

**AUGUSTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**  
**Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Special Education**  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**SPED 6009**  
**CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES**  
**3-0-3 SEMESTER HOURS**

**Professor:** Michael O'Connor, Ph.D.

**Office:** 305 University Hall

**Office Hours:**

Monday: 12:00- 2:00

Tuesday and Wednesday: 12:30- 4:30

Other times by appointment.

**E-mail:** [moconno2@aug.edu](mailto:moconno2@aug.edu)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

An introductory course in mild disabilities which covers definitions, historical development of the area of mild disabilities as a field of study, and major contributors; various theories and philosophies affecting the field; and current trends and issues.

**Prerequisite(s):** *admission to graduate program.*

**TEXTBOOK:** Friend, Marilyn (2008). *Special Education: Contemporary Perspectives for School Professionals*. Pearson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (In the campus bookstore).

**LiveText:**

All students admitted to degree programs in the College of Education are required to purchase *LiveText* software through the ASU bookstore. *LiveText* is an electronic, web-based data management service that allows students and faculty to create, store, and publish documents online using a word-processing format. All students will upload assignments, their portfolio, and other required documents into *LiveText*. *LiveText* works better with the Mozilla Firefox browser rather than Internet Explorer. Students may Google Mozilla Firefox and download it to their computers.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will meet a common core of knowledge and skills essential for general and special educators to support students of diverse needs and abilities by demonstrating the following competencies:

The student will:

The student will:

1. Cite (orally and in writing) various definitions (IDEA, NJCLD) of specific learning disabilities, note common elements, and identify controversial issues concerning identification criteria, labeling issues, and current incidence.
2. Note various etiologies of condition affecting individuals who are learning disabled.
3. Recognize major characteristics (academic, cognitive, perceptual/processing, linguistic, social, emotional, behavioral) of individuals with specific learning disabilities.
4. Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication.
5. Cite (orally and in writing) various definitions (AAMR, IDEA) of intellectual disabilities, note common elements, and identify controversial issues concerning identification criteria, labeling issues, and current incidence.
6. Recognize major characteristics (academic, cognitive, vocational, adaptive, social, emotional, and behavioral) of individuals with intellectual disabilities.
7. Discuss theories and philosophies impacting the field of intellectual disabilities. Cite current research in the field of intellectual disabilities relevant to characteristics and etiologies.
- 8.
9. Discuss the varying severity of intellectual disabilities and explain various service models and rationale for each. Note the individual needs of students with ID at the preschool, elementary, middle, and high school levels.
10. Access information on various characteristics of individuals with ID utilizing various technologies, organizations, and research.
11. Describe and explain various definitions and classification systems of emotional and behavioral disorders, including identification controversies, co-occurring characteristics, and criteria and current incidence and prevalence rates for the state and the nation.
12. Cite and describe historical foundations and classic studies of major contributors in the field and how past events, problems, and interventions relate to present-day use of concepts and practices regarding students with emotional and behavioral disorders.
13. Describe principles, practices, and terminology used in assessing students with emotional and behavioral disorders, including the essential characteristics of valid behavior rating scales, sociometric ratings, and self-report instruments.

14. Describe diverse cultural influences and the effect of variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures upon understanding, assessing, and educating students with emotional and behavioral disorders, and articulate the factors that may influence the overrepresentation of culturally/linguistically diverse students in programs for students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

## **College of Education Conceptual Framework**

### Understanding for Teaching, Teaching for Understanding

The preparation of educators is the most critical of all professions, without educators there are no other professions. The professional educator is the key element in the learning process. Building on the key elements of the professional educator, the Conceptual Framework of the unit of Augusta State University consists of a vision and mission with an overarching theme to produce **prepared, able, and responsive** professionals to teach diverse learners.

This vision and mission is a shared responsibility between campus colleagues, public school practitioners, and involved community agencies requiring the partnership of the entire education unit including the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the local community educational system and the Partner School Network.

Element: Prepared (PD)

P1: Demonstrate strong content and pedagogical preparation in their respective subject area or professional field.

