

# **Introduction to Special Education - SPED/2000 Overview**

**Course Number: SPED 2000**

**Graduate Education Credit: 3 Semester Hours**

**Course Requirements: Completion of 14 Modules**

## **Required Textbook and Materials**

- Hallahan, D.P., & Kauffman, J.M. Exceptional learners: Introduction to special education. Boston: Allyn & Bacon- Tenth Edition
- Additional presentation information related to subject areas for each module.
- Suggested website and related resources that can expand student understanding of the topic area.
- "Instructor's Notes".

## **Contents of the Course And Dates for Module Completion**

Module Topic Dates. These due dates for quizzes and related activities are listed on the **Course Calendar**. Quizzes and related activities need to be completed by the time assigned. If participants have challenges with completing an assignment on time, they must notify their Instructor prior to the due date to seek an alternative solution.

1. Foundation of Special Education: Legislative and Basic Issues
2. The Individualized Education Plan: The Basics
3. Mental Retardation: The Basics
4. Learning Disabilities: The Basics
5. Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: The Basics
6. Emotional and Behavior Disorder: The Basics
7. Communication Disorder: The Basics
8. Hearing and Visual Impairments: The Basics
9. Low Incidence Populations: The Basics
10. Physical Disabilities: The Basics
11. Gifted Students: The Basics
12. Autism: The Basics
13. Parents and Families: The Basics
14. Multicultural and Bilingual Aspects of Special Education: The Basics

**Course Objectives:** The following topics that provide structure for this course are identified by the Council for Exceptional Children and also Georgia House Bill 671 as critical content knowledge and skills for pre-service teachers.

## **THE LAW**

- **History of Special Education Law:** Issues in definition and identification procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs including individuals from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. (CC1:K3)
- **Due Process:** Assurance and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility and placement. (CC1:K4) Typical procedures used for screening, pre-referral, referral, and classification. (CC3:K3)
- **Tends and Issues:** Models theories and philosophies that provide the basis for special education practice. (CC1K1) Articulates personal philosophy of special education including its relationship to/with regular education. (CC1:S1) Laws, policies, and ethical principals regarding behavior management planning and implementation. (CC6:K1) Articulate the pros and cons of current issues and trends in the education of individuals with disabilities.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Issues in definition and identification procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs including individuals from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. (CC1:K3) Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the child and the family including cultural and linguistic diversity, socioeconomic level, abuse/neglect, and substance abuse. (CC2:K5) Cultural perspectives influencing the relationship among family, schools, and communities as related to effective instruction. (CC4:K4) Strategies for preparing individuals to live harmoniously in a culturally diverse world (CC6:K5) Personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's teaching. (CC8:K2)

## **CHARACTERISTICS**

- **Attitudes toward Disabilities:** Ways specific cultures are negatively stereotyped (CC1:K7) Ethical considerations inherent in behavior management. (CC6:K1) Personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's teaching. (CC8:K2) Importance of the teacher serving as a model for individuals with exceptional learning needs. (CC8:K3)
- **Eligibility decisions:** Issues in definition and identification procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs including individuals from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. (CC1:K3) Screening, pre-referral, referral, and classification procedures. (CC3:K3) Effects and exceptional condition(s) may have on an individual's life. (CC2:K4) Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities. (CC2:K3)
- **Placement and service delivery:** Issues, assurances and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement within a continuum of services. (CC1:K4)

# **INSTRUCTIONAL ADAPTATION**

- **Classroom Organization:** Demands of various learning environments. (CC4:K2) General and special curricula for individuals with exceptional learning needs. (CC4:K3) Modify the learning environment (schedule- physical arrangement) to manage inappropriate behaviors. (CC6:S3) Prepare and organize materials to implement daily lesson plans. (CC5:S1)
- **Behavior management:** Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management planning and implementation. (CC6K1) Teacher attitude and behaviors that influence behavior of individuals with exceptional learning needs. (CC6:K2) Strategies for crisis prevention and intervention. (CC6:K4)
- **Accommodations and modifications:** Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities. (CC2:K3) Modify the learning environment to manage inappropriate behaviors. (CC6:S3)

## **Course Overview**

Exceptional children and youths are students who require special education to reach their full potential. One out of every ten students in the United State is identified as exceptional. Special education is specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of exceptional students. Because many students with exceptionalities may receive some or most of their instruction in general classrooms, all teachers must be prepared to work with exceptional students. Therefore, the course is dedicated to providing a general exposure to the characteristics of individuals with special needs as well as instructional modifications and behavioral management techniques that can employ to assist individuals in the regular education environment. It is the intent of this course that participants will become more comfortable in the identification and education of students with special needs. Because legislation and subsequent litigation, related to the education of children and youths with disabilities has become increasingly specific and mandatory, this course will review relevant special education law and how it applies to the education of students with special needs.

