

Tentative Syllabus

**AUGSBURG COLLEGE
THE LEARNER WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
EDC 410/544
Winter, 2008**

(Final syllabus will be distributed the first day of class)

Pre-requisites: Admission to the Education Department

TIME: Saturdays, 8:00 – 12:00pm (1/12, 1/26, 2/2, 2/16, 3/1, 3/15, 3/29)

LOCATION: SVE 1

INSTRUCTOR: Lindsay Tsakistos

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Course Description:

This course presents an overview of issues related to people with disabilities. It specifically focuses on the critical issues they and their families face educationally, socially, and vocationally across the lifespan. Disability is examined looking beyond specific characteristics to the social systems in which people live, work, and recreate. The attitudinal barriers faced by people with disabilities in our society will be discussed throughout the course. A major focus of the course is of people with disabilities in K-12 settings and the role of teachers in adapting curriculum to create inclusive educational settings. The role of families and support networks will also be explored. Students will be involved in a service-learning project working with families and the special education system. They will also be required to complete a 20-hour field placement working with students with special needs.

Education Department Mission Statement:

The Augsburg College Education Department commits itself to developing future educational leaders who foster student learning and well-being knowledgeable in content, being ethical in practice, building relationships, embracing diversity, reflecting critically, and collaborating effectively.

Text: Turnbull, A.P., Turnbull, H.R., Wehmeyer, M.L. (2007). Exceptional Lives: Special Education in Today's Schools. (5th edition). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Additional Readings: Additional readings will be assigned; some readings will be available on the web.

Applicable Standards of Effective Practice

- *Standard 3 – Diverse Learning:* A teacher must understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to students with diverse backgrounds and exceptionalities.
- *Standard 5 – Learning Environment:* A teacher must be able to use an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.
- *Standard 8 – Assessment:* A teacher must understand and be able to use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of students.
- *Standard 9 – Reflection and Professional Development:* A teacher must be a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of choices and actions of others, including students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community, and who actively seeks out opportunities for professional growth.
- *Standard 10 – Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships:* A teacher must be able to communicate and interact with parents or guardians, families, school colleagues, and the community to support student learning and well being.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- Gain a broad understanding of the history and laws related to people with disabilities (MSEP 10.C.L).
- Understand and challenge the attitudinal, physical, and social barriers that people with disabilities face in schools and society (MSEP 3.L).
- Identify individual needs and learn to establish inclusive classroom environments, which serve a diverse group of students (MSEP 5.C, K, P).
- Develop a knowledge base related to the various types of disabilities (MSEP 3.B, 3.M).
- Gain practical experience assessing student needs and designing effective goals for student learning (MSEP 8. E, K, 10.D, G).
- Gain insight into multicultural and family issues as they relate to people with disabilities (MSEP 3.Q).
- Identify community resources that will support students, parents and teachers (MSEP 8.M, 9.J, 10.B, I, K).
- Articulate a personal philosophy of education as it relates to inclusion of people with disabilities in school and society (MSEP 9.C, G).

Assessment Summary

Assessment Tool	Activities/Documents	Program Standards
Reflection Papers	Reaction to readings and Personal reflections	3.B, L, M, Q; 5.C, K; 10.C, D, G, J, L.

Field Experience	Reflection paper	3.B, L; 5. C, K; 8.K; 9.C, J; 10.D, F, G, I.
Parent Project	Case Study, school visit and MAPS assessment tool	3.N: 5.K: 8.E, K, 10.B, C, D, F, I, J, K
Web quest	Use of technology and more in depth understanding of disabilities	8.E, 10.G, J
Philosophy Paper (Final Paper)	Philosophy and integration of concepts	5.C, K, P: 9.C, G: 10.D, G, L
Graduate student requirements:		
Final Paper Extension	Extend research to gain a more in-depth understanding of a specific disability	3.B, M: 5.C, K, P; 9.C, G; 10.G, L
Lesson Plans	Adapt two lesson plans for a child with a disability.	8:E; 10.G, J

Assessment Descriptions

Attendance and Group Work

This class will cover a substantial amount of work and there will be frequent group work. You will be responsible to each other for sharing information and assignments. Groups will work on some in-class assignments and several projects together. All group members are expected to contribute actively to the group process. For this reason, it is ***imperative*** that you attend every class session; your participation is important in all class activities. Attendance and punctuality at all class sessions is required. If you know you are going to miss a class, please consider taking the course at another time. Except in the case of extreme emergencies, absences or tardiness without prior approval will result in a loss of points.

