

**Rutgers University
Graduate School of Education
Department of Educational Psychology**

**Psychology of the Exceptional Child
15.293.525
Fall 2021**

Course Instructor: Dr. Colleen Belmonte, Ph.D., BCBA

Office Hours: By appointment.

Contact Me:

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Required Texts:

- Hallahan, D.P., Kaufman, J.M., & Pullen, P.C. (2015). *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education* (14th Ed.).
- Mooney, J. (2007). *The short bus*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Mode of Instruction:

Lecture

Seminar

Hybrid

Online (<https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>)

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course develops foundational knowledge in the characteristics, identification, educational needs, and development of students with exceptionalities with specific focus on students with disabilities. Content includes the influence of exceptionalities on the cognitive, educational, communication, motor, and social development of individuals with disabilities and other exceptionalities. The legal and ethical basis for comprehensive programs for exceptional children and adults is discussed.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Specifically, this course includes substantial weekly readings, structured review, discussion of readings and associated topics, assignments on course materials, and a final exam. PowerPoint Slides that highlight select content from each week's assigned textbook readings, reinforcing key concepts and providing a partial review, have been integrated into each week's introductory page. Each week of the course will run from Monday morning through Sunday night. Students are strongly encouraged to complete all of the assigned course readings in advance of the course week in effect. Review the Syllabus and let me know if you have any questions about this.

LEARNING GOALS

Upon completion of this course, candidates can expect to:

1. Identify and describe the historical milestones, legal basis, and current issues in educational programs for students with exceptionalities;

2. Understand key controversial issues in current special education policy and practice, including LD identification, RTI, and disproportionality;
3. Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with mild to moderate disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disabilities, cognitive impairments, speech and language impairments);
4. Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with moderate to severe disabilities (e.g., sensory impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, multiple handicaps);
5. Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with giftedness;
6. Identify the characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental influences on a child and family including cultural and linguistic diversity, socioeconomic status, abuse/neglect, and substance abuse;
7. Describe the differential characteristics of individual students with disabilities including level of severity and multiple exceptionalities across the lifespan;
8. Articulate the continuum of educational placements for students with exceptionalities and the benefits and drawbacks of each;
9. Identify the impact of exceptionality on the family;
10. Be familiar with agencies, professional organizations, and related Web resources for information relevant to support of special education students.
11. Be familiar with national advocacy groups addressing needs of students at risk for, or with disabilities, as well as resources, processes, and means to help these students address social and institutional barriers that impede equal access to services and supports that facilitate success in school, home, and the community.
12. Understand the current status of evidence-based research and practice standards in special education

GRADING POLICY

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.

Online activities are based on assigned readings; as a result, it is important that students keep up to date on their reading.

These 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

ONLINE COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Students should be comfortable in an online environment. Specifically, students should be able to use basic computer and Internet tools such as Word Processing, Power Point, Canvas, and email. If you need additional support, you can contact the Canvas help desk at:

help@Canvas.rutgers.edu.

ACADEMIC INTERGRITY 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: ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

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' 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> ([Links to an external site.](#)).

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 (<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/> ([Links to an external site.](#))) to ensure that they receive appropriate supports commensurate with their needs.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE ACTIVITIES

This course includes substantial weekly readings, structured review with PowerPoint presentations, discussion of readings and associated topics, disability laws comparison/contrast, IRIS Classroom Diversity module review, a best professional practices guide project, and a final exam. Powerpoint Slides that highlight select content from each week's assigned textbook readings, reinforcing key concepts and providing a partial review, have been integrated into each week's page.

Each week of the course will run from Tuesday morning through Monday night. Students are strongly encouraged to complete all of the assigned course readings in advance of the course week in effect. Review the Syllabus and let me know if you have any questions about this.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Class discussion / weekly participation (25 points)
2. Journal entries for “The Short Bus” (30 points)
3. Disability Law: Compare/Contrast Essay (20 points)
4. Paper One- Interview (20 points)
5. Best Professional Practices Guide (50 points)
6. Final exam (25 points)

Course Grades: (out of 140 possible points)

