

Describe historical points of view and contributions of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education.

Describe the role of families in the educational process.

Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including technological advances.

Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation, litigation, and use of innovative technology.

## **RELATIONSHIP OF COURSE TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

EDSE 501 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in special education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization in the United States. As such, the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities from preschool through grade 12.

The CEC standards are listed on the following web site:

[http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf\\_based\\_stds/common\\_core\\_4-21-01.html](http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/common_core_4-21-01.html)

CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include some of the following CEC Core Standards:

### Standard 1: Foundations

Models, theories, and philosophies that form the basis for special education practice.

Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management, planning, and implementation.

Relationship of special education to the organization and function of educational agencies.

Rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional learning needs.

Issues with definition and identification of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Issues, assurances, and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement with a continuum of services.

Family systems and the role of families in the educational process.

Historical points of view and contributions of culturally diverse groups.

Impact of the dominant culture on shaping schools and the individuals who study and work in them.

Potential impact of differences in values, languages, and customs that can exist between the home and school.

## Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners

Typical and atypical human growth and development.

Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities.

Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the individual with exceptional learning needs and the family.

Family systems and the role of facilities in supporting development.

Similarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.

Similarities and differences among individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Effects of various medications on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

## Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences

Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life.

Impact of learners' academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.

Variations on beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures and their effects on relationships among individuals with exceptional learning needs, family

and schooling.

Cultural perspectives influencing the relationships among families, schools, and communities as related to instruction.

Differing ways of learning of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally diverse backgrounds and strategies for addressing these differences.

## **NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

Learning activities include the following:

- Class lecture, discussion, and participation.
- Videotapes and other relevant media presentations.
- Study and independent library research.
- Applications with relevant hardware and software.
- Application activities, including in-class evaluation of intervention research and materials.
- Class presentations.
- Written case study and observation reports using American Psychological Association (APA) format.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- All assignments are due on the dates indicated. **Prior permission** from the instructor is required in order to submit “late” assignments. In fairness to students who make the effort to submit papers on time, points will be deducted from your grade for “late” assignments. Please retain a copy of your assignments in addition to the one you submit.
- Final grade will not be submitted until Signature Assignment is posted to TaskStream.
- Signature Assignment must be posted by assignment due date detailed in syllabus’ Course Calendar.
- All assignments should reflect graduate-level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you experience difficulties with the writing process you will be required to document your work with the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills.
- The major portion of your learning in this course will be the result of your personal involvement in the content provided and in your willingness to incorporate in-class content and the readings into your repertoire of knowledge and skills. My role in your learning is to be a facilitator and to provide a favorable environment in which learning can take place; however, the major responsibility must necessarily remain with you.
- We will explore Evidence Based Practices (EBPs) during our discussions and

via the assigned readings. Please include EBPs in your submitted assignments that enhance students with disabilities' access to the general education curriculum.

## REQUIRED TEXT

Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C. (2012). *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education*. Pearson: Boston, MA.

Note: This syllabus may change according to class needs.

## EVALUATION

### POINTS

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Class Attendance and Participation   | 48  |
| Field Observation Report (2) 50 each | 100 |
| Case Study                           | 80  |
| Article Critique                     | 40  |
| Child Abuse Unit                     | 32  |
| Final Exam                           | 100 |
| Group Presentation                   | 100 |
| Total Possible Points                | 500 |

### GRADING CRITERIA

|           |    |
|-----------|----|
| 475 - 500 | A  |
| 446 - 474 | A- |
| 396 - 445 | B  |
| 347 - 395 | C  |
| < 347     | F  |

Note: All assignments should be typed using APA format and are due on the dates indicated. In fairness to students who make the effort to submit papers on time, **prior permission from Professor is necessary prior to due date in order to submit "late" assignments. (Points will be deducted for work submitted after the due date.)**

***It is recommended that students retain copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE ED/LD program. Products from this class can become part of your individual professional portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards.***