P5: Understand how students learn and develop (intellectually, socially, and individually) and be able to provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities and support for these opportunities.

P6: Demonstrate knowledge of how to implement effective verbal and nonverbal information and technology techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in educational settings.

Element: Able (AD)

A1: Understand, use, and support a variety of instructional strategies to encourage the learner's development of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

A2: Create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation for all learners.

A3: Plan, guide, and support instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, the learners, the community, and curriculum goals.

A5: Ability to teach and work in authentic settings with diverse populations of learners

Element: Responsive (RD)

R1: A respect for the dignity of all persons. All children can learn and have the right to an opportunity to do so.

R2: Preparation in the subject area(s) to be taught or the professional field of study must be accompanied by the skill and dispositions to translate knowledge into creating and supporting meaningful experiences for diverse learners

R3: Understanding of how students differ in their approaches to learning and demonstrate the commitment for meeting their educational needs in fair, caring, nondiscriminatory, and equitable manners.

### **Program-Specific Standards Addressed in this Course:**

The student will:

5. Cite (orally and in writing) various definitions (IDEA, NJCLD) of specific learning disabilities, note common elements, and identify controversial issues concerning identification criteria, labeling issues, and current incidence. (NCATE/PSC 1; INTASC 1,2; BOR IIB(1); CEC: LD1K3,5,CC2K7, LD8K2,3)
6. Note various etiologies of condition affecting individuals who are learning disabled. (NCATE/PSC 1; INTASC L1 BOR IIB(1) CEC: LD1K2, LD2K1,2)
7. Recognize major characteristics (academic, cognitive, perceptual/processing, linguistic, social, emotional, behavioral) of individuals with specific learning disabilities. (NCATE/PSC 1; INTASC 1; BOR II(B)1 CEC: LD2K2,3, LD3K2,3,LD6,K1,2)
8. Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication. (NCATE/PSC 1; INTASC 6; BOR IIB(2); CEC: CC9S7,8,9;
5. Cite (orally and in writing) various definitions (AAMR, IDEA) of intellectual disabilities, note common elements, and identify controversial issues concerning identification criteria, labeling issues, and current incidence. **NCATE/PSC 1; CEC MR:1.K1, S1 & S2; INTASC 1; BOR II B (1)**
11. Recognize major characteristics (academic, cognitive, vocational, adaptive, social, emotional, and behavioral) of individuals with intellectual disabilities. **NCATE/PSC 1; CEC MR:2.S1; INTASC 1; BOR II B (1)**
12. Discuss theories and philosophies impacting the field of intellectual disabilities. (CEC MR:1.K3) Cite current research in the field of intellectual disabilities relevant to characteristics and etiologies. (CEC MR:1.K2) **NCATE/PSC 1; CEC MR:1.S1; INTASC 1; BOR II B (1)**
13. Discuss the varying severity of intellectual disabilities and explain various service models and rationale for each. Note the individual needs of students with ID at the preschool, elementary, middle, and high school levels. **NCATE/PSC 1; CEC GC1K5, MR:1.K3; INTASC 1; BOR II B (1)**

14. Access information on various characteristics of individuals with ID utilizing various technologies, organizations, and research. (CEC/G II, S-1; CEC/LD VII, K-1)  
**NCATE/PSC 1; CEC MR:2.K1-K5; INTASC 1; BOR II B (1)**
11. Describe and explain various definitions and classification systems of emotional and behavioral disorders, including identification controversies, co-occurring characteristics, and criteria and current incidence and prevalence rates for the state and the nation. [NCATE/PSC-1, 4; INTASC-1; CEC-, CC1K5, BD1K1-2; BoR-IA, IIB(1)]
12. Cite and describe historical foundations and classic studies of major contributors in the field and how past events, problems, and interventions relate to present-day use of concepts and practices regarding students with emotional and behavioral disorders. [NCATE/PSC-1; INTASC-1, 3, 4; CEC-BD4K5; BoR-IA, IIB(1)]
13. Describe principles, practices, and terminology used in assessing students with emotional and behavioral disorders, including the essential characteristics of valid behavior rating scales, sociometric ratings, and self-report instruments. [NCATE/PSC-2; INTASC-1, 8; CEC-BD8K1-2; BoR-IIB(2)]
14. Describe diverse cultural influences and the effect of variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures upon understanding, assessing, and educating students with emotional and behavioral disorders, and articulate the factors that may influence the overrepresentation of culturally/linguistically diverse students in programs for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. [NCATE/PSC-4; INTASC-3, 8, 9; CEC-CC3K5, BD2K4; BoR-IIB(1)]

