

**MOUNT SAINT MARY COLLEGE**  
**Newburgh, NY 12550**

**DIVISION OF EDUCATION**  
**PSY 3401 Psychology of the Exceptional Learner**  
**Spring 2014**

**1:25 – 2:20pm – Room: Hudson Hall 002**

Instructor:	Sonya Abbye Taylor	Office Hours:	By Appointment
Contact Information:		Office Location:	Hudson Hall, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor
Phone (Home):	845-319-3071	Office Phone:	845-569-3345
(Cell):	845-519-8100	email	Sonya.Taylor@msmc.edu
Weather:	845-569-3500 and eClass		

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will focus on psychological characteristics of children and youth who deviate from the norm because of intellectual, physical, sensory, and emotional disabilities, in addition to the implications for educational programming. Fieldwork is required.

**Prerequisites:** A grade of C+ or better in PSY3010 or PSY 3230, or permission of instructor.

**COURSE GOAL:**

The goal of this course is to serve as an introduction to the field of special education. It is designed to give students an overview of the philosophy, pedagogy, and proper lexicon associated with current special education practices. This course intends to assist in the preparation of those individuals who will work with students who are at risk or who require an individual education plan (IEP) or Section 504 modifications. This course will emphasize an understanding of the implications that specific disabilities have for educational programming, daily living, and family dynamics.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., & Wehmeyer, M.L. (2012). *Exceptional lives: Special education in today's schools* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Merrill.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES:**

Through readings, research, lectures, field participation, projects, and class discussions, you will:

- Identify the major components of federal and state law, including referral, eligibility procedures, due process, and parental involvement.
- Define current terminology in the field of special education.
- Demonstrate an understanding of current trends and issues in special education.
- Describe the continuum of services as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- Define and discuss the characteristics of each disability as recognized by NYS.
- Discuss general methods and strategies for meeting the social and educational needs of students with various disabilities.

## **COURSE ALIGNMENT WITH CEC STANDARDS**

This course addresses *Council for Exceptional Children* (CEC) Special Education Content Standards:

- CC1K1 Models, theories, philosophies, and research methods that form the basis for special education practice.
- CC1K2 Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management planning and implementation.
- CC1K4 Rights and responsibilities of individuals with exceptional learning needs, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional needs.
- GC1K1 Definitions and issues related to the identification of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- GC1K8 Principles of normalization and concept of least restrictive environment.
- CC2K2 Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities.
- CC2K4 Family systems and the role of families in supporting development.
- GC2K4 Psychological and socio-emotional characteristics of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- CC3K2 Impact of learner's academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.
- GC3S1 Relate levels of support to the needs of the individual.
- CC4K1 Evidence-based practices validated for specific characteristics of learners and settings.
- GC4K1 Sources of specialized materials, curricula, and resources for individuals with exceptional needs.
- CC5K2 Basic classroom management theories and strategies for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- GC5K3 Methods for ensuring individual academic success in one-to-one, small group, and large-group settings.
- CC7K1 Theories and research that form the basis of curriculum development and instructional practice.
- CC7K3 National, state or provincial, and local curricula standards.
- CC8K1 Basic terminology used in assessment.
- CC8K5 National, state or provincial, and local accommodations and modifications.
- GC8K4 Procedures for early identification of young children who may be at risk for exceptional learning needs.
- CC9K2 Importance of the teacher serving as a model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES:**

Procedures used to attain the student outcomes will include:

- Lectures, discussions and readings
- Field work
- eClass forums & materials
- Videos
- In-class presentations
- Written assignments
- Simulations

## DESCRIPTION OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND WEIGHTS:

The course assignments are designed to facilitate mastery of the course objectives.

