

I. PSY 324 - PSYCHOLOGY OF EXCEPTIONALITY

II. 3 Academic Credits

III. Course Description

A survey course designed to develop an understanding and appreciation for children who have special needs. Learning disabilities, physical and behavioral difficulties, and adaptive needs of children labeled mentally retarded, visually or hearing impaired and gifted are studied. Students will investigate all areas of exceptionality and demonstrate knowledge of the sociological and psychological implications of teaching students with special education needs. (Prerequisite: Sophomore standing; Education: EDPS 210; Psychology: PSY 101)

IV. Place of Course in Curriculum

This is a required course for all education majors and psychology majors.

V. Course Goals and Objectives

Goal:

This course is designed to provide understanding of the nature and needs of individuals considered to be exceptional learners. The goal of the course is demonstrated awareness, knowledge, and acceptance of diverse and exceptional people. (LD8)

Objectives:

1. Identify the historical and legal antecedents of education for exceptional children. (LD1)
2. Explain the basic requirements of federal and state laws regarding the education of exceptional students. (LR7)
3. Describe educational characteristics, needs, and placement alternatives for each category of exceptionality. (LR7)
4. Identify and assess the educational needs of exceptional students who are likely to be placed in the regular classroom. (T3)
5. Develop and implement strategies to help your other students exhibit positive attitudes toward their exceptional classmates. (T5, LD7)
6. Participate in writing an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) for exceptional students. (T9, LD1)
7. Spend time with and communicate with exceptional persons. (LD2, LD8, LR4)
8. Communicate with families of exceptional people. (LD2, LD8, LR4)
9. Communicate with professional colleagues and other school personnel who work with exceptional students. (LD2-LD5)

VI. Content and Methodology

Content:

1. Disabilities and Special Education
History of Disabilities, Special Education Defined, Inclusion, Legal Protection
2. Individualized Special Education Programs
Access to General Education, Individualized Services, the IEP, Evaluation of Programs
3. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity
History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships
4. Speech or Language Impairments
History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships
5. Learning Disabilities
History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships
6. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships
7. Emotional or Behavioral Disorders
History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships
8. Mental Retardation
History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships
9. Physical or Health Disabilities
History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships
10. Deaf and Hard of Hearing
History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships
11. Low Vision and Blindness
History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships
12. Autistim Spectrum Disorders

History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships

13. Very Low Incidence Disabilities

History, Multiple-severe disabilities, Deaf-blindness, Traumatic Brain Injury, Educational Considerations

14. Giftedness and Talent Development

History, Definition, Characteristics, Prevalence, Causes and Prevention, Early Intervention, Assessment, Transition, Collaboration, Family Partnerships

Methods:

Lecture and demonstration (T8)

Large and small group discussions (LD2, LD6)

Student presentations (LD2)

Individual log (LR2)

Simulation (LD8, LR7)

Practicum (T8)

Literature reviews (T5)

Guest speakers (T5)

Media, including videos (T5)

Class Assignments (LD5)

VII. Course Requirements

1. Attendance:

Attendance is required for every class session. Notify the instructor in advance if you must miss a class. Missing more than one night class, or more than 2 day classes, may significantly affect your grade for the course, as determined by the instructor. (LD1)

2. Academic Integrity:

You are expected to turn in original work on each assignment. Work that is not your own will be given no credit. (LD1)

3. Readings:

You are expected to complete all readings prior to class so that you will be able to participate in a meaningful manner. (LD1, LD2)

4. Participation:

You are expected to participate in class activities, contribute to discussions, and work cooperatively with the instructor and peers. (LD5)

5. Practicum Experience:

You will complete 12 clock hours of practicum experience with exceptional students. You may keep a written log of activities and observations during this experience, dating and recording the amount of time spent that day. Or you may choose to write a 2

page summary of the experience once you are done. Your cooperating teacher will evaluate you on the form that you must provide. Return the log/paper to Prof. Geidel and the evaluation & hours log to Lynda Parde as soon as the experience is completed. (LR2)

6. Scholarly Paper (Graduate only - 514):

You will select a topic of interest to you that relates to the subject matter of this course. Run your chosen topic by the instructor prior to beginning your research. Complete an in-depth study of the topic using professional journals and texts no more than ten years old. The paper should be 5-10 pages in length and research based. Be sure to include a bibliography done in a correct format. Prepare to share your findings with the class in a 10-20 minute review. (T8, LD2, LR7)

7. Course Assignments:

- a) Exams – four exams will be given during the course of the semester. Each will cover 3-4 units of lecture notes. (LD1)
- b) Quizzes – five quizzes will be given during the course of the semester. Each will cover a portion of the course text. (LD1)
- c) Article Abstract and Review – there are 5 articles in your note pack. You will write a one-page, single-spaced abstract of each article. Be sure to include the following information in the abstracts: (LD1, LD2)
 1. Bibliographic information in MLA or APA format.
 2. Purpose of the article.
 3. Summary of the main points made by the author.
 4. Conclusions or recommendations made by the author.
 5. Your comments, critiques, usefulness to you.

