Summer 2015
Learning Disabilities
15:293:522 (Section H1)
3 Credits
Online

Instructor Name: Jigisha Vyas	Email address: jigisha.vyas@rutgers.edu
Mode of Instruction: _X_ Online	Permission required: _X_ No, if you need an SPN contact Marie Pavelchak at 848-932-0814 or marie.pavelchak@gse.rutgers.edu

Learning goals:
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 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.

Course catalog description:
This advanced level graduate 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, 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.

Class materials/ Textbooks:
▪ Mercer & Pullen (2009). *Students with Learning Disabilities* (7th edition). Merrill. ISBN 0132228424 **(The text is referred to as M&P in the readings assignments section)**
▪ Swanson, Harris, & Graham (2013). *Handbook of Learning Disabilities* (2nd Edition). ISBN 1-4625-0849-9 Guilford Press.
▪ Other required readings available online in the eCollege course site.

Grading policy:
1. Class discussion participation (@ 4 points per class x 12 sessions = 48 points).
2. Quizzes (11 quizzes at 10 points each = 110 points)
3. Student-produced study guide (20 points)
4. Website Review Sheets (24 points)
5. LD Teacher Manual Project (100 points)
6. Take-home final exam (30 points)
Course Grades: (out of 332 possible points)

Assignments:
1. Participation: Students are required to participate in online class discussions. For each session, the instructor will post 1-3 discussion prompts. For each discussion prompt, each student is required to post an original contribution (about 4-6 sentences), and also at least one reply to another student's original posting or student's response to another student's original posting (also about 4-6 sentences). Students' will be graded on the thoughtfulness, originality, connections with the readings in the original post, and overall quality of their postings/replies to others. Students must post all of their comments for that session by 10pm ET on the night it is due. **Students are required to read all student postings.**

EXAMPLE DISCUSSION PROMPT: *Discuss what you see as potential promises and pitfalls associated with RTI.*

EXAMPLE high-quality posting: I believe that RTI is not a panacea, but rather, an unproven approach to LD identification and prevention of early reading problems that may hold promise. Using early screening and intervention for emerging reading problems, avoiding a "wait-to-fail" approach, RTI can help change the learning trajectory for many early elementary students for the better. But to do this well would require a massive commitment of financial and human resources, professional development, staff buy-in, and administrative leadership in the schools. And the question remains, once a student receives remediation through multiple RTI tiers, and is subsequently referred, evaluated, and classified as having a learning disability, what types and intensities of academic services will they receive, compared to those in the RTI tiers to which they were not fully responsive? We also need to consider the new roles for both general and special education teachers under an RTI approach and the data management systems necessary to help make it all work well.
EXAMPLE low-quality posting: I like what Robert said about RTI and I agree with most of his points. His response was very thoughtful. I mean, you can't expect schools

and teachers to solve all of the world's problems—there really are limits. And what about the parents? What are their responsibilities to help kids learn to read early on? Everybody needs to work together under an RTI model to help kids succeed.

2. Quizzes: The course includes 11 brief quizzes (sessions 1-11) based on the assigned readings. The quizzes are designed to help students engage in structured review of critical content from each session's assigned 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*, but students are not allowed to use the Internet and they are not allowed to consult with other people regarding the quiz questions. Any questions regarding the quizzes must be directed to the course instructor.

3. Student-produced Study Guide. Beginning at session #2, 1-2 students per session will each post a 5-6 page, single spaced, outline form, bulleted study guide for a particular reading from that session. Each student will be assigned a different reading. The student-produced study guide will be posted on the class eCollege site, available to all students enrolled in the course. A grading rubric will be posted on the site as well as an exemplar completed study guide assignment. **The guide is due on the 1st day of the session.** See the schedule posted on the eCollege site.

4. LD Class Teacher Manual Project: The project involves designing, writing, and publishing (in print and electronic form--WORD) a comprehensive teachers manual for teachers working with students with LD. This handbook will be geared to teachers, and should bridge relevant research to practice. Within this training manual, students will consider potential barriers, and identify solution paths for teachers struggling to meet the needs of a variety of students with LD. The manual will serve as a guide for teachers, and will include information across a variety of domains. Keep in mind that the content of the manual must link research to practice within each of these domains. All recommendations and suggestions must be supported by research. **Students must write the manual using their own language.** The finished training manual should be approximately 20-25 pages in length (1" margins, **double-**spaced, 12-point Times Roman font, block paragraph format). The cover, preface, and Table of Contents are not part of the total page count. A project rubric with greater detail on the assignment and the required report format will be posted online on the class ECollege site. **The project is due by the end of class session #11.**

5. Website Review Sheets: Students will review selected LD and related special education resource Websites, filling out a review sheet on each Website (review sheets posted on the course eCollege site). Students will complete the review sheets individually throughout the semester and **turn them in by the end of class session #10**.

