



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

Fall 2014

EDSE 501 6S2: Introduction to Special Education

CRN: 81990, 3 - Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Liber L Riccio, EdD	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 08/25/2014 – 12/05/2014
<b>Phone:</b> (202) 744-9775	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Asynchronous
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<b>Office Hours:</b> By Appt./by phone	<b>Meeting Location:</b> NET

**Note:** This syllabus may change according to class needs. Course members will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.

### **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.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

**Co-requisite(s):** None

### **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 students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

## **Highlights**

Please pay particular attention to highlighted items.

### **DELIVERY METHOD:**

This course will be delivered online using an **asynchronous** format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will login to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before “@masonlive.gmu.edu”) and email password. The course site will be available on the posted start date of the course.

### **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. Opera and Safari may not be compatible with Blackboard.
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard is required, 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 the course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs respectively, available for free downloading by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player>
  - Apple QuickTime Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
- A headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool (optional).

### **DISTANCE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS:**

- **Course Week:**
  - **Asynchronous:** Because online courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will **start** on Monday, and **finish** on Sunday.
- **Log-in Frequency:**
  - **Asynchronous:** Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor - at a minimum this should be **3 times per week**.
- **Participation:** Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities during the semester which include viewing of all course materials, completing course activities / assignments, participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in using all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance if they are struggling with

- technical components of the course. Contact ITU (<http://itservices.gmu.edu/help.cfm>) at (703) 993-8870 or [support@gmu.edu](mailto:support@gmu.edu) as needed.
- **Technical Issues:** Students should expect that they could experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
  - **Workload:** Expect to log in to this course **at least three times a week** to read announcements, participate in the discussions, and work on course materials. Remember, while this course is self-paced, there are **specific final deadlines** and **due dates** listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

**Netiquette:** Our goal is to be **collaborative**, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. I suggest that you always re-read your responses carefully before you post them to prevent comments that may be viewed as personal attacks or are offensive to others. **Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words.** I will do the same. Remember, you are not competing with each other but sharing information and learning from one another as well as from the instructor.

### Nature of Course Delivery

Learning activities include the following:

1. Online lecture/materials and discussion via BB
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and writing activities

### Field Experience Requirement

A Field Experience is a part of this course. Field Experiences may include observations of a school setting or case studies of individual students.

Below are procedures that students need to follow based on their specific situation:

#### **REQUIRED PROCEDURE FOR ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THIS COURSE:**

Complete the online field experiences form [<http://cehd.gmu.edu/endorse/ferf>] at the beginning of the semester (if not before) and complete the information requested REGARDLESS if you need assistance in 'finding' an individual for the project/case study or not. This information is required by the state.

## **PICK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING THE FORM**

**OPTION 1:** Request a placement online through the Clinical Practice Office

• Complete the online request form and indicate that you need a field placement. **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO THIS WITHIN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF CLASS SO THAT THE FIELD PLACEMENT OFFICE HAS SUFFICIENT TIME TO FIND A PLACEMENT FOR YOU .**

**OPTION 2:** Arrange for your own placement AND complete the online field placement form indicating that you do not need assistance finding a placement.

- a. I work in a school setting and would like to complete my course assignment in my school or with one of my own students.

→Although you are already a school employee, you should request permission from your principal BEFORE you begin your assignment.

- b. I don't work in a school setting, but I have a friend or classmate who does and I would like to complete my course assignment in their school or with one of their own students.

→You need to ask the SCHOOL EMPLOYEE to request permission from the principal BEFORE you begin your assignment. (The guest GMU student should NOT contact the principal directly). The school employee needs to send an email that indicates principal consent to the course instructor so it can be forwarded to the CEHD field experience office at [fieldexp@gmu.edu](mailto:fieldexp@gmu.edu).

- c. I know a student outside of a school setting that I would like to work with for the assignment (Note: It is not recommended that you work with your own child.)

→You need to obtain consent from the parent of the child and forward written consent to the CEHD field experience office at [fieldexp@gmu.edu](mailto:fieldexp@gmu.edu).

- d. I am a consortium student that does not attend GMU

→You need to complete the GMU online field placement form regardless of whether or not you need assistance finding a placement. You need to make sure that you follow the procedures for field placement at your university to identify a placement or report that you have a placement. Contact your faculty liaison for more information.

*The Module 1 assignment requires you to observe or interview those involved in special education or visit a classroom or meeting. This is considered a field experience even if you do*

*not need assistance in arranging it. You must register with the Field Experiences office as described above but complete the form stating that you do not need assistance in finding a placement. If you do need assistance, please let me know. You may be able to visit the school of one of your classmates.*

## Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” 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, behavioral/academic characteristics associated with disability areas.
- Describe historical points of view and contribution 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 use of innovative technology.
- Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.
- Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children.

