

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A. Course Prefix, Number and Title

EDU 720 Current Issues in Special Education

B. Number of Credit Hours

Three (3) credit hours

C. Course Description

The course examines divergent perspectives on critical issues or questions in the field of special education. The course is designed to enhance reflective thought on current topics in special education including, but not limited to: inclusion, collaborative and consulting teacher models, technology, legal aspects of special education including revisions to the IDEA Act, the IEP, dual diagnosis, transition services, and non-categorical approaches to teaching.

D. Method of Instruction

This course is framed within a constructivist perspective that embraces the belief that knowledge is socially constructed. Learning is viewed as a developmental process that is enhanced when students learn to view problems and issues from multiple perspectives, constructing knowledge from their own interpretations of numerous pieces of evidence. Teaching approaches are directed toward open-ended inquiry, critical thinking and reflection, and social interaction. Instructional methods will include whole class and small group discussion, individual and cooperative activities, presentations by instructors and classmates, internet and library searches, observations of instructional videos, field experiences, and research.

E. Course Objectives

The practicing teacher will:

1. utilize research including on-line resources to enhance teaching efficacy in the area of special education;
2. examine different perspectives on various current special education topics;
3. explore and evaluate trends in special education;
4. examine issues surrounding classification and labeling;
5. analyze functional assessment and special education decision making;
6. investigate curriculum based assessment and literacy instruction in special education;
7. develop a rationale and vision for collaborative consultation; and
8. examine inclusive community living opportunities.

F. Outline of Course Content

1. Organizational Strategies
2. School Service Delivery Approaches
3. Maximizing the Talents and Gifts of Students
4. Classification and Labeling
5. Assessment
6. Instructional Perspectives
7. Instructional Perspectives
8. Classroom Management
9. Collaboration/Consultation
10. Research Practices

11. Higher Education
12. Adult Service-Housing
13. Adult Service-Employment

G. Course Requirements

Textbook:

Brynes, Mary Ann: Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Special Education (4th edition, 2009).

Major Assignments:

- Reflective Summaries of each topic area
- Computer Search of one current issue in Special Education with Reflection
- Class Presentation on Current Issue of choice
- Course Portfolio
- Quizzes

Evaluation and Grading:

Evaluation is based on the quality of major assignments (80%), class attendance (10%), and participation (10%).

Attendance:

Attendance is considered an indicator of professional commitment and responsibility. Candidates are expected to attend all classes. Absences are permitted only for illness or serious personal matters. Excessive absences may jeopardize a student's course grade. A phone call, e-mail message, or not delivered to the instructor is required if you expect to miss a class.

Student Disclosure:

Candidates in this class with disabilities who may need additional academic accommodations are encouraged to discuss options with the professor during the first two weeks of class to ensure that appropriate modifications are made. Candidates needing additional accommodations should also have their records on file with the Office of Academic Support/Disability Services.

Academic Integrity:

"The integrity of an academic community necessitates the full and correct citation of ideas, methodologies, and research findings to the appropriate source. This is necessary to protect the original work, whether it is found in reference material, other published matter, or unpublished communication from faculty, other scholars, and fellow students. In addition, each student can promote academic honesty by protecting his or her work from inappropriate use. Academic honesty is essential to ensure the validity of the grading system and to maintain a high standard of academic excellence." Cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Candidates are strongly advised to appropriately cite references using APA formatting, including those taken from the internet.

Please refer to the information on Academic Integrity listed in the University Catalogue and online, for complete information regarding this policy.