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. Class discussion/weekly participation.** Each student must make an initial post for each question no later than 11:59 p.m. on Monday. Each post must be thorough, answer the questions fully, and demonstrate that you have completed the reading assignments for the week. You must follow the directions for each week and make comments to the postings of two classmates.
- 2. Disability Law: Compare/Contrast Essay (due 10/4).** Drawing on course resources, and your own research, submit a three (3) page essay that clearly presents the similarities (comparisons) and differences (contrasts) between The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA ‘04), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (formerly known as No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 – NCLB ‘01).
 - Additional assignment information will be available in a Canvas Module.
- 3. Paper One- Interview (due 10/27).** This assignment involves application of information learned from this course with an interview with a professional (e.g. learning consultant (ldtc), school psychologist, social worker, reading specialist or school administrator) from your school district.
 - Additional assignment information will be available in a Canvas Module in the Assignments tab.
- 4. Best Professional Practices Guide (due 11/22).** Students will create a 12-15 pages research-based /evidence-based best practices booklet in one of the following topic areas:
 - Working with students with [select one] Disability/Disorder (e.g., LD, EBD, ID, Autism, etc.)
 - Working with families of students with disabilities
 - Bullying and violence prevention (must devote attention to students with disabilities)
 - Disproportionality in special education identification

- Classroom and school-wide behavior management
- Teaching in an inclusive [elementary / middle school / high school] classroom
- Early literacy supports and methods for non-responders (students not learning to read through typical instructional approaches)
- Transition for high school student with disabilities
- Other focus topics discussed with and approved by instructor (before student begins working on it)
- Additional assignment information will be available in a Canvas Module.

5. **Final (Due 12/6).** The final is designed to help students engage in structured review of content from assigned readings. Students will be required to demonstrate a complete knowledge of key points and issues in the readings and to apply this knowledge in conjunction with critical thought. The format allows for students to develop personal professional connections to the material. The final will be open notes, open book, but students are not allowed to consult with other people regarding the final questions. Any questions regarding the final must be directed to the course instructor.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

All assignments are expected on time. This includes Discussion Thread responses which are “real time” activities; consequently, initial responses and responses to classmates cannot be made up after the week in which they are due. Late assignments will receive a reduced grade; generally, a flat reduction in grade equivalent to 10% of the total possible assignment grade per day late (or part thereof). Students with an emergency should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss special arrangements to avoid grade penalties. The instructor will work constructively and collaboratively with students who communicate early regarding special problems completing assignments on time, with no grade penalties in situations where advance communication takes place and the circumstances are deemed reasonable, but will not be supportive of last minute or “night before” requests for extensions on assignment due dates. Personal vacations and work-related responsibilities (conferences, back to school nights, etc.) are not considered to be “special problems.” If you are taking multiple courses, it is up to you to manage competing responsibilities.

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS AND CONTENT COVERAGE

SESSION #	CONTENT COVERAGE	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS
1 (Due 9/13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptionality and Special Education 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 1 *Introduction post * Weekly discussion questions
2 (Due 9/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Practices for meeting the needs of Exceptional Learners 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 2 *Weekly discussion questions
3 (Due 9/27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural and Bilingual aspects of Special Education • Parents and Families 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 3, 4 *Weekly discussion questions *Journal 1 due 9/29
4 (Due 10/4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 5 *Weekly discussion questions * Disability Law: Compare/Contrast Essay due
5 (Due 10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Learning Disabilities 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 6 *Weekly discussion questions
6 (Due 10/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 7 *Weekly discussion questions *Journal 2 due
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Emotional or 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 8

(Due 10/25)	Behavioral Disorders	*Weekly discussion questions *Paper One due 10/27
8 (Due 11/1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 9 *Weekly discussion questions
9 (Due 11/8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners with Communication Disorders 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 10 *Weekly discussion questions
10 (Due 11/15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 11 *Weekly discussion questions
11 (Due 11/22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners with Blindness or Low Vision 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 12 *Weekly discussion questions * Best Professional Practices Guide due
12 (Due 11/29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners with Low-Incidence, Multiple, and Severe Disabilities 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 13 *Weekly discussion questions
13 (Due 12/6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners with Physical Disabilities And Other Health Impairments Learners with Special Gifts and Talents 	Exceptional Learners Chapter 14, 15 *Weekly discussion questions/Journal 3 response *FINAL DUE 12/6