

Rutgers University
Graduate School of Education
Department of Educational Psychology, Special Education

15.293.525.01 Psychology of the Exceptional Child
(9/2011 Revision)

Fall, 2011

Wednesdays

4:50 – 7:30 pm

Location: Scott Hall Rm. 219

3 credits

Cynthia Bott, Ed.D.

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Office Hours: by appointment

Note: To reach me, you will be most successful using email.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course develops foundational knowledge in the characteristics, identification, educational needs, and development of students with exceptionalities with specific focus on students with disabilities. Content includes the influence of exceptionalities on the cognitive, educational, communication, motor, and social development of individuals with disabilities and other exceptionalities. The legal and ethical basis for comprehensive programs for exceptional children and adults is discussed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students can expect to:

- Identify and describe the historical milestones, legal basis, and current issues in educational programs for students with exceptionalities;
- Understand key controversial issues in current special education policy and practice, including LD identification, RTI, and disproportionality;
- Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with mild to moderate disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disabilities, mental retardation, speech and language impairments);
- Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with moderate to severe disabilities (e.g., sensory impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, multiple handicaps);
- Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with giftedness
- Identify the characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental influences on a child and family including cultural and linguistic diversity, socioeconomic status, abuse/neglect, and substance abuse;

- Describe the differential characteristics of individual students with disabilities including level of severity and multiple exceptionalities across the lifespan;
- Articulate the continuum of educational placements for students with exceptionalities and the benefits and drawbacks of each;
- Identify the impact of exceptionality on the family;
- Be familiar with agencies, professional organizations, and related Web resources for information relevant to support of special education students.
- Be familiar with national advocacy groups addressing needs of students at risk for, or with disabilities, as well as resources, processes, and means to help these students address social and institutional barriers that impede equal access to services and supports that facilitate success in school, home, and the community.
- Understand the current status of evidence-based research and practice standards in special education

OVERVIEW OF COURSE ACTIVITIES

The course includes substantial weekly readings, structured interactive review of readings and additional content, FOUR in-class quizzes on the readings, student-led presentation/discussions, in-class activities, guest speakers, wheelchair activity, Website resource review project, and a take-home final exam.

COURSE MATERIALS

- Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C. (2012). *Exceptional learners: An Introduction to Special Education* (12th ed.). Boston: Pearson. (Referred to as **HKP** in reading assignments)
ISBN-13:978-0-13-703370-6; ISBN-10:0-13-703370-2
- Required readings available online (on SAKAI--<https://sakai.rutgers.edu>)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are required to attend every class. More than one unexcused absence will result in lowering the student's final grade by the equivalent of one full letter grade (e.g., from B+ to C+) for each additional unexcused absence beyond one (except for documented emergencies, illness, religious observance, or other serious needs). More than three absences total (regardless of absences being excused) will likely necessitate repeating the course to earn credit. Bona fide emergencies and highly unusual situations should be discussed in private with the instructor to explore the possibility of special accommodations and/or arrangements.

Class starts at 4:50 sharp. Students are expected to arrive at class a few minutes before class begins. Students who will arrive late for a legitimate reason are expected to email the professor in advance or in

case of a last minute delay (traffic jam), call the professor's phone number (see top of syllabus) and leave a message to that effect. **Two unexcused tardy arrivals** (defined as arriving more than 10 minutes late for class) **constitute one unexcused absence**.

PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

As current and future teaching and allied field professionals, students are expected to present themselves and act in class as they would in a professional meeting in the school district where they work. This applies to several dimensions of professional conduct:

- Students are expected to focus totally on class activities and not engage in alternate activities (social conversations, text messaging, etc.).
- Students are expected to be respectful of divergent beliefs and opinions that may be voiced in class discussions, offering constructive questioning and feedback as appropriate.
- Except where otherwise customary (e.g., deaf community terminology), students are expected to use *person-first* language when speaking of students with disabilities (e.g., *student with a learning disability*, NOT, *LD student*), and never use demeaning terms such as *retard*. Students should avoid terminology that objectifies human beings as “things” of pity, such as, *wheelchair-bound*, *confined to a wheelchair*, or *suffers from a disability*.

APPROPRIATE & INAPPROPRIATE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are expected to put all electronic devices away during class, including telephones/text messaging devices. Students with bona fide reason for accessing text messaging during class (e.g., family member in hospital) will be permitted to do so, but are requested to privately contact the instructor in advance as to the need. Laptop/notebook computers are not to be used in class unless by special advance arrangement with the instructor (students are provided class notes for every session).

LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

All assignments are expected on time. Late assignments will receive a reduced grade, generally, the equivalent of 10% of the total possible project grade per day late (or part thereof). Students with bona fide emergencies should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss special arrangements in order to avoid grade penalties. The instructor will work constructively and collaboratively with students who **communicate early** regarding special problems completing assignments on time, with no grade penalties in special situations where advance communication takes place and the circumstances are deemed reasonable, but **will not be supportive of last minute requests for extensions on project due dates.**

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The University Code of Student Conduct can be accessed at:

<http://rci.rutgers.edu/%7Epolcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml> For information on the academic integrity policy, please go to: <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/integrity/policy.shtml>

A multimedia presentation on plagiarism can be found at:

<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/integrity/realifeexamples.html>

Related regulations may also be found in the Rutgers Graduate School of Education Catalog.

For any and all assignments and class activities, including in-class quizzes, take-home quizzes, tests, papers, field projects, PowerPoints, and any other class related work, **no copying of any kind is allowed**, unless copied text is placed within quotations and author/source is appropriately cited. Excessive use of quoted material in essay assignments, quizzes, and tests is strongly discouraged and this will tend to result in lower grades (students need to express themselves using their own language).

Clear evidence of extensive plagiarism will likely result in a grade of F for the assignment AND course.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

Students requiring accommodations related to disabilities will be provided all necessary supports and accommodations. In such circumstances, students should make sure that they communicate their needs in advance to the instructor in coordination with the Rutgers Office of Disability Services to ensure that they receive appropriate supports commensurate with their needs.

COURSE GRADING PLAN

1. Participation (@ 3 points per class x 14 sessions = 42 points).
2. Quizzes (4 quizzes at 15 points each = 60 points)
3. Student-Led Presentation/Discussion (30 points)
4. Website Review Sheets (24 points)
5. Wheelchair Activity (30 points)
6. Take-home final exam (60 points)

Course Grades: (out of 246 possible points)

GRADE	PERCENT	POINTS
A	93.00 – 100.0 %	Point totals will be converted to percentages. N.B. A grade of 86.99 earns a B, not a B+ Any mid-course modification of course assignments that result in changes to possible point totals will be reflected accurately as percentage of total possible points earned.
B+	87.00 – 92.99 %	
B	81.00 – 86.99 %	
C+	77.00 – 80.99 %	
C	70.00 – 76.99 %	
F	Under 70 %	

ASSIGNMENT/GRADING REQUIREMENTS: ADDITIONAL DETAILS

1. **Participation:** Students are expected to come to class having completed all assigned readings for that week **in advance** and to participate in class discussions, offering informed ideas and opinions.

Breakdown: 1 point for attendance, 1 point for active attention throughout class session, 1 point for active discussion/participation (no points earned when absent, except in excused absence cases of serious, documented emergencies/religious observance/illness—then 2 points are awarded)

2. **Quizzes:** The course includes FOUR quizzes based on the required readings. Students will be required to demonstrate a complete knowledge of key points and issues in the readings and also to apply this knowledge with critical thought. Quizzes will be *open notes, open book*. **Students are strongly encouraged to highlight, underline, and take notes on readings—available for use on quizzes.** Bring all assigned readings for the week to each class. Students who do not bring their materials may not borrow the instructor's or classmates' materials during quizzes. There will be make-ups for quizzes **ONLY** in cases of excused absences (usually requiring documentation on the reason for absence, or in an obvious emergency or other serious situation).

Students are strongly encouraged to form study groups and email Dr. Bott about parts of the readings for which they have questions (at least one full day prior to class).