### **COURSE CALENDAR:**

#### Session

#### Topic:

#### **Week 1 (Aug 19)**

Characteristics of the Special Education System

READING: pp. 12-31, text

Assignments: (1) View film of Special Education Timeline Lecture.

(2) Post to the Discussion board your response to the instructor question (200 words min.)

(3) Post 2 replies to your group members (100 words min. each)

(3) Write a 2-page synopsis of pp. 12-31 of the text.

#### **Week 2 (Aug 26)**

Inclusion and Collaborative Teaching

READING: *Inclusion and Collaborative Teaching* (posted

to your LT account).

- Assignments: (1) Write a 2-page synopsis of the reading.  
(2) Post reply to the instructor on Discussion Board.  
(3) Post replies to your group-members.

**Week 3 (Sept 2)**

Learning Disabilities

READINGS: (1) Chapter 5, text

(2) Read online lecture on LD and RTI

Assignments: (1) Write 2-page synopsis of Chap. 5.

(2) Posts to Discussion Board (3 total)

**Week 4 (Sept 9)**

Intellectual Disabilities

READING(s): (1) Chapter 8, text

(2) Your choice: journal article

on a current controversy in education.

Use WilsonOmnifile to access article.

Assignments: (1) Chapter synopsis

(2) Posts to discussion board (3 total)

(3) Journal article synopsis #1 (full reference required for credit)

**Week 5 (Sept 16)**

Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

READING: Chapter 7, text

Assignments: (1) Chapter synopsis

(2) Discussion board posts (3 total)

**Week 6 (Sept 23)**

Speech/Language Disorders

READING: Chapter 9, text

Assignments: (1) Chapter synopsis

(2) Discussion Board posts (3 total)

**Week 7 (Sept 30)**

Autism Spectrum

READING: Chapter 12, text

Assignments: (1) Chapter synopsis

(2) Discussion board posts (3 total)

**Week 8 (Oct 7)**

Current Issues in the Special Education System

READING: Your choice: journal article or mainstream

media article on an important current controversy regarding education.

Assignments: (1) Write 2-page review of article, including your own opinion and stance on this issue.

(2) Post 200 word description of your selected article to Discussion Board. Explain clearly why you feel this issue is significant to you as an educator.

(3) Post your 2 replies to your fellow group members.

(4) Go out and celebrate: great work!

## **PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

**This course is entirely online. We will not have any class meetings in person.**

### **READINGS**

EACH WEEK (except the last week) you are required to complete a READING on the topic of the week. Depending on whether you are an MAT candidate, or an M.Ed. candidate, your assignments will differ, as follows:

For MAT candidates:

Write a 2-page synopsis of the reading, including the following points:

- What are the central issues concerning this topic?
- How has our understanding of this disability or topic changed over the years?
- What are some of the recommended approaches or suggestions for the future concerning this topic?

For M.Ed. or Ed.S. candidates:

Write a 2-page synopsis of the reading, including the following points:

- From a working teacher's point of view, what are the most important points brought out in this reading?
- Give two examples of students you have worked with, or case studies from the literature (give references of case studies) that reflect the disability topic of the reading.
- Include at least one suggestion for how the chapter could be improved. In other words, please describe some important facet of this topic that was left out of the reading.

Your article reviews will be evaluated according to the Writing Rubric found in your class documents (in your Livetext account).

