

**Introduction to Special Education**  
**05:300:383:02**

**Instructor:** Dr. Dake Zhang  
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**Class Meeting:** Dates: Tuesdays and Thursdays,  
Location: Scott Hall Rm. 116  
Time: 1:10 – 2:30  
Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays: by appointment

**Text:** Smith, D.D. & Tyler, N.C. (2010) *Introduction to special education: Making a difference*, Pearson - Prentice Hall (ISBN-13: 978-0-205-60056-4; ISBN-10: 0-205-60056-5)

Additional required readings available online at **SAKAI:** <https://sakai.rutgers.edu>

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on the foundations of special education. The purpose of the course is to: 1) examine historical background information related to the field of special education (legislation and litigation); 2) review components necessary for effective collaboration and consultation with parents, school personnel and other professionals, and related multicultural issues/perspectives; 3) examine the nature and characteristics of various disabilities; and 4) discuss services and programs to help meet the educational, social, and/or personal goals for students with disabilities. These goals are achieved via the use of case studies, large and small group class discussions, chapter readings, class assessments, and related activities.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Examine the historical trends in special education, as well as related litigation and legislation;
2. Review current terminology and issues in the field of special education, including inclusion practices, as well as family and multicultural issues;
3. Examine the diagnosis, identification, and characteristics of various disabilities;
4. Review service delivery options for students with disabilities and their families; and
5. Discuss general methods and strategies for meeting the social and educational needs of students with various disabilities.

## **Policies**

### **How You Earn Your Grade:**

Evaluation of your performance in this course is based on the percentage of total points that you earn in the course. Course assignments have been assigned a point value and the total number of points will be used to calculate the final grade. Late assignments will only be accepted with the permission of the instructor and will lose points for each day they are late. Included in the class participation component is the score received on group assignments completed in class. Group work is based on assigned readings; as a result, it is important that students keep up-to-date on their reading in order to be good group members.

### **Course Requirements:**

Number grades will be converted to letter grades as follows:

90 – 100%	= A
87-89%	= B+
80-86%	= B
77-79%	= C+
70-76%	= C
60-69%	= D
59% and below	= F

- If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act and are eligible for academic accommodations or modifications, please notify me immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs. For additional assistance, please contact the New Brunswick Campus Coordinator at (732) 932-1711.

### **Assignment Submission Policy:**

- Additional assignments will be given out at the beginning of class. If late to class, students will be responsible for checking with other students.
- Late assignments are accepted only at the discretion of the instructor. If you are absent the day an assignment is due, you must email the assignment to the instructor or the assignment will be counted as late and points will be deducted.
- Students should review and be familiar with the Policy on Academic Integrity. Violations of academic integrity will be handled according to the procedures and guidelines outlined in the catalog and could result in course failure and/or expulsion. Plagiarism, handing in someone else's work, work obtained on the internet without documenting the source, or work written for another professor's course are all reasons for failure of this course and dismissal from this university.
- All assignments should be typed, double spaced, and neat. *Edit your work before handing it in*, as attention to grammar, spelling, and organization count. Please use 12-point font in a traditional/professional font (e.g., Times New Roman). All assignments must be completed using APA Format (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). In particular,

- references should be noted in the body of your work, as well as on a separate reference page. Better than satisfactory writing skills are expected.
- Papers will be graded within 14 days of their due date.

## **Professional Demeanor**

As 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*. Because *normal* has multiple meanings and may inappropriately imply abnormal where it is not applied, this word should not be used. Instead, more operationally descriptive terms such as “intellectually average students”, “typically developing students”, or “students without learning disabilities” should be used. See the APA Manual for more information on person-first terminology.

## **Assignments:**

### **I. Exams – 40 points each**

There will be two exams involving multiple choice, short-answer questions, and/or essay questions. Exam items will include information from class lectures, activities, and reading assignments/handouts. For example, exam items may come directly from the chapter readings or guest presentations which may or may not be addressed in class lectures. **Thus, it will be essential to attend class, complete homework, and to read the assigned chapters and related handouts.**

### **II. Papers – 40 points for Paper I and 40 points for Paper II**

#### **Paper I:**

**Option 1:** Read and respond, in no more than seven total pages, to three journal articles that focus on instructional strategies for students with disabilities. Some journals to explore are:

- *Teaching Exceptional Children*
- *Intervention in School and Clinic*
- *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*
- *Reading Teacher*

**Option 2:** Movie Project

Select and watch a movie from a list provided in Saikai, reflect on the figure(s) with special needs in the movie story. Answer four reflection questions in the rubric we provided.