## **Course Communications**

In order for communications regarding this course to be documented, all assignments in this course must be submitted as directed via the specific course module. As you will see, many of these assignments are to be posted via the Discussion Board. If you have questions or concerns regarding the Discussion Board, please do not hesitate to contact your specific Instructor or Teaching Assistant.

## **Completion of 14 Modules**

Each module will take approximately 3 hours to complete. The modules include many activities, and these activities should be done in order during each module. Students are encouraged to complete modules ahead of course calendar schedule.

## Assigned Readings

A chapter or chapters from the Hallahan and Kauffman textbook support each module. This textbook has been assigned to offer participants sufficient foundation from which to proceed with the course content and thus, receive a general understanding of special education issues. Many modules are also supported by the "Instructor's Notes". These notes will provide you with the State of Georgia's Eligibilities Requirements as well as many of the state rules and regulations concerning students with disabilities. Each module also has a list of suggested web-based resources and related text-based material that can assist participants in gaining a better understanding of the course content. Some of these resources will be required reading, however many are not. Instead, they are meant to serve as possible future resources for the participants.

## Module Activities

Specific activities are described in each module. These may involve web challenges, media reviews, quizzes, etc. One or two activities may be required during any particular module. Fourteen module activities will be graded on a scale of 100 total possible points.

All assignments are to be turned in as directed by the notations within the specific Course Modules and by the module completion date. Due dates are posted on the Course Calendar.

## Multiple Choice Quizzes

Multiple-choice quizzes are required in most modules throughout the course. These quizzes will be included in the student's grade. Each quiz must be completed on time (i.e., by the due date for completion of each module). Please note: You do have two opportunities to complete a quiz. Do you need to do the quiz twice? No, but if you miss number of questions, I would recommend reading the chapter again and return and take the quiz again.

## Chatroom Discussions/Horizon Live

In order to provide a forum to allow for some "face-to-face" interaction, chat experiences will be scheduled for the class. The chatroom participation will be included in the student's grade. **Your instructor will e-mail you at a later date for the scheduled times and topics.** The chatroom experience will allow for students to discuss issues central to special education, the course in general and individual concerns that we might have. PC headset and microphone will be required to participate in Horizon Live

discussions. The headset allows users to speak and listen simultaneously, as if in regular classroom. Live participation in Horizon Live sessions requires a headset. They can be purchased for under \$20.00 at most electronics retailers and department stores. Below is a hyperlink to the Circuit City website and an example of a suitable headset to purchase (just make sure NOT to purchase a headset with a USB interface- yours should plug into the microphone and speaker ports of your PC. USB headsets do not work well with the Horizon Live system),

Link: [www.circuitcity.com/ssm/Plantronics-PC-Headset-AUDIO-50-/sem/rpsm/48428/rpem/ccd/productDetail.do](http://www.circuitcity.com/ssm/Plantronics-PC-Headset-AUDIO-50-/sem/rpsm/48428/rpem/ccd/productDetail.do)

## **Software: (all can be obtained free)**

**Microsoft Word and Microsoft Power Point (or viewers):** If you have Microsoft Office you will have both MS Word and MS Power Point (Office 2003 or XP will work best for this course, while Office 95 may give you problems). If you do not have these pieces of software, you have two options: a) You may purchase a full version or a student version (both are pricy, but the student version is considerably less expensive), or b) download a free viewer for each program from Microsoft. The viewers will allow you to view all of the material of the course, but they do not allow you to use the software to create anything.

For many of the assignments, you will need to use some kind of word processing software. MS Word will be the most compatible software with the course. If you do not have or cannot afford to purchase MS Word, it is strongly recommended that you find a way to have access to it (university or public library, a friend's computer, etc).

**Adobe Reader 6.0:** Adobe Reader allows you to view document in a 'PDF' format. This format will be used throughout the course.

## **Discussion Board Discussions**

Several of the Course Module Assignments are to be completed by posting information to the Discussion Board. Why? First, this is a medium we have available where either your instructor or your TA can easily access your work. Second, I believe your thoughts, opinions, and related information you provide are worth sharing with others. Thus, the discussion board allows a medium where you can share information with the rest of the class. Finally, by sharing this information, it offers an opportunity for class participants to review other's opinions and thus, offer comments and related feedback.

## **Final Project/Exam**

For your final activity, please interview a parent of a child with a disability or a family member who has a sibling or relative with a disability. Most of you are in the school setting so I hope access to an individual and their family member will not be difficult. **If you do not have access, please notify your instructor, optional final activity will be**

**offered.** Sit down with this individual or individuals. Ask them questions to get a better understanding of the disability that confronts their child or family member. Ask how they interact with an individual with a disability and what they do to better instruct, communicate, or modify their behavior in order to enhance his or her development. Expand your questions to understand how this impacts the other children in the family. Questions you might ask include:

- What types of characteristics does your son or daughter exhibit that present challenges in the day-to-day learning and overall development?
- What types of types of interventions (school and/or home or community-based) are currently being used to address his or her developmental needs?
- What do you expect he or she will be doing upon completion of the K-12 experience?
- What types of things are being done to assist this individual in their transition (or preparation in their transition) to the post-secondary environment?