DUE DATES: Each writing assignment is due by midnight the day before the next class day. In other words, you have one week to complete each assignment.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE REQUIREMENTS:** You are required to locate, read, and describe two articles this semester. You are required to write a 2-page summary for each article. Again, the assignments will vary depending on your degree program.

For MAT candidates:

- Describe the content and conclusions of this article, i.e. “What did the article say?”
- Tell why this article was relevant to your work as a special educator.
- Your personal opinion of this article, its content, and its significance.
- Give full reference for the article in APA style. Do not give a link.

For M.Ed or Ed.S. candidates:

- Describe the content and conclusions of this article, i.e. “What did the article say?”
- Tell how this article relates to situations you have encountered in your working role as a teacher, or in the case study literature (give reference for case study).
- Give suggestions for additional content for this article. In other words, what aspects of this topic did this article fail to present? Note: Do not criticize the article on the basis of style considerations—only on the basis of content.
- Give the full reference for the article in APA style. Do not give a link.

\*\*\*\*These reviews are due one week from the class date they are assigned.

**Note:** The Wilson Omnifile electronic database can be accessed through the GALILEO system. You can go to GALILEO from the ASU website, and then find Wilson Omnifile under the database section. Click on Full Text Only, and you will get full-text journal articles on the subject you have chosen.

### **DISCUSSION BOARD REQUIREMENTS:**

Each week you are required to post one 200-word response to my question or discussion topic on the Livetext Discussion Board.

You are required, each week, to read ALL the posts of your fellow group members, and then to POST REPLIES to TWO of your fellow group-member’s post. Each of your replies should be at least 100 words long, and should offer some research-based, or experience-based view on the topic being discussed.

Specific dates for submitting to the Discussion Board are as follows:

Initial post: Must be posted by Saturday at midnight. (Thus, you have 4 days to make your initial post.)

Replies to your fellow students: Must be posted within one week (same as for the writing assignments).

IMPORTANT: Failure to make your initial post to Discussion board by Saturday at midnight will result in the loss of all your Discussion board posts for that week. Thus, you receive no credit for your replies unless you post your initial post on time.

**Your final grade** will be calculated according to the following:

<b>Weekly synopsis of readings</b>	<b>42 percent</b>
<b>Journal article synopsis (2)</b>	<b>18 percent</b>
<b>Discussion Board postings (on time)</b>	<b>40 percent</b>

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS**

This course requires 30 hours of direct contact with students with mild disabilities. In order to receive a passing grade in this course, this field experience must be documented using our lab documentation form, or the waiver form which states that you are working full-time as a teacher. I need the original, signed copy of this document, so you will have to drop this off in person, or mail it to me. IMPORTANT: You must contact me as soon as possible if you are not presently working in a school and thus do not have a lab placement.

### **COURSE EVALUATIONS:**

You are required to drop off a completed course evaluation with our department secretary during the last week of classes. It would be ideal to drop off your completed course evaluation and your lab experience documentation at the same time.

The feedback received from these course evaluations is quite important to me, so I really appreciate your help in this matter.

### **WRITING GUIDELINES**

All papers should be typed, double spaced, with 12-point font and 1” margins using *APA* guidelines. Times New Roman font should be used.

Always use *PERSON FIRST* language and other appropriate terms as indicated in the *APA Manual*. Written assignments will be graded on content and style. Grammatical and spelling errors will be penalized.

Do not include lists, quotations, or bullet-points in any document you create for this class. All chapter reviews and synopsis must be fully 2 pages. There should be no header except for one line with the title.

IMPORTANT: Documents submitted with blank spaces, lists, quotations, headers, or less than 2 pages will receive a score of zero.

Please ask for assistance with writing style if you have questions about these expectations. Also, you may contact the ASU Writing Center (737-1402) for further help with developing and improving composition skills.

NOTE: If persistent problems are noted in your writing, I may require you to go to the Writing Center before turning in any papers to me, and require verification that each paper has been edited by someone in the Writing Center.

