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

15.293.525   **Psychology of the Exceptional Child**
On-line Section
(1/1/2012 Revision)

Spring, 2012   Instructor: Susan Fread Albrecht, Ed.D., NCSP
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3 credits
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, candidates can expect to:
1. Identify and describe the historical milestones, legal basis, and current issues in educational programs for students with exceptionalities;

2. Understand key controversial issues in current special education policy and practice, including LD identification, RTI, and disproportionality;

3. 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);

4. Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with moderate to severe disabilities (e.g., sensory impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, multiple handicaps);

5. Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with giftedness

6. 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;

7. Describe the differential characteristics of individual students with disabilities including level of severity and multiple exceptionalities across the lifespan;

8. Articulate the continuum of educational placements for students with exceptionalities and the benefits and drawbacks of each;

9. Identify the impact of exceptionality on the family;

10. Be familiar with agencies, professional organizations, and related Web resources for information relevant to support of special education students.

11. 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.

12. 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, announced quizzes on the readings, student-led presentation/discussions in the on-line discussion tool, a Website resource review project, a major project, and a final exam.

COURSE MATERIALS
Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C. (2012). *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education (12th Ed.)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (Referred to as **HKP** in reading assignments)

Required readings available online and as referenced

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
1. Student discussion: Students will participate in on-line discussions of the assigned readings. Unlike a traditional class where participation may be judged by attendance, in a distributed environment participation is documented by communiqués and information exchange among the class participants. The substance, function, and nature of these communiqués (e.g., relevance, clarity, and insightfulness) become indicators of a learner's conceptual and procedural growth. Quality of responses will be evaluated based on the hierarchy of thinking (i.e. Bloom's Taxonomy) expressed. A sample of this response hierarchy will be posted in the Course Documents in eCollege.

On-line discussions of the assigned readings will be facilitated by the instructor through the posting of prompts in the Discussion tool of eCollege. Students will respond to the prompts by posting at least one initial (original) response to the prompt and by responding to at least two comments by colleagues. Due dates will be posted with each set of prompts. The reflections will be graded according to the Assessment Rubric for Asynchronous Discussions posted in the Course Documents in eCollege.

2. Website review fact sheets: Students will prepare fact sheets describing pertinent websites identified by the instructor. The fact sheets will include the following information, formatted on the template provided:

1. Website name and URL address, date, name of student author;
2. Background information, including website sponsor and extent of research base reported;
3. Content: purpose, main topics, example(s) of depth of information included;
4. Format and ease of navigation; and
5. Your evaluation: Specific recommendations and cautions, usefulness.

Fact sheets are to be submitted through the eCollege and will be posted there in a shared folder. **Due: February 7.**

3. Individual project: Through this project, students will create an authentic assessment of *knowledge* (what should the professional know?), *skills* (what should the professional be able to do?) and *dispositions* (how should the professional behave?), representing the candidate's proficiencies at the end of the course. Projects will be identified between the student and the instructor to address the focus topics covered in the course: IDEA 2004 and the intersection of IDEA and NCLB, disproportionality in special education; Response to Intervention; evidence-based practice in special education; and behavior management, school-wide discipline, and violence/disruption prevention. In addition, the student will create an assessment rubric for this project using the form provided by the instructor. The "distinguished" rating will reflect satisfaction of at least once of the course objectives listed above. An example of this process and product will be provided in a tutorial module.

Authentic assessment is characterized by its application of a concept or principle to real-life situations. It is student-structured rather than a traditionally teacher-structured assessment and demonstrates the candidate's evidence of objective mastery through application in performing a task. Formats for this demonstration of mastery may include creating a lesson plan, an integrated thematic unit, classroom library, class blog, parent newsletter, tutorial module, or Podcast.

The individual project is to be submitted through the Assignment tool. **Due: April 24.**

PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR
Communication
Prompt and effective communication is essential to the learning and teaching process. The eCollege computer network will be employed in this course to:
• Discuss, evaluate, and summarize content and context of reading assignments;
• Share resources, ideas, and make suggestions; and
• Discuss and clarify class activities.

Your instructor is readily available through email most of the time. In addition, I am available during the office hours posted above for scheduled conferences through Instant Messaging or Skype and other times as needed, including weekends.

Guidelines for Email correspondence
- Use a descriptive subject heading
- Follow acceptable e-mail etiquette; and
- Be concise, write short sentences, and use bulleted lists.

Code of Ethics
Students of the university must conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism or violations of copyright policies are a form of academic dishonesty and are treated as ethics violations. The University Code of Student Conduct covers student rights and responsibilities, student complaint procedures, student misconduct, student disciplinary procedures, and other related information.

The Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct can be accessed at:
http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-conduct

For information on the Rutgers University academic integrity policy, please go to:
http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity

Related policies and procedures may also be found in the Rutgers Graduate School of Education Catalog:
http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/gse_current/pg32.html

For any and all assignments and class activities, including quizzes, tests, papers, projects, PowerPoints, and any other class related work, **no copying of any kind is allowed**, unless copied text is placed within quotations and the 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 as candidates 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 the course.