\*Note: Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one time course, or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to

submit the Signature Assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.\*

### **Expectations:**

- Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time and (d) complete all assignments. Attendance, timeliness, and professionally relevant, active participation are expected. Attendance at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Please notify me *in advance* by E-mail if you will not be able to attend class.
- In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot approximately three hours for class study and preparation for *each* credit hour weekly in addition to papers and assignments.
- Use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines. <http://www.apastyle.apa.org>
- We will use person-first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). Please refer to “Guidelines for Non-Handicapping Language in APA Journals” <http://www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html>.
- We will also strive to replace the term “Mental Retardation” with “Intellectual Disabilities” in our oral and written communication in accordance with terminology choices in the disability community.
- Please note that we will utilize the E-mail system within Blackboard

### **Be an Informed Student!**

Negotiating all the requirements for your Master’s and/or VA Licensure is extremely complex. It is imperative that you schedule a phone or in-person appointment with the Special Education Advisor, (Jancy Templeton ([jtemple1@gmu.edu](mailto:jtemple1@gmu.edu)), 703/993-2387). This will ensure that you rectify any outstanding issues, are timely with all necessary paperwork, and are ultimately in good standing to graduate on time.

### **Using Blackboard:**

GMU’s Blackboard will be used to post important information and presentations for this course and for you to check grades and communicate with your classmates. You should check Blackboard at least once a week and right before class to make sure you are informed about class/GMU issues.

Your GMU E-mail address will be entered in the Blackboard system.

The following is how you will access the Blackboard-GSE Login Page:

Enter the URL <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/> into your browser location field.

Enter your Username & Password assigned to you. Most likely it will be your first

initial of your first name and your entire last name (for example – John Smith = jsmith).

This will serve as both your username and password.

Click Login. **Please change your password the first time that you access the site.**

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:**

### **Student Expectations**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- 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.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### **Campus Resources**

- 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/>].
- 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/>].

- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

## ASSIGNMENTS

1.

Weekly readings from the text and other sources will be required. The student is expected to share acquired information and reactions during class discussion.

2.

Two field observations will be required. These classroom observations will occur in a disability area other than one in which the student is currently working. The student will complete a structured observation form and will share their experiences during class discussion.

3.

A group presentation will be required. It will focus on typical and atypical development, major characteristics associated with common disability areas, research-based interventions, and relate to the objectives for this course. **E-mail first and second choices for disability category to Professor by September 5, 2011.**

4.

A comprehensive case study on a student with disabilities will be completed. This case study will include specific components, compare student's characteristics with those described in the textbook, and integrate sources from other readings.

5.

You will be required to read and critique one article relating to current trends in special education. In addition, you will be asked to present this article to the class (maximum of 10 minutes). Please provide a single handout for the class that synthesizes the article, your thoughts, and classroom implications.

6.

Module on child abuse reporting. (Completed via VDOE link)

7.

A Final Exam (Signature Assignment) will be given to assess knowledge and understanding of student outcomes. The Final Exam is a "take home" exam via Blackboard. You may utilize your notes and textbook. However, you may not seek assistance from peers, coworkers, family members, etc.

**Notes:**



- 1. All written products, including group project's PowerPoint, are due via the course's Blackboard site.**
- 2. Please save word processed documents in Rich Text Format (.RTF) to ensure that the Professor is able to open, read, and grade in a timely manner.**
- 3. Please plan to post assignments prior to the deadline in Blackboard to avoid "technical issues", e.g. power outage, "lost" file on computer, etc.**
- 4. Copy and paste Scoring Criteria Sheet into your document.**

## Course Calendar

(Subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances)

