

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
Spring 2012**

**EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education**  
**Online course, January 9, 2012 to March 17, 2012**  
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**Course Description:**

This course provides a survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Content includes historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies, including existing and emerging technologies, assessment and support services of/for individuals with disabilities. The course will study the impact of disabilities on academic and social/emotional performance. Field experience is required.  
Prerequisites: none.

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 in 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 contribution of culturally diverse groups.
- Importance 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 individual 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 in 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.

### **GSE 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/>].

### **Grading Scale for FAST TRAIN:**

**A+ = 100**

**A = 94-99**

**A- = 90-93**

**B+ = 85-89**

**B = 80-84**

**C = 70-79 – does not meet licensure requirements or Level I award recommendation**

**F = Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education**

**Fieldwork:** All students must complete a minimum of 20 hours of fieldwork in this course. At the conclusion of the class, students are required to turn in the Fieldwork Log, Fieldwork Evaluation Form or required Teaching Evaluation Form, and the final assignment (Performance Based Assessment) to the instructor. The deadline for posting the PBA , Fieldwork Log, and Fieldwork Evaluation form to TaskStream and for completing the required

fieldwork document in this course is **March 11**. Failure to submit this work to the instructor (via TaskStream) by this deadline will result in an "F" for the course.

**Incomplete (IN):** This grade may be given to students who are in good standing, but who may be unable to complete scheduled course work for a cause beyond reasonable control. The student must then complete all the requirements by the end of the ninth week of the next semester, not including summer term, and the instructor must turn in the final grade by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> week. Unless an explicit written extension is filed with the Registrar's Office by the faculty deadline, the grade of IN is changed by the registrar to an F. (Mason catalog); Faculty may grant an incomplete with a contract developed by the student with a reasonable time to complete the course at the discretion of the faculty member. There is no guarantee that such incompletes will be granted. The faculty member does not need to allow up to the following semester for the student to complete the course. A copy of the contract will be kept on file in the FAST TRAIN office.

**Online Attendance Policy:** As an enrolled graduate student, you must commit fully to being a member of this learning community over the next several weeks. **Therefore, lack of participation in online sessions will not be allowed.** Your continued presence in this course contributes to the learning of each of your colleagues and it is your obligation to support each other's learning. In addition, you are responsible for notifying your instructor if your participation in the online course will be interrupted due to a documented emergency. Participation in the class is worth a total of 20 points. Any unexcused absences will result in a deduction of two points for each week of non-participation.

**GMU E-mail & Web Policy:** Mason uses electronic mail ([www.gmu.edu/email](http://www.gmu.edu/email)) to provide official information to students. Examples include notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly (Mason catalog).

**Course Withdrawal with Dean Approval:** For graduate and non-degree students, withdrawal after the last day for dropping a course requires approval by the student's academic dean, and is permitted only for nonacademic reasons that prevent course completion (Mason catalog). Students must contact an academic advisor in FAST TRAIN to withdraw after the deadline. There is no guarantee that such withdrawals will be permitted.

**Required Text:**

Hallahan, D. P., & Kauffman, J. M. (2009). 12th Ed. *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Additional course readings will be provided by instructor.

**Course Requirements:**

EDSE 501 will meet on-line at: <http://courses.gmu.edu/> weekly. As a community of on-line learners, it is incumbent upon each member to participate regularly and complete weekly assignments. Students will also be expected to complete fieldwork, to complete collaborative group projects and to undertake self-guided learning. The success of an online class is based large on engagement and interaction among participants and collaborative learning.

**Evaluation:**

- Discussion Board 20 pts.
- Field Experience 30 pts.
- Internet Log/Report 15 pts.
- Mid-Term Exam 15 pts.
- Final Exam 15 pts.
- Child Abuse Online Training 5 pts.