Group and Individual Reflections on Readings

Course readings are meant to enhance your understanding of the course material. Group or individual reflections will be assigned throughout the course and will be based on the course readings.

Field Placement

A 20-hour field placement working with students with special needs is required. Hours must be completed before you will receive a grade for this course. If necessary, I can facilitate you in finding a placement. More details regarding this placement will be shared in class.

Reflection on Field Placement

A minimum of a three page typed reflection, based on your field placement is required. Reflect upon observations you have made on:

- The setting – is it different from settings where non-disabled students learn?
- What adaptations do you observe?
- Is there any assistive technology being used?
- What are the staffing patterns?
- What issues arise in the setting and, most importantly, how would you handle including the students you observe or work with in your classroom?

You might also add additional comments or observations that you deem as being significant to student learning or your teaching of students with special needs. Finally, discuss the role of the special education teacher and how do you see that as being different from the general education teacher?

MAPS Parent Advocacy Project

This service-learning project will give you an opportunity to be paired with a family who has a child with a disability. It will give you insight into parental concerns in planning for their child and the challenges they face on a daily basis. In addition, you will gain insight into the special education system and the IEP process. With the family and another class member, you will work through the process of informally assessing the child's needs and making recommendations based on your MAPS process and their individualized education plan (IEP). You will be required to make a minimum of 2-3 visits. One should be to the school the child attends.

The first visit will be one in which you introduce yourself to the family, begin to collect some family history and simply get to know the family. (It is preferable that you do another visit with the intention of spending time with the child within his/her context).

A second visit will be to the child's school. Parents will let the teacher know when you will be visiting (you will also be given a letter to take with you). This is an opportunity to see the child in the school and talk to the teacher. You should act as a visitor not "hanging on" the student with the disability, but rather observing the child in an unobtrusive manner.

The third visit will be to attend a school-planning meeting with the family (IEP or general planning. This will vary with each family as will the order of the visits). If you do not have the opportunity to attend an IEP meeting you should meet with parents to discuss potential goals and/or offer suggestions that you came up with in your MAPS process. If you do attend a meeting your role should be one of an observer and support to

the parent. The goal is for you to view the system from the perspective of the family. Some of you will not have the opportunity to attend a meeting; in this case, you should visit the family when your project is complete to give the child a copy of your MAP.

The time spent on this project will vary according to the relationship you develop. Meeting times should be arranged with the family. Please be aware that there may be some frustrations related to contact. Families have many things they are coordinating and sometimes may not get back to you immediately. You will be asked to submit a project based on your cumulative experience. The final project should include:

- Family case study: this is based on the time you spend with the family and the knowledge you gained about the family. It will be a description of their situation and should highlight information you acquired while talking to the family. The description should also include the status of the child and any assessment information the parents share.
- The next section of the project will describe the school and specific issues that you observe or discuss with the teacher. What is the situation for the child in the school and your analysis of what is happening?
- The final section will be the MAPS assessment process. We will go over this process together in class. You will present a final copy of the MAPS project to the family and a second will be turned in to me as part of the completed project. At the end of the MAPS project write goals and your recommendations after going through the process (and based on issues we have discussed in class). Given the information you collect, and looking at the IEP, goals and recommendations should reflect revision or additions to the IEP (please keep in mind that families may not use these goals but they are based on your insights and conclusions).

This project may be completed with your partner or alone. In other words, you may turn in one project and both receive the same grade or you may each turn in your own project. Projects should be typed. GET STARTED ON THIS PROJECT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

****Reminder****

Families are very busy and are graciously opening their doors to us, please respect this. In some situations you may have to call them several times. It is not that the family isn't interested, but often they are juggling many things. Each family has been given an outline of what you are expected to do. This does not always mean they will understand it thoroughly. If frustrations arise, be creative in thinking of ways to deal with them as they may be some of the same frustrations you will have to deal with as a professional. Feel free to discuss any issues with me.

Web quests

Working in groups of no more than four, you will be asked to develop a web quest that you can use with your students. A web quest is an inquiry-based online means of learning. The following sites will address the questions you have about web quests. Review these sites to familiarize yourself with web quests.

<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/w8-resources.html#sites>

http://www.educationworld.com/a_tech/tech/tech011.shtml

Your web quest can be on a specific disability or a topic related to the field (e.g. the history of a disability, use of music with students with disability, adaptive sports/recreation, etc.). You should each take a role in constructing the web quest and they should be posted on your pages in *Inside Augsburg (augnet)*, so they are accessible to all students. Be sure to include assistive technology in your web quest whenever possible.