1. **Text Readings:** You are expected to read all assignments on time and *contribute to class discussions*. The class will be conducted as a combination of lecture, discussion, and small group activities; your participation in discussions is vital to your learning and to the class as a community of learners.
2. **Class Sessions:** Content will be presented in class that will supplement the required text readings. Each week, there will be discussions of a variety of issues and topics related to special education; your participation in discussions is essential. *Please feel free to bring in newspaper, magazine, journal articles, or to identify URLs for videos or other Internet content related to course topics.*
3. **Fieldwork:** You will observe and interact with one or more students referred for or classified as having a disability recognized by NYS at an approved site for a total of ten (10) hours. You may select your own site or be placed by the instructor. The paperwork essential for your observations will be explained before you begin your fieldwork. You will complete a fieldwork report. (The length of the report should depend on what you incorporate in your findings. Suggested length: 8-10 pages.) **This report should include the following, but should not contain the name of the district, school, or any specific individuals:**
  - A summarization, including: motor development, language disorders, social skills, developmental growth, and behavior patterns of one or two students.
  - Compare your observations to what you have learned in class, assigned readings, and your research. You must be explicit and thorough about whether your observations support or refute what you have learned regarding educational approaches, modifications, behavior management approaches, and how the classified student's disabilities affect performance academically and socially.
  - You must keep the Mount Saint Mary College Field Work Log Sheet for this assignment. **A minimum of ten (10) hours is required.** Submit the original log sheet to the Coordinator of Student Teaching and Fieldwork Placements, but be sure to keep a copy for your records, and attach a duplicate to your report.
4. **Book Reflection: Part I:**  
You are required to read one of the books listed below and write a 3-4 page reflection that:
  - Includes a short summary of the book.
  - Describes how the disability of the character or the author resonated with you and *how* it will impact your teaching in the classroom.
  - Describes how the character with the disability was portrayed.
  - Explain the family dynamics.**Questions for discussion:**
  - Have you ever had an experience with someone with this disability?
  - How would you adapt or modify your lesson plans to meet the needs of this individual?
  - What did you learn from reading the book and how does it relate to the content of this course?**Part II:** Write a short "book jacket" review that "sells" the book to your audience. on eClass forum. (Language for the book jacket can come from your book review.)
   
  
**Part III:** Respond to *at least* two other posts.

### Recommended Books:

- Buck, P. (1992). *The child who never grew*. Maryland: Woodbine House.
- Choldenko, G. (2004). *Al Capone does my shirts*. New York: Puffin Books.
- Choldenko, G. (2011). *Al Capone shines my shoes*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Grandin, T. (2006). *Thinking in pictures*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Grandin, T., Panek, R. (2013). *The autistic brain: Thinking across the spectrum*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing.
- Kranowitz, C. (2005). *The out-of-sync child: Recognizing and coping with sensory processing disorder*. New York: Perigee.
- Lord, C. (2006). *Rules*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- Palacio, R.J. (2012). *Wonder*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Picoult, J. (2009). *Handle with care*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Picoult, J. (2010). *House rules*. New York: Atria Books.
- Saperstein, J. (2010). *Life with Asperger's in 20 1/3 chapters*. New York: Perigee.
- Tammet, D. (2006). *Born on a blue day*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Taylor, B. (2007). *ADHD and me: What I learned from lighting fires at the dinner table*. California: New Harbinger.
- Van Bloss, N. (2006). *Busy body: My life with Tourette's syndrome*. Georgia: Vision.
- Wells, J. (2006). *Touch and go Joe: An adolescent's experience with OCD*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

5. **Media Review:** Choose a form of media, TV, film, etc. that has as its central character an individual with a disability. Describe how that individual was portrayed. Comment on the accuracy of the portrayal, given knowledge you gained from this class. (***Post response on forum and respond to at least two other posts.***)

## 6. Quizzes, Exams and Homework

There will be several quizzes during the semester based on the core concepts and ideas presented in class lectures, assigned chapters, readings, and discussions. Quiz items may come directly from the chapter readings, presentations, class activities, and handouts. Dates of quizzes will be announced in class. There will be a **cumulative** final examination. **It is essential to attend class, complete assignments and readings.**

7. **Disability Project** – This will be a group project. Each group will research a particular disability and will present their findings to the class in a memorable way. Technology and multi-sensory approaches should be used to bring the content to life and to engage the audience.

