

SPECIAL EDUCATION (SPED)

Courses and Descriptions

SPED 500 The Inclusive Classroom: Effective Practices for General Education Teachers 3 Credits

This course is designed to introduce general education teachers to special education and the inclusive classroom. Students will explore current research, issues and practices in special education. Assignments and activities will enable students to develop the knowledge and skills to design and manage the instructional environment for diverse learners in inclusive and classroom setting. Attitudes and behaviors that influence children with special needs will be addressed.

SPED 504 Assistive and Augmentative Technology for Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Disabilities 3 Credits

This course will emphasize the use of assistive technology, augmentative communication modalities, visual supports, and related instructional methods and strategies that maximize the learning of individuals with autism spectrum disorders and other exceptional learning needs. Students will learn how to effectively customize materials and adapt learning environments using technology, with a specific focus on individuals with ASD. Students will become familiar with the use of high-tech, low-tech, and no-tech solutions that support the individualized needs of learners. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

Prerequisite(s): SPED 512.

SPED 505 A Comprehensive Approach to Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder 3 Credits

Through this course, students will learn theories related to instructing and assessing individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as evidence-based practices related to academic instruction. Effective interventions related to supporting the emotional, behavioral, and communicative needs of students with ASD across grade levels will also be addressed. The course begins by examining the characteristics of the disability, causes, early warning signs, diagnostic procedures, and early intervention practices. Specific practices related to instruction and intervention as well as how to best structure a classroom for students will be examined. Teachers will receive instruction in a variety of strategies and practices, as well as their theoretical underpinnings. Strategies for communicating effectively and efficiently with parents, as well as the most current and/or special issues in the field will also be discussed. Issues related to post-secondary transition and the specific needs of this population and their families will also be examined. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

Prerequisite(s): SPED 512.

SPED 512 Psychology of Exceptionality 3 Credits

This course provides opportunities for the study of school psychological issues associated with supporting students with exceptionalities. Philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education, and the characteristics of students with disabilities will be examined. Special education policy, legal foundations, and evaluation procedures are discussed. Current issues related to inclusive practice and intervention strategies are examined from a psychological and sociocultural perspective. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting. This course, or its equivalent, will be the prerequisite for all other SPED courses.

SPED 514 Applied Behavior Analysis for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other Behavior Needs 3 Credits

This course is designed to provide extensive knowledge and practice in meeting the behavioral challenges of individuals through Applied Behavior Analysis for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other behavioral issues. Candidates will receive instruction in a problem-solving approach to identify the possible function(s) of problem behavior and the design of proactive, positive behavior intervention plans that emphasize the teaching of appropriate alternative skills. An emphasis is placed upon behavior change strategies, which intervene on antecedent events, teach appropriate alternative skills, and provide supports in the natural environment. Multi-component interventions also are designed to include the interest and preferences of the target student. Legal and ethical considerations are considered. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

Prerequisite(s): SPED 512.

SPED 524 Collaboration and Inclusive Practice for Students with Mild and Severe Disabilities 3 Credits

This course will emphasize curriculum planning, learning environments, materials, and modifications for students with mild and severe disabilities. Instructional and behavioral strategies to maximize learning of all students, including those with exceptional learning needs in the general education classroom will be examined. Inclusive educational practices including collaboration, communication and positive behavior supports and co-teaching will be discussed and applied for diverse learners. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

Prerequisite(s): SPED 512.

SPED 531 Assessment for Instruction in Special Education 3 Credits

In this course, standardized and functional assessments are emphasized. Students are introduced to basic educational assessment procedures, norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, and individually-referenced assessment in this course. An emphasis is placed on gathering information to answer specific referral questions, and the use of assessment tools, which meet legal and ethical guidelines. A model of academic assessment most consistent with classroom practices is emphasized. Students are expected to measure an individual's performance (e.g., current level of functioning) and provide recommendations for instruction and learning goals and objectives. A field experience will enable students to apply knowledge to practice.

Prerequisite(s): SPED 512.

SPED 536 Instruction and Transition for Autism and Severe Disabilities 3 Credits

The course will provide students with the knowledge and skills to support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and those with moderate to severe disabilities. Strategies to address instruction, transition, behavior, and communication and will be emphasized across domains of life skills, inclusion, and transition. Transition planning, including understanding, formulating, and implementing the Individual Transition Plan will be taught. Collaborative interactions with school and community personnel and agencies will be addressed. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

Prerequisite(s): SPED 512.

SPED 539 Instructional Practices for Students with Disabilities 3 Credits

This course will give students the opportunity to evaluate, select, develop, and adapt instructional and assessment materials for individuals with mild to severe disabilities. Using various case studies, students will have the opportunity to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and synthesize assessment information to make appropriate instructional decisions addressing learner characteristic and classifications.

Curriculum planning, learning environments, modifications, and materials for diverse learner needs will be examined. Students will experience the collaborative process and develop their ability to function as part of an educational team. A field experience with children with disabilities will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

Prerequisite(s): SPED 512.

SPED 542 Literacy and Students With Special Needs 3 Credits

The course will provide an overview of theories, assessment, and intervention techniques for the literacy development of students with special instructional needs. Students will explore research validated methods for literacy development and instruction, including current strategies for teaching comprehension, composition, vocabulary, and language study. Management of literacy instruction is studied in a workshop setting. An experience in the field will enable students to apply knowledge in a realistic classroom setting.

Prerequisite(s): SPED 512.

SPED 580 Supervised Internship in Special Education 3 Credits

This supervised internship experience will provide students with an opportunity to connect theory and practice in special education during the summer. Students will work full-time in a setting with individuals with disabilities. After a brief period of orientation to the setting, the intern will assume a full load of teaching and/or supervisory responsibilities appropriate to the context of the experience. Seminar meetings will be required. Permission of the program advisor is required.

Prerequisite(s): SPED 512, SPED 514, SPED 523, SPED 525, SPED 531, SPED 535, SPED 539.

SPED 590 Professional Seminar in Special Education 3 Credits

This course addresses the current issues in the field of special education. Students will synthesize research and literature from the field of special education to address current issues and practice. Collaboratively, students will examine one area of special education through research and presentation. A reflective comprehensive view of special education including assessment, instruction, inclusive practice, assistive technology, Autism Spectrum Disorder, behavior, literacy etc. will be shared. Students are expected to complete a comprehensive exam in these related special education topics and submit 100 hours of supervised field hours. This course should be taken in the final semester of the MA program as it is the culminating reflective course of study.

Prerequisite(s): Permission of instructor.

SPED 600 Independent Study and Research in Special Education 1-3 Credits

The content of the course varies with the academic research interests of students who wish to engage in independent study related to topics in special education.