Quizzes and tests are open-note, open-book, and open-resource. Again, sources of information must be cited in any essay-type responses. Students are strongly encouraged to form study groups and email your instructor about parts of the readings for which you have questions.

Equity and Inclusion
All written, graphic, and aural communications must conform to guidelines for non-sexist and non-racist language. Consult the most recent edition of a professional style guide for specific guidelines such as the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Ed.).

As current and future teaching and allied field professionals, students are expected to present themselves and act in the asynchronous learning environment 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 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** a disability.

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 but will not be supportive of last minute requests for extensions on project due dates.

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. Discussion: 30 points
2. Website review fact sheets: 30 points
3. Individual project: 40 points
4. Quizzes (10 @ 10 points): 100 points
5. Final exam: 85 points
6. Final reflections: 15 points

Course Grades: (out of 300 possible points)

GRADE	PERCENT	POINTS
A	93.00 – 100.0 %	Point totals will be converted to percentages.
B+	87.00 – 92.99 %	
B	81.00 – 86.99 %	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.
C+	77.00 – 80.99 %	
C	70.00 – 76.99 %	
F	Under 70 %	

ASSIGNMENT/GRADING REQUIREMENTS: ADDITIONAL DETAILS
Quizzes will be announced periodically and will be completed by candidates during a specified time period. Quizzes and the open window for taking them will be announced in advance.

Midterm exam and Final exam: Students are responsible for all material covered for the final exam. The exam will contain three sections:
(1) Test of Specific Knowledge (approx. 25 T-F and/or Multiple Choice items),
(2) Framing Issues (one short essay response: 2 pages), and

(3) Applying and Extending Knowledge to Problem-Solving: Given school-based scenarios, candidates will describe possible answers/solutions and discuss key issues (one longer essay response: 3 pages).

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS AND CONTENT COVERAGE
Students are expected to keep pace with the posted schedule of readings, discussions, and assignments. Tuesday is considered the first day of the week for this course.

All Readings other than HKP are posted in eCollege.

Session	Date	Topic	Activity
1	1/17 – 1/23	Overview of course and requirements Overview of special education Evidence-based practices	• HKP Chapter 1 (Extra Credit advance reading before session 1 with 4-5 pages bulleted outline notes, single spaced) • Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence (2003). Treasure Hunt assignment: answer questions from content of website.
2	1/24 – 1/30	**FOCUS TOPIC:** IDEA 2004 and the intersection of IDEA and NCLB	• Yell Chapters 5 (IDEA) and 8 (NCLB) • Education Policy Brief on Impact of NCLB on Students with Disabilities (C. Cole, 2006)
3	1/31 – 2/6	Inclusion and support for success Multicultural issues	• HKP Chapters 2-3
4	2/7 – 2/13	**FOCUS TOPIC:** Disproportionality in special education	• HKP pages 59-60 • Artiles et al. article on over-identification (2002) • Justifying and Explaining Disproportionality (2010) • Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice (Losen, 2011) **Website review fact sheets due**
5	2/14 – 2/20	Working with families Child well-being	• HKP Chapter 4 • A.E. Casey Foundation report • Child Welfare League of America data tables
6	2/21 – 2/27	Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities	• HKP Chapter 5 • Students with Disabilities as Citizens in the Classroom (Kliewer, 1998)
7	2/28 – 3/5	Learning Disabilities	• HKP Chapter 6 • Handbook of LD, Chapter 2 • Rethinking LD, Chapter 12
8	3/6 – 3/12	**FOCUS TOPIC:** Response to Intervention and evolving	• RTI: Definition, evidence, and implications • Fuchs and Fuchs: RTI blueprint

		views of LD	• RTI NJCLD Report, June 2005 • Fuchs et al.: Blurring of Special Education (2010) • Smart RTI (Fuchs et al., 2011)
	3/13 – 3/19	No class – spring break	
9	3/20 – 3/26	ADHD	• HKP Chapter 7 • Pfiffner, Barkley, and DuPaul, Chapter 15 • 80+ Classroom Accommodations for ADHD
10	3/27 – 4/2	Emotional Behavioral Disorders	• HKP Chapter 8 • Handbook of Research in EBD, Chapter 3 • A National Perspective of Children with EBD (Bradley et al., 2004)
11	4/3 – 4/9	**FOCUS TOPIC:** Behavior management, school-wide discipline, and violence/disruption prevention	• How Can We Improve School Discipline? (Osher and Sprague, 2010) • Overview of bullying and related issues • CTPSV Fact Sheets (www.preventschoolviolence.org)
12	4/10 – 4/16	Communication Disorders Deafness/Hard-of-hearing	• HKP Chapters 10-11 • NCLB Effects on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students (AERA, 2007)
13	4/17 – 4/23	Autism and Developmental Disabilities Low Incidence and Severe Disabilities	• HKP Chapters 9 and 13 • Problem behavior interventions for children with autism: research synthesis • Effective practices for students with Asperger's Syndrome
14	4/24 – 4/30	Visual Disability/Blindness Physical Disabilities and Other Health Impairments Giftedness	• HKP Chapters 12, 14-15 **Individual Project due**
15	5/1	**Final Exam available**	
	5/8	**Final Exam due**	