3. **Student-led presentation/discussion.** Beginning at session #2, a student will present on a selected reading during each class. Following a brief introduction in which the presenter states the topic and previews the main presentation content (1 minute, with accompanying presentation overview slide), the main content part of the presentation will last 9-10 minutes, to be followed by 8-9 minutes of facilitated (by the presenter) discussion (or, discussion can be embedded throughout the presentation), and a 1-minute summary/closure with accompanying slide. **Under no circumstances can the total time exceed 20 minutes per presenter** (due to other content coverage and activities during class). Students should rehearse to make sure their presentation timing is appropriate and they are responsible to bring a small clock or other timing device to help them manage their presentation time. Students will sign up for topics during session #1. The oral presentation should **cover just the main concepts and major informational points** from the selected reading—not all of the content. A rubric will be distributed at class session #1. The student must prepare three things to accompany the presentation:
- a. A brief PowerPoint slide show for the presentation. Email the PPT to Dr. Bott no later than 8pm the day before the presentation.
 - b. Copies of a 4-page (single spaced) detailed handout (with more detail than in the PPT show) for class members containing summary information
 - c. A list of 4 - 5 challenging discussion questions (higher-order thinking) for the class with prepared follow-up probes in case of limited audience response on certain questions.
4. **Wheelchair Activity:** The wheelchair activity focuses mainly on society's views of disability, civil rights and accessibility issues, social interactions, and larger questions of professional concern regarding disabilities, above and beyond consideration of physical disability. One to two students per week will each sign out a collapsible wheelchair from Dr. Bott. Each student will perform a series of tasks and **submit a written report on their experience no later than class session #13.** The tasks include (1) going to a local restaurant, mall, or other public facility and both navigating and measuring a ramp, entryway, or bathroom for compliance with ADA regulations (provided to students); (2) going to a local mall twice (once with and once without wheelchair) and recording eye contact behaviors of passersby under prespecified conditions; and (3) going into a local eating establishment using a wheelchair and having a beverage/snack, and writing a journal about the experience. An activity rubric with greater detail on the assignment and the required report format will be distributed and discussed at class session #2. A student who may be a current user of a wheelchair has the option to arrange an alternate activity/assignment with the instructor.

5. **Website Review Sheets:** Students will review selected special education and related area resource websites, filling out a review sheet on each website (review sheets provided by Dr. Bott). Students will complete the review sheets on their own and **turn them in at class session #12.**
6. **Take-Home Final Exam:** The final exam will contain three sections: (1) **Test of Specific Knowledge** (Approx. 25 T-F/Mult. Choice), (2) **Framing Issues** (One short essay response: 2 pages), (3) **Applying and Extending Knowledge to Problem-Solving:** Given school-based scenarios, students will describe possible answers/solutions, and discuss key issues (One longer essay response: 3 pages).

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS AND CONTENT COVERAGE

N.B. Assigned reading to be completed BEFORE the session (except Week#1-optional extra credit). All readings other than HKP will be posted on SAKAI.

SESSION	CONTENT COVERAGE	READINGS (by shortened name)
1 (9/7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Introduction • Overview of Special Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 1 (Extra Credit advance reading before session 1 with 2-3 pages bulleted outline notes)
2 (9/14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEIA 2004 and Intersection of IDEIA 2004 and NCLB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC IDEA primer • Education Policy Brief on Impact of NCLB on Students with Disabilities (Cassandra Cole)
3 (9/21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion and Academic/ Behavioral Support for Success • Multicultural Issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapters 2-3
4 (9/28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportionality in Special Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losen & Orfield (Introduction & Chapter 1) • Justifying and Explaining Disproportionality (2010)
5 (10/5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Families • Child Well-Being • Cognitive/Intellectual Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 4 & 5 • ACNJ Child Protection Data Report 2007
6 (10/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 6 • Handbook of LD Chapter 2 • Redefining LD as Inadequate RTI
7 (10/19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to Intervention (RTI) and Evolving Views of LD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI: Definitions, Evidence, and Implications • Fuchs & Fuchs RTI Blueprint • Fuchs & Deschler: What We Need to Know About RTI (2007)

8 (10/26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADHD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 7 • Barkley Chapter 2
9 (11/2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional and Behavioral Disorders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 8 • National Perspective on Children with EBD
10 (11/9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior Management, School-wide Discipline and Violence/Disruption Prevention • Bullying Prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugai et al. Chapter 10 • How can we improve school discipline? • CPSV Fact Sheets
11 (11/16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Disorders • Deafness/Hard-of-Hearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapters 10-11 • Inclusion of Students with Hearing Loss in General Education: Fact or Fiction? • NCLB Effects on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students
12 (11/20-Monday) *holiday adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual disability/Blindness • Physical Disabilities and Other Health Impairments • WEBSITE SHEETS DUE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapters 12 & 14
13 (11/30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism and Developmental Disabilities • Low Incidence and Severe Disabilities • WHEELCHAIR ACTIVITY REPORT DUE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 9, 13 • Effective Practices for Students with Aspergers Syndrome
14 (12/7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giftedness • Transitioning Older Students • Hand out Take-Home Final 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 15 • TBD
15 (12/14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-Based Practice in Special Education • TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odom, et al., CEC DR Quality Indicators Report (2004) • Odom, et al., Research in Special Education: Scientific Methods/Evidenced Based Practice