## Required Textbooks

Hallahan, D., Kauffman, J., & Pullen, P. (2015). *Exceptional learners: An introduction to special education* (13<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

## Digital Library Option

The Pearson textbook(s) for this course **may be** available as part of the **George Mason University Division of Special Education and disAbility Research Digital Library**. Please note that not all textbooks are available through this option. Visit the links below before purchasing the digital library to ensure that your course(s) text(s) are available in this format.

The division and Pearson have partnered to bring you the Digital Library; a convenient, digital solution that can save you money on your course materials. The Digital Library offers you access to a complete digital library of **all Pearson textbooks** and MyEducationLabs used across the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research curriculum at a low 1-year or 3-year subscription price. Access codes are available in the school bookstore. Please visit <http://gmu.bncollege.com> and search the ISBN. To register your access code or purchase the Digital Library: <http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html>

- 1 year subscription \$200 ISBN-13: 9781269541411

- 3 years subscription \$525 ISBN-13: 9781269541381
- Individual e-book(s) also available at the bookstore link above or at  
<http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html>

### **Recommended Textbooks**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

### **Required Resources**

Access to the Internet and Blackboard login.

### **Additional Readings**

Included in Blackboard site.

## **Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Special Education: Students with Disabilities who Access the General Curriculum K-12. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include Standard 1: Foundations, Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners, and Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences.

## **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. 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.*
- d. 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/>].

- e. 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/>].
- f. Where appropriate, students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. 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/>].

## **PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>]

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

### **Course Policies & Expectations**

**Attendance.** All instruction takes place online through Mason's Blackboard learning management system.

This is a 3-credit graduate level course. Traditional 3-credit courses across a 15-week semester require an average of 45 hours of in-class time and approximately 90 hours of independent reading and assignment completion. This course includes the same amount of content as a traditional 15-week course. As you budget your time for the course, keep in mind the importance of allotting an appropriate amount of time for course preparation, reading assignments, lesson activity completion, and longer module assignments. I would recommend you review the syllabus carefully and develop a schedule for yourself.

Students have failed the course because they did not allocate time and ran out of it at the end. Please note that ALL work for the course, including the upload of your TaskStream requirements must be completed by the end date given in the Course Schedule.

**Participation.** This is both an interactive and independent course that requires a high level of self-direction, communication, and problem solving on your part. You will learn from the material provided and from one another. This is a primarily self-paced course so everyone's schedule will vary. You are responsible for all communication that occurs

during the time of the course. Please check your Mason email frequently (or set it to forward to a preferred address), even after you have finished all components of the course. If something is missing or I need to contact you, I will send you communication through your Mason email. *If you are having trouble finding something within the course or have content-based questions, please contact me. If you are having technical issues, please refer to the ITU Contact information in the Distance Learning Expectations section of this syllabus.*

**Late Work.** As this is a self-paced course until the last 30 days, you have a great deal of latitude to plan your time. No deadlines are set prior to November 5, which is the last date anyone can enroll in the course. *However, once that final enrollment period has been met, final deadlines are provided to support the successful completion of the course. During this period of final deadlines, late work will be accepted with a 10% per day point reduction. No work will be accepted after midnight on the final day of the course.*

**Evaluation.** Assignments are evaluated according to posted rubrics. You can find the assignment descriptions and rubrics in each Module. Grades for most reading checks will be available immediately after you finish and will post to the Grade Center (My Grades in the left side navigation bar). For Module assignments (and some reading checks), I will grade the assignment and post the score you earned and my comments to Grade Center. You can read the comments by clicking on the grade. If you have any questions, please contact me. If you have difficulty with an assignment, either in understanding it or completing it, please contact me immediately to discuss.

All Module assignments require you to synthesize material from the Course and outside sources into coherent statements of your ideas. In all cases, your writing should be data-based, meaning that you must support statements and ideas with evidence from these sources, giving these sources credit. The standard format for writing in the field of education is outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). The citation for this manual is included in the section entitled, Recommended Texts. This is also termed “APA Style.” For an online resource, see [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org). Specifically, final Module Assignments for Modules 1 and 4 should be written in APA style, including a cover page, running head, pagination, headings (as needed), citations (as needed), and reference pages.

**Grading –** As you can imagine, grading and feedback are among the most powerful tools in which a professor and teacher can communicate with course members and students. They are interconnected tools that allow the professor to express what he thinks about a student’s learning, and a way to help a student make progress toward identified goals. In many ways it is a collaborative/constructivist way of learning.

In order to make use of grades and feedback, it is important that you submit your assignments in a timely manner. Please do not wait until the last minute to submit.