See the document entitled “Writing Guidelines” which I have sent to your Livetext account for further important instructions regarding the writing requirements of this course.

**\*\*\*\*PLAGIARISM WARNING\*\*\*\***

I actively search for plagiarism in student papers, and if I detect plagiarism, the consequences are as follows: The first instance of plagiarism reduces your final grade in this course by 25 points, giving you a C at best. I will report the matter to my chairperson and your advisor.

If I detect a second instance of plagiarism, you will receive an automatic F for the course. I will report the matter to my chairperson. University students are routinely expelled for plagiarism, and this is a possible consequence. I will not offer any make-up work or exceptions with regard to plagiarism.

In short, do not “cut and paste” or copy ANY text for this course. **ALL WORK HANDED IN FOR THIS COURSE MUST BE ENTIRELY IN YOUR OWN WORDS.**

If you do not understand what plagiarism is, it is your responsibility to find out. If you simply follow my rule, and write everything for this course in your own words, you will never have to worry about this.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:**

**Pipeline e-mail and class information access**

Students are assigned an e-mail address on Pipeline and are responsible for information on e-mail and on class bulletin boards located on the Pipeline system. **Check your e-mail regularly.** Information updates and class notes will be posted there. Informational and tutorial sessions are available for students who are unfamiliar with the Pipeline system.

## **Grade Scale**

90-100 A    80-89 B    70-79 C    60-69 D    <60 F

Assigning a student the grade of *Incomplete* is strongly discouraged at ASU, and will only be allowed under documented, extraordinary circumstances. Please consider the requirements specified in the syllabus as you plan your schedule.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to read and strictly adhere to the entire Academic Honesty policy found in the 2009–10 *Augusta State University Catalog*. In part, the policy reads:

Academic honesty requires the presentation for evaluation and credit of one's own work, not the work of others...Plagiarism is the failure to acknowledge indebtedness. It is always assumed that the written work offered for evaluation and credit is the student's own unless otherwise acknowledged. Such acknowledgement should occur whenever one quotes another person's actual works, whenever one appropriates another person's ideas, opinions, or theories, even if they are paraphrased, and whenever one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials unless the information is common knowledge.  
(p.43)

### **Pipeline Account**

Students are encouraged to check their Pipeline account daily. Students are responsible for any assignments or deadlines sent to them via Pipeline. If you have trouble accessing your Pipeline account, you should contact Information Technology Services at 737-1676. Computers and printers are available free of charge in computer labs throughout campus as well as the library and campus Internet cafes for students who do not have access from a home computer.

### **Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling and Special Education Website**

Students are invited to visit the departmental website at: <http://www.aug.edu/clinical> A variety of forms, some interactive, may be downloaded from the website. There are also newsletters, registration information and announcements which students will find useful. Most forms are in Adobe Acrobat. All campus computers have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed and students can download Adobe Acrobat Reader for their home computer at no charge from: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/>

### **Writing Center**

You may contact the ASU Writing Center (737-1402) for help with developing and improving composition skills. If you would like additional help with writing or with learning APA style, inform the class instructor.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who are registered with the Office of Disability Services should schedule an appointment with the instructor before the third week of class to discuss academic accommodations. If the student does not initiate this meeting, it is assumed no special accommodations or modifications will be necessary to meet the requirements of this course. You may make an appointment by calling the Counseling and Testing Center (706) 737-1471 or visit their office located in the Quadrangle, next to Fanning Hall (Business Office).

### **Student Safety**

Student safety is of primary importance. Students leaving classes late in the evening are encouraged to stay in groups of two or more and to report all suspicious behavior or persons to the ASU Office of Public Safety (emergency number 706-729-2911; non-emergency 706-737-1401). Emergency telephones are located in the University Hall parking lot and various other locations on campus.

**Please let me know promptly about problems or concerns with assignments or requirements of the course.**

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

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**Reference websites:**

<http://www.interdys.org/>  
<http://ldresources.com>  
<http://ideapractices.com>  
<http://www.ldonline.org>  
<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us>