

**Rutgers University**  
**Department of Educational Psychology**

**15.293.522 Section 2    Spring 2013**

**Learning Disabilities**

<b>Class Meets:</b>	Monday 4.50 to 7.30 p.m. HH B6
<b>Course Instructor:</b>	Professor Angela O'Donnell
<b>Office Location:</b>	Room 325, Graduate School of Education
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesday, Thursday 1-2 p.m. or by appointment.
<b>Contact Me:</b>	
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**Required Texts:**

Swanson, H. L., Harris, K. H., & Graham, S. (2013). *Handbook of learning disabilities (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)*. New York: Guilford Press. (available from the Barnes and Nobles bookstore on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> February)

Other readings available on the Sakai website at <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an overview of the field of learning disabilities (LD). The focus of the course is on causes, characteristics, assessment, and instructional needs of students with LD. Topical coverage addresses cognitive characteristics that distinguish students with LD in areas of attention, memory, and organization, and the academic needs of students in writing, reading, and math, and social competence. The needs of students with LD across the continuum of educational placements will be examined. Ongoing developments in the field with changing conceptualizations of LD and alternative identification methods to IQ-achievement discrepancy (e.g., RTI) will be covered in depth.

**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 learning disabilities;
- Understand the current educational definition of individuals with LD, including identification criteria, labeling issues, and current incidence;
- Understand the psychological characteristics of students with LD across the lifespan, including intelligence, perception, memory, metacognition, attention, and language development;
- Understand the academic characteristics of individuals with LD in reading, written language, and mathematics;
- Understand the social-emotional characteristics of individuals with LD, including emotional self-awareness and self-regulation, self-concept, social imperceptiveness, and learned helplessness;
- Identify and describe basic research supported instructional strategies and practices for teaching individuals with LD;
- Identify relevant professional organizations, governmental agencies, and advocacy groups relevant to providing services and supports to individuals with LD, as well as related journals and Web-based resources.

## Class Format

The primary method of instruction in this course will be the use of lectures and class discussions, supplemented by small group activities and the use of videos, web resources etc.

## Overview of Course Activities

The course includes extensive readings, two quizzes (open book, open notes), student led (group) presentations on the readings, Website resource reviews and a field observation project .

<i>Required Activities</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Points Available/% Grade</i>
Participation	weekly	10%
Group presentation related to the readings	TBA	20%
In class quizzes	11 March 22 April	30%'
Field observation project	6 May	30%
Website reviews	25 March	10%

## Policies

**Academic Integrity:** I expect that you will comply with standards of academic integrity (that is, you will not even think about cheating) in this course. If you need assistance in understanding an assignment or course content, please seek assistance from other appropriate resources or me. Assignments, however, should be your own work, except in cases where I have required a group product. The consequence for violating policies of academic integrity and other elements of the student code of conduct are serious and can have a tremendous negative impact on your academic progress and future career. You should not turn in the same work in two separate classes without the specific written approval of the faculty members involved. Leaving work until the last minute can increase the temptation to plagiarize work from journals or “borrow” friends’ work. You can avoid problems by getting your work done early. Exams are also your own work. The Office of Student Conduct supervises issues related to violations of academic integrity (see (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>)). Please familiarize yourself with the university policy on academic integrity (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity>). Also see the PowerPoint slides on plagiarism on the course sakai website.

**Make Up Exams:** Make-up exams will NOT be scheduled unless you miss an exam because of religious observance or because of a properly documented illness. Proper documentation means that you provide a doctor's note that states you were unable to attend class on the specific day of the exam.

**Attendance:** Attendance at all regularly scheduled classes is required in accordance with the university’s attendance policy. Excused absences include absences due to religious observance (please let me know *before* the holiday), travel on university business (e.g., sports team), and properly documented illnesses. Students who were frequently absent last semester did not do as well in the courses as those who were regularly in attendance. Attendance will be monitored by in-class assignments that students will turn in and these will also function as a record of attendance.