If you and other course members wait till the last minute to submit assignments it will impact on my ability to respond fully to your submission - I will only be able to give you a grade. I will not be able to give you feedback since the clock will be running toward the end date for the course. Please keep this in mind when you start the course and especially when you start your assignments.

**Communication.** The best way to contact me is through email. There is a Send Email icon on the left navigation bar in our course. My email (as well as the emails of your classmates) is located here. I check my email at least once a day on weekdays. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, if not sooner, on weekdays.

**TaskStream Submission.** Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit these assessments, the Child Abuse/Neglect Recognition Certificate and the Module 4 Final Paper, to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete(IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, IN will convert to F nine weeks into following semester.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you MUST use the login and password information that has been created for you. This information is distributed to students through GMU email, so it is very important that you set up your GMU email. For more TaskStream information, go to <http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream>.

### Grading Scale

100-93%	A
92-90%	A-
89-83%	B
82-80%	B-
79-70%	C
<69%	F

## Assignments

### Performance-based Assessment (**TaskStream submission required**)

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#### **1. Child Abuse Training Module**

All students must complete the online Child Abuse Recognition training module available at [http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated\\_reporters/cws5691/index.html](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated_reporters/cws5691/index.html). If you have already completed the training module, you will just need to post your certificate (or evidence of completion on your teaching license) to TaskStream.

#### **2. Module 4 Final Paper**

Module 4 Final Paper assignment is also a required assignment that must be uploaded to TaskStream. Specific directions are posted on Blackboard.

**These are mandatory requirements and you will not pass the course without completing this assignment. The Certificate of Completion and the Module 4 Final Paper will need to be posted to your TaskStream account in order to receive your final grade in the course.**

### Performance-based Common Assignments (**No TaskStream submission required**)

#### **3. Reading Checks (16 at 25 points each/ 400 points)**

At the end of *each lesson*, there is a reading check assignment. In most lessons, these checks are 5-10 multiple choice questions. These reading checks assess your understanding and recall of the chapter in the textbook you were assigned. *You may use your book or notes to help you complete these checks and you may take each one multiple times.*

#### **4. Module Assignments (4 at 150 points each/600 points; all directions and rubrics posted in Blackboard)**

Module assignments are a combination of independent and group work. **Modules 1 and 4** require students to write papers individually. The paper in **Module 1** is a personal philosophy statement. It also requires you to choose two activities from a list of school- and community-based options. You will include a summary of the activities in your paper. In **Module 4**, students must integrate information from all of their course experiences to write a paper about one disability area.

Assignments for Modules 2 and 3 are slightly different. Once you complete the Module lessons, you will choose two disability areas from the Module (2 and 3) and :

1. Post your choices to the Discussion Board. (If there are already five students who have posted for a specific disability area, please choose another one.)

2. Once you have completed your worksheets for the Module (1 each in the high incidence disability category; and one in the low incidence disability category), you will post each to the relevant disability area Wikis.
3. After posting your worksheets in the disability groups, choose a DIFFERENT disability area Wiki, read over the postings, and comment on the group information provided.
4. Each comment should be posted to the group comment Wiki and include how the information related to at least one aspect of the Module.

**Course Schedule on following page**

## Course Schedule

Date	Event/Assignment	Expectation
8/25	Course is opened in Blackboard	Students review syllabus, website, begin work on Discussion Board (DB) items.
8/25 - 11/4	Completion of all course components at own pace. You can complete entire course before any of the deadlines noted below.	Students review Blackboard site, work on all course components at their own pace. Use deadlines list below as a checklist.
11/5	Final date for new students to enroll in course.	Final Deadlines/Late Work penalties start.
11/7	Introductory activities (e.g., Engage with Instructor, Ask Instructor DB, Introductory DB, Field Office form)	Due by midnight
11/9	Child Abuse/Neglect Recognition Certification completion (includes posting copy of certificate to TaskStream account)	Due by midnight
11/16	Module 1 (includes all reading checks, field experience activities, and paper posted to assignments section)	Due by midnight
11/23	Module 2 (includes all reading checks, selection of high-incidence disability area, completion of research worksheets and posting to assignments, posting/comments on wiki); Midpoint Survey	Due by midnight
11/30	Module 3 (includes all reading checks, selection of low-incidence disability area, completion of research worksheets, posting/comments on wiki)	Due by midnight
12/5	Module 4 (includes all reading checks, selection of disability area, completion of paper, posting to assignments and TaskStream)	Due by midnight
12/5	All remaining assignments completed and posted Completion of course evaluation/final survey	<b>FINAL DUE DATE</b> All Course Material should be completed and submitted by midnight