When you have finished with this interview, please write up the experience in a paper that should be six pages (double space, 12 fonts) in length. The paper should give an overview of who you interviewed, why, the circumstances in how you collected the information. It should also review the questions you developed to be asked, why you asked these specific questions, and of course the feedback you received. The conclusion of the paper should specifically discuss what you learned as an individual and how this will help you as a future educator.

## **Grading**

Each student will be graded on the following system:

- Quizzes - 15% of the final grade
- Chats - 10% of the final grade
- Discussion Boards/Activities - 50% of the final grade
- Final Activity - 25% of the final grade

90 - 100 = A

80 - 89.9 = B

70 - 79.9 = C

60 - 69.9 = D

Below 60 = F

## **Assignments and Incompletes**

Incompletes are rarely given, and never because you just need more time. An incomplete grade can be given only if you are doing satisfactory work, but for nonacademic reasons beyond your control, you are unable to meet the requirements of the course. We are very strict about giving an incomplete, and it typically requires medical documentation.

Course assignments are purposefully distributed throughout the semester and/or session, and it is not acceptable to try and complete all of the work in a short period of time (e.g., during the last month of the semester and/or session). Therefore, if the assigned work is not completed according to the schedule in the course syllabus, you will not pass the course. **It is so important to constantly review the course calendar.**

## **Appropriate Language**

Students are expected to use appropriate language in both verbal communication and written products. When writing concerns persons with disabilities, they should be referred to as just that: people who have physical, sensory, behavioral, learning, or intellectual disabilities. Please avoid terms like "the handicapped", "EBD kids" etc. Instead, please communicate in a way that puts "people first". For example, "the student with a developmental disability", "a student with an emotional and behavioral disorder", "students with learning disabilities". This small change emphasizes the humanity and the individuality of the person and clarifies that a disability is only one of many characteristics (and not necessarily the most important) that a person can possess.

## **E-Mail**

E-mail will be your primary means of communication with your instructor and teaching assistants. Unless otherwise requested by your instructor or TA, please use the WebCT e-mail that is designated for the course and not the UGA e-mail system. Please feel free to e-mail either your instructor or TA. In either case, you should strive for professionalism, clarity, and efficiency in your communication. Your instructor will provide you with a telephone number and appropriate times to call if telephone communication is needed.

## **Due Date**

While understanding that we all are busy with school, work, and family, your decision to register for this course is an indication that you have made it a high priority. Thus, extensions of assignment due dates are given only in extreme situations (death of a close family member, hospitalization, etc.) and require documentation on your part. Otherwise, due dates are fixed and non-negotiable: All assignments should be submitted on or before the assigned due date. Assignments past the due date will not be accepted for full credit. Examples of unreasonable extensions for an assignment include frequent computer malfunctions, outside class-work, or job responsibilities that inhibit meeting the required deadlines. If you anticipate missing a deadline on an assignment, you should send an e-mail to your instructor before the deadline. Unexcused assignments submitted after the

due date may be returned ungraded or assigned a lower evaluation. *Whether an extension is allowed will be at the instructor's discretion.*

## **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please e-mail the instructor **no later than the second week of the course.**

## **Diversity and Cultural Sensitivity**

Educational problems that require special education interventions are concerns for families, schools, and communities of all cultures, nations, and backgrounds. Effective teaching involves understanding the diverse social context of students, families, and educators. Efforts at cultural sensitivity are expected in all interactions with instructors and fellow students.

## **Academic Honesty**

The University of Georgia seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and other members of the University Community. A policy on academic honesty has been developed to serve these goals. All members of the academic community are responsible for knowing the policy and procedures on academic honesty. Please see the following web site for complete details.

Link: [www.uga.edu/vpaa/polproc/ahpol/main.html](http://www.uga.edu/vpaa/polproc/ahpol/main.html)

While collaboration among students is encouraged, plagiarism will result in sanctions. Plagiarism is defined as an attempt to "steal and pass off as one's own ideas or words of another" (Webster, 1967, p. 646). Examples of plagiarism are turning in copies of other student's assignments as your own, copying words from an article or website without appropriately citing the work.

## **Grading Concerns**

Every effort will be made to evaluate student performance as objectively as possible. Grading rubrics will be provided to the teaching assistance. If you have concerns regarding a particular grade, please send an e-mail to both your TA and instructor outlining your concern. Either your TA or the instructor will contact you either by e-mail or phone to discuss the matter further.