| Session                      | Topics  | Activities   | Assignment  | What is Due?   |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| 1                            | Introductions<br>Course Overview<br>Blackboard.com<br>Legal Issues<br>Current Trends and Issues | Large Group Discussion<br>Lecture<br>Large and Small Group Activities<br>Video (CEC) | Pick Topic for Article<br>Ponder Disability Category<br>Read Chs. 1 & 2 | N/A  |
| 2<br>(Blackboard Discussion) | Legal Issues<br>Current Practice<br>Eligibility & IEP Process                                   | Blackboard Discussion: See Prompt and "What is Due?" in Blackboard                   | Read Ch. 3  | Blackboard Discussion<br>Via E-mail: Article Topic<br>Disability Category Preference |
| 3                            | Academic Diversity<br>Multiculturalism  | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Group Time?                           | Read Ch. 4  |  |
| 4                            | Parents & Families<br>Impact upon Family  | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Group Time?                           | Read Ch. 6  |  |
| 5                            | Students with Learning Disabilities   | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Role Play<br>Group Time?              | Read Ch. 8  | Article Critique Paper<br>Article Critique Presentations                             |
| 6                            | Students with Emotional Disabilities  | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Group Time?                           | Read Ch. 5  | Article Critique Presentations   |
| 7<br>(Tuesday, 10/11/11)     | Students with Intellectual Disabilities   | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Group Time?                           | Read Ch. 7  | Field Observation #1<br>Article Critique Presentations                               |
| 8                            | Students with Attention Deficit Disorders   | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Group Time?                           | Read Ch. 9  | Child Abuse Unit Certificate<br>Article Critique Presentations                       |
| 9                            | Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)   | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Group Time?                           | Read Ch. 10   | Field Observation #2<br>Article Critique Presentations                               |
| 10                           | Students with Communication Disorders   | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Group Time?                           | Read Ch. 11   |  |
| 11                           | Students Who are Hard of Hearing  | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Group Time?                           | Read Ch. 12   |  |
| 12                           | Students with Blindness or Low Vision   | Lecture<br>Small and Large Group Discussion<br>Group Time?                           | Read Ch. 13   | Case Study Assignment  |

|    |  |   |  |                    |
|----|--|---|--|--------------------|
| 13 | Students with Low-Incidence, Multiple, and Severe Disabilities   | Lecture<br>Small and Large<br>Group Discussion<br>Group Time? | Read Ch. 14  |                    |
| 14 | Students with Physical Disabilities and Other Health Impairments | Lecture<br>Small and Large<br>Group Discussion<br>Group Time? | Read Ch. 15<br>Final Examination                             |                    |
| 15 | Students with Special Gifts and Talents                          | Lecture<br>Small and Large<br>Group Discussion<br>Group Time? | Prepare for Group<br>Presentation, e.g.<br>"Dress Rehearsal" | Final Examination  |
| 16 | All  | Course Evaluations<br>Group Presentations                     |  | Group Presentation |

### Assignment Details

#### Assignment: Article Critique

Objective: Increase awareness of a current issue/trend in special education.

Activity: Find an article in a scholarly journal regarding special education. Read the article and summarize in a one page critique detailing the following: author, title, topic, article citation, article summary, your thoughts/opinions, and classroom implications.

Presentation: You will present the above critique to the class, schedule TBD. (10 minutes)

#### Scoring Criteria Article Critique Assignment

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

| Article Critique       | Points Available | Points Received |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Turned in on Time      | 7                |                 |
| APA Citation           | 7                |                 |
| Summary of Details     | 11               |                 |
| Classroom Implications | 7                |                 |
| Presentation           | 8                |                 |
| Total Points           | 40               |                 |

### ASSIGNMENT: FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT (Two)

**Objective:** You will complete two observation reports and be able to contribute meaningful information to class discussions, based on personal experience and observation.

**Activity:** Conduct two classroom observations in two disability areas other than the one in which you currently teach. Each observation must be at least 30 minutes in length. Complete and submit the reports based on the structured observation form and be ready to contribute to class discussion on the night the observed disability area is discussed.

**Date Due:** See Course Calendar

**Scoring Criteria  
Field Observation Assignment**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Field Observation</b>             | <b>Points Available</b> | <b>Points Received</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Turned in on Time                    | 4                       |                        |
| Disability Area                      | 3                       |                        |
| Class Composition                    | 3                       |                        |
| Activities Listed & Described        | 10                      |                        |
| Instructional Materials & Technology | 10                      |                        |
| Evidence of Individualization        | 10                      |                        |
| Reactions/Opinions                   | 10                      |                        |
| Total Points                         | 50                      |                        |

### FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT WORKSHEET

(This is a structure for the information required in the report; do not turn this in for your observation)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Disability Area \_\_\_\_\_

Class Composition:

Students: \_\_\_\_\_

Staffing: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

Instructional  
Materials: \_\_\_\_\_

Use of  
Technology: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence of Individualization: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your reactions and impressions of your observation:

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### Individual Paper: CASE STUDY ASSIGNMENT

Objective: You will be able to integrate sources in the literature with observations made during the case study in order to present a complete

picture of a student with a disability.

Activity: You will complete a comprehensive case study of a student with disabilities. This case study will include the following components.