 6. Final Exam: The final exam will contain two sections: (1) **Test of Specific Knowledge** (15 T-F/Multiple Choice), (2) **Framing Issues** (One short essay response: 2 pages).

Academic Integrity Policy:

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 at
http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_2013.pdf

Office of Disability Services:

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

Course Schedule:

SESSION #	CONTENT COVERAGE	READINGS (by informal, shortened name)
1 **(5/26-5/29)** **Assignments due 5/29**	• Course Introduction • Overview of Learning Disabilities • Overview of LD (continued) • Medical Aspects of Learning Disabilities **(HEAVY READING LOAD – START THIS SESSION'S READING IN ADVANCE)**	• Mercer & Pullen - Chapter 1 • Mercer & Pullen - Chapter 2 • Handbook of Neurodevelopmental and Genetic Disorders in Children-Chapter 6 • Swanson, Harris & Graham (2013) - Chapter 8 (Classification, Definition, and Identification – pp. 123-124; Neurobiology Research on LD & Genetics of LD – pp. 132-136) (Skim past anatomical and more technical terms; read for basic meaning & main findings) • Swanson, Harris & Graham (2013) - Chapter 34 (Skim past anatomical and more technical terms; read for basic meaning & main findings)
2 **(5/30-6/1)** **Assignments due 6/1**	• Early Identification and Intervention • Assessment	• **M&P** Chapter 13 & 4 • LD Assessment-Speece & Hines (2007)
3 **(6/2-6/4)** **Assignments due 6/4**	• Challenges to Traditional Views • RTI and Evolving Views of LD	• *RTI*: Definitions, Evidence, and Implications… (2003) • Fuchs & Fuchs RTI Blueprint (2004) • Fuchs & Deschler: What We Need to Know

		About RTI • (Fuchs) Smart RTI Swanson, Harris & Graham (2013) - Chapter 8 (Response to Intervention – pp. 130-132)
4 **(6/5-6/7)** **Assignments due 6/7**	• Working with Families • Adolescents with LD • Transition Programming	• **M&P** Chapters 12 & 14 • Transition: Why it does not work (2010)
5 **(6/8-6/10)** **Assignments due 6/10**	• Social-Emotional-Behavioral Issues	• **M&P** Chapter 11 • Handbook of LD-Chapter 15: Social Cognition of Children and Adolescents with LD: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Perspectives • Social-Emotional Learning and LD (Elias, 2004) • Social-Emotional Side of LD (Bryan, Burstein, & Ergul 2004)
6 **(6/11-6/13)** **Assignments due 6/13**	• ADHD	• **M&P** Chapter 3 • ADHD-Pfiffner, Barkley, & DuPaul, Chapter 15 • OSEP ADHD Guide
7 **(6/14-6/16)** **Assignments due 6/16**	• Theory & Practice Addressing LD • Educational Settings & Services • Instructional Models	• **M&P** Chapters 5 & 6
8 **(6/17-6/19)** **Assignments due 6/19**	• Spoken Language	• **M&P** Chapter 7 • Child and Adolescent Development for Educators Chapter 7 (Language Development) (Pressley & McCormick, 2007)
9 **(6/20-6/22)** **Assignments due 6/22**	• Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Memory Issues with LD	• Handbook of LD Chapter 12 (Memory Difficulties in Children and Adults with LD) **(skim)** • Handbook of LD Chapter 17 (Diagnosing and Treating Specific LD in Reference to the Brain's Working Memory System) • Metacognition and LD • Handbook of Educational Psychology Chapter 12
10 **(6/23-6/25)** **Assignments due 6/25**	• Reading	• **M&P** Chapter 8 • Handbook of LD Chapter 10 (RAN) • Handbook of LD Chapter 11 (Cognitive Processes and Reading) • Handbook of LD Chapter 18 (Word Identification)
11	• Writing	• **M&P** Chapter 9 & 10

(6/26-6/28) **Assignments** **due 6/28**	• Math	• Handbook of LD Chapter 21 (1st Ed. Swanson, Harris, & Graham) (Handwriting/Spelling) **(in Doc Sharing)** • Swanson, Harris, & Graham (2013) – Chapter 22 (Writing of Students with LD – SRSD) pp. 405-411 • Handbook of LD Chapter 21 (Instructional Intervention for Students with MLD)
12 **(6/29-7/1)** **Assignments** **due 7/1**	• Access to the General Education Curriculum	• 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 Guideline sections) http://www.udlcenter.org/implementation/examples