Next, you will search for another journal article (NOT newspaper or online article) on the same or a related topic. After reading it you will write a one-page, single-spaced paper including a brief summary of the new article and an explanation of its similarities or differences with the first. Submit both one-page papers together with a copy of your second article.

- d) Group Simulation Presentation – your group will develop a handbook/pamphlet to describe the disability group you are assigned. Investigate the challenges, feelings, manners, and lifestyles of this group. Your study should include information about how different strengths and needs may conflict with typical school routines and expectations. Search the internet and written

sources at the library and include a bibliography at the end of your handbook with at least 5 sources.

Your group will share its findings AND a simulation activity in a 20-30 minute presentation in class. You must provide a copy of your handbook for each class member and the instructor.

*****At least 2 weeks prior to your presentation, your group must arrange to meet with Prof. Geidel to review your plans.**

(LD 2)

- e) Projects – choose 3 projects from the following list. (LD2)
- 1 – Interview a classroom teacher to determine his/her feelings on the advantages/disadvantages of inclusion, as well as the amount and type of support they receive from special education staff. Turn in a written summary of the interview. (LD5)
 - 2 – Develop a written lesson plan to teach a lesson to a student with a mental disability. Be sure to include the models and prompts you'd use, the practice activities used to reinforce the skills, concrete materials used in place of abstract concepts, and your methods for evaluating the student's progress and the lesson's effectiveness. (T9)
 - 3 – Talk to a peer who has participated in an accelerated or gifted program during any of their school years. Find out their impressions of the program and the impact it had on them intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Write a summary of your discussion. (LR7)
 - 4 – Collect 5 current articles from newspapers that discuss topics related to this course. For each, write a brief paragraph describing how the information compares to what you have learned through class activities. Submit the articles with your assignment. (T5)
 - 5 – Visit a facility that provides services to exceptional persons. In a short paper describe the program you visited and what you observed, or share your experience with us in class via a short presentation.
 - 6 – Read three journal articles that deal with one area of exceptionality. Write a one-page abstract of each article using the guidelines given in assignment "b" of this syllabus. Submit the articles with your assignment. (LD5)
 - 7 – Arrange to interview an individual who works with exceptional persons. Write a report sharing what you learned. Use the following list of questions as a guideline: (LD5)
 1. What are the responsibilities of this person?
 2. What type of training is needed?
 3. What is rewarding about this work?

4. What is difficult about this work?

8 – Interview the parents of an exceptional child. Try to get a feeling for how this family reacted when they learned their child had a disability. Have the parents encountered any problems in trying to get the necessary services for their child? How has sending this student to school been different then their other children? Does the family feel the school system is adequate in serving their child's needs? In a written report include a summary of this discussion as well as your personal reaction. (LD2, LD8)

9- Create a title collection of at least 10 children's books that involve the course content. For each record the bibliographic information, a summary, and usefulness to you as a classroom teacher.

10 – Watch a movie about someone with a disability. In a written review, summarize the following: the message in the film as it pertains to exceptionality, the image/role of the exceptional individual portrayed in the film, connections with ideas discussed in class, and your overall assessment of the movie from a learning perspective.

11 – Visit and become familiar with a special education director and his/her duties. Write a report about what you learned from this experience. (LD5)

12 – Obtain IEP forms online from any school district. Locate and label the legally required contents within the IEP paperwork, which are given in the lecture 2 outline.

13 – Invite a former student teacher to share how they saw students with disabilities being included in the school they were at. If the individual cannot be here, interview him/her and turn in a written report explaining their experience.

14 – Visit a school that has mainstreamed a student with physical impairments into the regular classroom. Observe the various modifications and adaptations that have been made for this student. Turn in a brief report describing what you observed and learned.

15 – The average person has a stereotyped idea of what it means to have mental retardation. Ask five people, who do not know a person with MR, what they think the characteristics of these persons might be, and what they might be capable of. Then ask two people who work with persons who have mental retardation the same question. Compare their answers in a written report.

16 – Review one assessment (get from Prof. Geidel) that may be used to determine if a student has a learning disability. Bring it to class to demonstrate how it is given and what type of results it gives.

- 17 – Read a non-fiction chapter book about a person who is gifted or has a disability. Write a brief summary of the book and state your personal reactions and learning.
- 18 – Develop a list of at least 10 web sites that provide information on disabilities. Describe each, and explain its usefulness to you as an educator.
- 19 – Create your own assignment. Be sure to get approval!
- 20 – Spend a weekend at His Kids Camp (this counts for all 3 projects)

VIII. Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on the quality of the student's work on the following requirements. The grade reflects the points earned.

Attendance (LR8)
 Participation (LD2)
 Practicum Log/Paper (T9)
 Scholarly Paper & Presentation (T8) (grad. only)
 Article Abstracts (x 5)
 Stud. Selected Projects (x 3)(LR7)
 Class Presentation (T5)
 Exams (x 4) (T5)
 Quizzes (x 5) (T5)
 Final

Grades will be awarded as follows:

A = 94-100% C+ = 77-79%
 A- = 90-93% C = 73-76%
 B+ = 87-89% C- = 70-72%
 B = 83-86% D = 67-69%
 B- = 80-82% F = 66% and below

IX. Bibliography

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