- Student's demographic data
- Description of school and neighborhood
- Educational history (schools attended, reason for referral to special education, placement, services, etc.)
- IEP goals and objectives, classroom accommodations and/or modifications
- Observational information
- Teacher interviews
- Parent and/or student interviews
- Summary and synthesis, i.e. comparison of student's characteristics with those described in the textbook.

You should include appendices such as student work samples, interview questions and answers, etc.

Date Due: See Course Calendar

**Scoring Criteria  
Case Study Assignment**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Case Study</b>                    | <b>Points Available</b> | <b>Points Received</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Turned in on Time                    | 8                       |                        |
| Student's Demographic Data           | 8                       |                        |
| Description of School & Neighborhood | 9                       |                        |
| Educational History                  | 9                       |                        |
| IEP Goals & Objectives               | 9                       |                        |
| Observational Information            | 9                       |                        |
| Teacher Interviews                   | 9                       |                        |
| Parent and/or Student Interviews     | 9                       |                        |
| Summary & Synthesis                  | 10                      |                        |
| Total Points                         | 80                      |                        |

**GROUP PROJECT ASSIGNMENT: DISABILITY AREA PRESENTATION**

**Objective:** You and your group members will be able to describe the major characteristics associated with five common disability areas. You will be able to discuss in-depth, the issues regarding assessment, identification, educational interventions, and strategies in one of these five areas. You will become aware of current issues affecting students with these disabilities.

**Disability Options:** Specific Learning Disability; Other Health Impairment due to ADD or ADHD; Emotional Disturbance; Mental Retardation; Autism (Topic and group will be chosen in class; preferences for topic will be honored depending upon group size.)

**Activity:** Working with your group, you will prepare a half-hour presentation on a specific disability area. The presentation should address the following:

- Historical information regarding the disability
- Characteristics of persons with the disability including cognitive/academic,

processing deficits or issues, social, communicative, and behavioral aspects. How does their growth and development differ from their typically developing peers?

- Present, and possible future models of assessment and identification, including any technological advances.
- Current thinking on intervention models and strategies.
- Current trends and issues surrounding the education of students with the disability.
- Each member of the group will participate in this multi-modal presentation. There will be evidence of cooperative learning and research extending beyond the information presented in the textbook.

Use of media and technology is encouraged.

Due Date: See Course Calendar



**Scoring Criteria  
Group Presentation Assignment**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Group Presentation</b>          | <b>Points Available</b> | <b>Points Received</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Turned in on Time                  | 2                       |                        |
| Participation by all Group Members | 14                      |                        |
| Historical Information             | 14                      |                        |
| Characteristics of Disability      | 14                      |                        |
| Present/Future Models              | 14                      |                        |
| Current Thinking                   | 14                      |                        |
| Current Trends                     | 14                      |                        |
| Multi-Modal Presentation           | 14                      |                        |
| Total Points                       | 100                     |                        |

**Scoring Criteria  
Child Abuse Unit**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Child Abuse Unit</b> | <b>Points Available</b> | <b>Points Received</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Turned in on Time       | 8                       |                        |
| Unit Completed          | 24                      |                        |
| Total Points            | 32                      |                        |

**Scoring Criteria**

**Class Attendance & Participation**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Class Attendance &amp; Participation</b>     | <b>Points Available</b> | <b>Points Received</b> |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Arrived on Time to each Class                   | 16                      |                        |
| Remained in each Session                        | 16                      |                        |
| Actively Participated in Activities/Discussions | 16                      |                        |
| Total Points                                    | 48                      |                        |

**Weekly Reflection Form****Chapter(s)/Article(s) Read:** \_\_\_\_\_**Reactions:****Questions:****Summary statement, with application to your course assignments:**

Part 2: Session Reflections      Completed at End of Each Class Night

**Sample guiding questions. . . Please feel free to express yourself using a different approach**

- What was valuable/not valuable for you about tonight's class session?
- What have you added to your knowledge base or repertoire?
- How are you growing as an educator?
- What was easiest, most difficult for you tonight?
- How does this change your ideas about students, parents, teachers, and/or mathematics instruction?
- What happens next for you as a result?
- What could we do to improve this session?

ONE THOUGHTFUL PARAGRAPH IS ACCEPTABLE.