**Missed Classes:** It is your responsibility to get notes, including handouts, from another student if you miss class. If you miss class when exams are returned, you will need to come to office hours to look at your exam.

**Grading Policy:** Grades are assigned based on a points system described previously.

**Policy on Late Assignments:** Assignments must be submitted on time. Late assignments will be accepted but the grade will be reduced.

**Classroom Culture:** Please turn all cell phones to **SILENT** during class. Please refrain from sending text messages during class. If you bring a laptop to class, I expect that you will use it for the purposes of the class **ONLY**. In other words, please do not use your laptop to surf the web or check email.. I expect that all of us (instructor included) will treat one another with respect and have a pleasant learning environment (I cannot make promises about the heating/cooling issues!!).

**Problems?**

*Personal problems.* A variety of resources are available at the university to assist you with personal difficulties (e.g., stress, anxiety, bereavement, etc). Each campus has a counseling center and these services are free to you as a student. Please seek assistance as early as you can so you can maintain a good academic performance.

*Academic problems.* If you are having difficulties with this course, you should seek assistance from me during office hours or by making an appointment with me. e.

### 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.

### ASSIGNMENT/GRADING REQUIREMENTS: ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- 1. Participation:** Students are expected to come to class having completed all assigned readings for that week and to participate in class discussions. One way to prepare for class is to come up with three questions you have about the material.
- 2. Quizzes:** The course includes two quizzes. The quizzes will sample knowledge of key points and issues in the readings and be able to apply this knowledge.

**Students are strongly encouraged to form study groups and email Dr. O'Donnell about parts of the readings for which they have questions.**

- 3. Group Presentation** Because of the number of individuals in the class, there will be presentations by groups of students rather than individual students. Groups will be organized based on friendships, common commutes or other variables students see as appropriate.
- 4. LD Class Observation:** Each student will spend a **minimum of 6 hours of total** observational time across a minimum of **4 separate visits** in an inclusion class, resource room, or self-contained special education room addressing the needs of several students with LD. The **target students for the observation must be formally classified as having a learning disability**. The observations must be with the same special education teacher. The graduate student will interview the special education teacher and will also collect samples of teaching and assessment materials. The student will write a paper that examines how the needs of students with LD are being served, based on the observations, interview, and document review. A project rubric with greater detail on the assignment and the required report format will be distributed and discussed at class session # 4. **The project is due at class session #14.** Sample projects are available for viewing in Dr. O'Donnell's office. You are encouraged to set up an appointment to do so. Students needing help securing school placements should contact Dr. O'Donnell. You will need to drop off your projects at Dr. O'Donnell's office rather than in class due to the number of students in the class and Dr. O'Donnell's inability to carry all projects to her office.
- 5. Website Review Sheets:** Students will review selected LD and related special education resource Websites (5), filling out a review sheet on each Website (review sheets provided by Dr, O'Donnell at class # 4). Students will complete the review sheets individually and **turn them in at class session #8** .Students are encouraged to begin these reviews early in the semester.

**SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS AND CONTENT COVERAGE**

<b>SESSION #</b>	<b>CONTENT COVERAGE</b>	<b>READINGS (by informal, shortened name)</b>
<b>1 Jan 28</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course Introduction/ Overview of LD (extra credit for advance reading with bulleted outline notes submitted at class session #1)</li> </ul>	Mercer and Pullen Chapter 11 Handbook of LD- Chapter 2: A brief history of the field of learning disabilities
<b>2 Feb 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical aspects of LD</li> </ul>	Handbook of Neurodevelopmental and Genetic Disorders in Children-Chapter 6 Mercer and Pullen Chapter 2 Handbook of LD-Chapter 16: Behavioral Genetics, Learning Abilities, and Disabilities
<b>3 Feb 11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Identification and Intervention</li> <li>Assessment</li> </ul>	<b>M&amp;P</b> Chapter 13 & 4
<b>4 Feb 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges to Traditional Views RTI and Evolving Views of LD</li> </ul>	Rethinking LD-Chapter 12 <i>Redefining LD as Inadequate RTI</i> (2003) <i>RTI: Definitions, Evidence, and Implications</i> (2003) Fuchs & Fuchs RTI Blueprint (2004) RTI NJCLD June 2005 Report Fuchs & Deschler: What We Need to Know About RTI (2007) Fuchs et al: Blurring of Special Education (2010)
<b>5 Feb 25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Families</li> <li>Adolescents with LD</li> <li>Transition Programming</li> </ul>	Mercer and Pullen Chapters 12 and 14 Transition: Why it does not work (2010) Handbook of LD Chapter 20: Reading Comprehension for Adolescents with Significant Reading Problems
<b>6 Mar 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social-Emotional-Behavioral Issues</li> </ul>	Handbook of LD-Chapter 15: Social Cognition of Children and Adolescents with LD: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Perspectives Social-Emotional Learning and LD
<b>7 Mar 11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADHD</li> </ul> <p><b>QUIZ # 1</b></p>	Barkley Chapter 2 Pffifner, Barkley, & DuPaul, Chapter 15 Rethinking ADHD and LD in DSM-5: Proposed Changes in Diagnostic Criteria
<b>Mar 18</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>8 Mar 25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theory &amp; Practice Addressing LD</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b>WEBSITE REVIEWS DUE</b></p>	Handbook of LD Chapter 26: Direct Instruction as Eo nomine and Conronym: Why the Right Words and the Details Matter Handbook of LD Chapter 27: Cooperative Learning for Students with Learning Disabilities: Advice and Caution Derived from the Evidence Handbook of LD Chapter 28: Data-Based Individualization as a Means of Providing Intensive Instruction to Students with Serious Learning Disorders
<b>9 Apr 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spoken Language</li> </ul>	Child and Adolescent Development for Educators Chapter 7 (Language Development) Early Language Development and Language Learning Disabilities Handbook of LD Chapter 14: Language Processes: Characterization and Prevention of Language-Learning Disabilities Handbook of LD Chapter 5: Linguistically Diverse Students' Reading Difficulties: Implications for Models of LD Identification and Effective Instruction
<b>10 Apr 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Memory Issues with LD</li> </ul>	Handbook of LD-Chapter 12 ) Memory difficulties in children and adults with learning disabilities Handbook of Educational Psychology Chapter 12 Handbook of LD-Chapter 17 : Diagnosing and Treating Specific Learning Disabilities in Reference to the Brain's Working Memory System

<b>11 Apr 15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> </ul>	Handbook of LD Chapter 10: Rapid Automatized Naming and Reading: A Review Handbook of LD Chapter 11: Basic Cognitive Processes and Reading Disabilities Handbook of LD Chapter 18: Word Identification Difficulties in Children and Adolescents with Reading Disabilities: Intervention Research Findings
<b>12 Apr 22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing</li> </ul> <b>QUIZ # 2</b>	Handbook of LD Chapter 23: Classroom Spelling Interventions for Students with Learning Disabilities Want to Improve Children’s Writing? Effective Writing Instruction Across the Grades Self-Regulated Strategy Development-Writing Instruction for Students with Disabilities
<b>13 Apr 29</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathematics</li> </ul> (this class will be held online during the week)	Handbook of LD Chapter 13: Learning Disabilities in Mathematics: Recent Advances Handbook of LD Chapter 21: Instructional Intervention for Students with Mathematics Learning Disabilities Balancing Perspectives on Mathematics Instruction
<b>14 May 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to the general education curriculum</li> </ul>	Handbook of LD Chapter 30: Technology Applications for Improving Literacy: A Review of Research Strategies to Improve Access to the General Education Curriculum Universal Design for Learning –Delaware SKIM Checkpoints 1.1 to 9.3 (EXPLORE 1 link from each of 9 sections) <a href="http://www.udlcenter.org/implementation/examples">http://www.udlcenter.org/implementation/examples</a>