**Paper II:**

**Option 1.** Students will complete a research paper on a chosen topic in the field of special education. The paper should adhere to the following guidelines:

- At least 10 pages in length
- Follow APA format, including reference list
- Use at least five sources

Possible topics include:

- Inclusion
- Co-teaching
- Working with paraprofessionals
- Working with parents
- Specific instructional strategies for students with disabilities (such as learning disabilities, autism, emotional and behavioral disabilities, etc.)
- Reauthorization of IDEA
- NCLB and its impact on special education
- Discipline policies for students with disabilities
- Classroom management strategies
- Behavior modification
- Task analysis

**Option 2: Family Interview Project**

For your final project, interview a parent of a child with a disability or a family member who has a sibling or relative with a disability. I hope access to an individual and their family member will not be difficult. 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.

When you have concluded this meeting, write up the experience in a paper that should be six-eight pages (single space, 12 font) in length. The paper should give an overview of who you interviewed, why, and the circumstances in how you collected the information. It should also review the questions outlined and the feedback you received. The conclusion of the paper should specifically discuss several collaboration questions; what you learned as an individual, and how this will help you as a future educator.

#### **IV. Presentation - 50 points**

Each student will give two presentations and lead the class discussion at least once during the semester. One presentation will involve explaining and leading discussions on a disability topic listed in the syllabus. The other presentation will be of an empirical article the student selects about an evidence-based intervention for a disability type. Please give the article to the instructor one week prior to your presentation. I will make these available for your peers via Sakai.

Presentation 1 and 2 are suggested to be done at the same time pertinent to the topic of the class. This assignment will be completed in small groups (about 3 people per group) and will include two presentations/demonstrations (*25 minutes for the first presentation and 15 minutes for the second presentation*) with *a one page handout for each of the presentations for each class member*. You will sign up for a topic the first week of class and presentations will start the third week of class.

#### **Class Attendance/Participation – 30 bonus points**

Because of the importance and the nature of this course, attendance is essential and daily attendance will be recorded – you are responsible for making sure that you sign the attendance sheet at each class meeting (start from the second class). As adult learners you are expected to be responsible for your own learning. Therefore, absence from class will not be recorded as “excused” or “unexcused”- students do not need to bring in notes from the health center or other sources. Those students who miss 2 or fewer classes over the course of the semester will be rewarded with 30 bonus points, which may result in a better grade improvement for the overall course.

#### **Class Cancellation**

You will receive an e-mail from me if class is cancelled. If class is cancelled due to inclement weather, students should check SAKAI for replacement assignments.

#### **Grading Scale**

1. Presentations (50 points)
2. Paper I (30 points)
3. Paper II (50 points)
4. Exam I (40 points)
5. Exam II (40 points)

**Total possible points: 210 points**

## Class Schedule\*\*

<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Assignment(s)</u>
Week 1 (Jan 21, 23)	What is special education and inclusion, the history & laws of special education, the structure of support services in New Jersey	Chapter 1
Week 2 (Jan 28,30)	How are students identified for special education, the IEP process, characteristics and interventions used with specific disabilities	Chapter 2
Week 3 (Feb 4, 6)	Inclusion of students with disabilities <b>(Presentation Starts)</b>	Additional rdg
Week 4 (Feb 11, 13)	Cultural & Linguistic Diversity and ELL	Chapter 3
Week 5 (Feb 18, 20)	Speech & Language Impairments	Chapter 4
Week 6 (Feb 25, 27)	Learning Disabilities	Chapter 5
Week 7 (Mar 4, 6)	ADHD <b>Paper I due (Oct 17)</b>	Chapter 6
Week 8 (Mar 11, 13)	Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities <b>Exam I – Chapters 1-7 (Oct 24)</b>	Chapter 7
Week 9 (Mar 18, 20)	Spring Break	Chapter 8
Week 10 (Mar 25, 27)	Intellectual Disabilities	
Week 11	Physical or Health Disabilities,	Chapter 10

(April 1, 3)      April 3<sup>rd</sup> AERA meeting

Week 12      Deafness & Hard of Hearing      Chapter 11  
(April 8, 10)

April 10<sup>th</sup> CEC conference

Week 13      Low Vision & Blindness;  
Low Incidence Disabilities

Chapter 12

(April 15, 17)

Week 14      Autism Spectrum Disorders

Chapter 13

(April 22, 24)

Week 15      Class Wrap-up  
(April 29, 31)      Exam II (chapter 8-13)

**Final      Paper II due**  
(May 13)

**\*\* Schedule is subject to change**