Final Research/Philosophy Paper

Based on course materials, discussions, and your interactions with families, you will be required to write a final paper (minimum of 7-9 pages) highlighting your philosophy as it relates to special education. You should also discuss the basis of your developing philosophy. In your paper, please address (minimally) the following topics:

- How you will work to merge “special” and “regular” education; your thoughts about including students with disabilities in general education classrooms.
- What you will see as the major challenges to inclusion as well as the opportunities it presents; your concerns and anticipation of including students with disabilities in your classroom.
- Your understanding of current laws as they relate to students with special needs.
- What you see as the critical resources, which will support your ongoing professional development as a teacher, and what type(s) of information, support, and/or collaboration will improve your ability to fully include students with disabilities in your classroom.
- Your role as a special education teacher; what strengths do you possess that will (or does) enable you to provide instruction to students with disabilities.

Your paper should include at least 4 references from current texts or journals in the field (one reference may be from assigned course readings). All papers should be cited in APA format.

****Graduate Students Only****

Final Paper Extension:

You will extend the final paper to focus on the specific disability of the MAPS student you are working with (note: you may select a different disability, but you must get this change approved). The focus of this extension should be on the current status of the research and best practices related to the disability you have chosen. The final paper should be a minimum of 10-12 pages, include at least eight references from current texts or academic peer-reviewed journals (not more than 10 years old), and follow APA format.

Lesson Plans:

You will adapt two lessons for the child you are doing the MAPS process with. One lesson plan should be in the area of literacy or math and include adaptations that relate to

the IEP of the child (lesson plan adaptation should be based on regular education curriculum). The other lesson plan should include the use of assistive technology. What might be some ways technology would assist the student to meet his/her educational goals? You will explain its use and how it will assist the student. Also include three examples that you found useful in adapting the lesson for this child (this might include websites or sources where the technology could be acquired).

These assignments will be evaluated not only based on comprehensiveness of content but how clearly you critique and apply the information as it relates to the family with whom you have been involved.

Grading Criteria will be shared the first day of class (on the final syllabus).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Topics subject to change

Week 1

January 12

- Introductions and course overview
 - History of special education; introduction of special education disabilities
-

Week 2

January 26 (*note there is only one week until next class meets*)

- Special education as a social movement and concepts that guide the field: Normalization, mainstreaming, integration, inclusion, and beginning the IEP discussion
 - Special education language and terms
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Week 3

February 2

- Legislation and the IEP process (from parent and student perspectives)
 - The referral process
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Week 4

February 16 (*classes end at 11:30 today for the Convocation with Ned Holloway*)

- Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, Severe and Multiple Disabilities, Speech & Language Impairments, Traumatic Brain Injury and Giftedness
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Week 5

March 1

- Directing the work of paraprofessionals
- Emotional, Social and Behavior Disabilities, ADHD, Autism

Week 6

March 15

- Sensory Disabilities, Physical & Health Disabilities, Hearing Impairments, Visual Impairments
-

Week 7

March 29

- Disability across the lifespan (early intervention, adult services and ethical issues)
 - Class presentations
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Policies

Attendance: Attendance is expected in all class sessions. As mentioned earlier, if you know you will be missing a class, please take the course another time.

Individual Needs: Students requiring modifications for full participation in class should discuss their need with the instructor within the first week of class. All students have the right to use the Augsburg College Counseling Center, the Tutor Center, and the Writing Lab.

Honesty Policy: The Augsburg College policy on academic honesty applies to this course. All work submitted is expected to be your own; any ideas and information taken from another source must be accurately cited.

Confidentiality: All information that is shared in class is considered confidential. In order to foster a climate that is respectful and open, please do not share the content of class discussion with those outside of class. In order to protect the confidentiality of the students and families that you will be working with this semester, you may choose to use initials or different names when referring to them or their families.

Late Work: 10% will be deducted from your assignment for each day the assignment is late.

Technology Expectations: As an education department, we expect these entry-level technology skills from our students:

- Read and answer e-mail regularly and in a timely fashion using your Augsburg account
- Attach documents to e-mail, when required
- Make active use of online resources
- Access and use online file space (e.g. Inside Augsburg)
- Use word-processing for assignments
- Have the ability to access and navigate the internet