### Guidelines for Written Assignments:

1. All written work must be typed, in 10-12 point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins using a computer or word processor and must be in APA 6 format. You may purchase the manual in the bookstore or consult the MSMC library web site for general rules. An excellent web site for APA support is: <owl.english.purdue.edu>. **An APA tutorial is also posted on the eClass for this course.**
2. Avoid Plagiarism. Plagiarism is against MSMC policy. The MSMC official policy is stated in both the Catalog and the Student Handbook. (*Be the student you want your students to be.*)

### Division of Education Policy Regarding Writing:

In grading any work submitted by a candidate, if the instructor identifies five or more errors in spelling (including apostrophes), grammar, and/or sentence construction, the instructor will discontinue reading that work and will return it to the candidate with a grade of zero. At the discretion of the instructor, the candidate may correct the document and resubmit it once. **In this case, the candidate may receive no more than the equivalent of 78% on the document, receiving a lower grade if otherwise warranted.** This grade will be final for the document. (This policy does not apply to work written in class, such as on a test.)

### Division of Education Policy about Retrieving Materials in a Timely Way:

All graded materials, papers, and portfolios for any course must be picked up at the education office within the first two weeks of the following semester. Any materials left beyond two weeks will be discarded. We know that graded work is required for many portfolios. We are unable to be the repository of old papers and portfolios for you. We expect and appreciate having you accept responsibility for gathering your work.

### College-Wide Policy on Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty subverts the mission of the college and must be discouraged by application of a uniform college policy. Dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, and falsification which are explained on page 28 of the *Graduate Catalog*. To discourage these types of activities the following sanctions will be imposed:

1. For an initial transgression, and where culpability is established, the student will face sanctions up to and including failure for the course. The sanction will be determined by the course instructor. In

addition, a memo detailing the infraction must be forwarded by the instructor to the Registrar's Office to be placed in the student's file.

2. If the Registrar determines that this is the second infraction on the part of a student with fewer than twelve credits, the case will be referred to the Vice President for Academic Affairs before any action is taken.

3. If the Registrar determines that this is a second infraction on the part of a student with more than 12 credits, the penalty is immediate failure of the course. The Registrar will inform the student and the instructor of the failing grade in the course.

4. A third infraction will result in dismissal from the college.

Any student charged with academic dishonesty will be accorded due process which is described on page 37 of the *Student Handbook* under Students' Rights.

### **Grading Scale/Evaluation:**

Assessments(includes final).....	30%
Forums .....	10%
Fieldwork Project.....	25%
Book reflection .....	15%
Disability Group Project .....	20%

***Rubrics with self- evaluation completed must be attached to all assignments.***

### **Grading Scale/Evaluation:**

The following scale will be used to convert a numerical grade into a letter grade:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	F	62 and below
C+	77-79		

### **Students with Disabilities**

FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES Mount Saint Mary College will provide reasonable accommodations to any student or employee who has a disability and who wishes such accommodations. The Coordinator of Services for Persons with Disabilities (CSPD), whose office is within the Department of Student Development, oversees the procedures for arranging such accommodations. An individual who wishes accommodations because of a disability must inform the CSPD about the disability and must request the accommodations desired. The college will require appropriate documentation of the disability. Such documentation will consist of written notice from a psychiatrist, licensed psychologist or physician relevant to the disability. The individual is responsible for obtaining, at his/her own

expense, any evaluations needed to provide such documentation. The individual must also provide the documentation in a timely manner that allows the college reasonable opportunity to consider and act upon the requested accommodation(s). Once an individual has informed the CSPD about his/her disability and that disability has been recognized by the college, the CSPD will assist the individual in developing a plan for appropriate accommodations. The CSPD will also assist the individual in implementing the plan and will coordinate college aspects of the plan. Should there be any disagreement about the documentation, the plan or some aspect of its implementation, the matter will be referred to the Committee on Disabilities. This committee will consider the matter and will make a recommendation to the president of the college whose decision is final. Further information about procedures to accommodate persons with disabilities may be obtained by calling the CSPD at 845 - 569 - 3115.