Legal Issues in Special Education  
SED 411-Spring 2018

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Office Hours: T/R 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Wednesdays 12-1:30 p.m. or by appointment

TEXTBOOK:


Other readings and materials will be provided by the instructor.

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will provide an introduction to legal aspects in special education as well as a foundation to legally navigate the Special Education process. Topics covered include the history and basics of special education law, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Other topics include the evaluation and assessment procedures and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

EXPECTATIONS:

Professionalism:

- Attend all class meetings (*prior arrangements* must be made with the instructor if you are unable to attend class).

Class participation:

- Students are encouraged and expected to participate in class discussions.

Class meetings:

- Class meets on Wednesdays generally, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Any changes will be announced in advance.

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Summarize the history of special education law
- Become familiar with landmark decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court that impacted special education
- Describe the major provisions of the IDEA, Section 504 and NCLB
- Identify the major litigation leading to the passage of IDEA
Discuss the application of a FAPE and how it compares to LRE
Explain considerations in sharing reports with the student and with family members
Explain the general requirements for assessment as mandated by federal laws
Consider legal and ethical considerations in assessment based on current federal and state legislation and common practices
Describe the process of review and evaluation of the IEP and the role of the family in the assessment process as outlined by federal law
Discuss and evaluate legal trends in special education
Develop legally sound procedures with respect to special education law

Academic Integrity

“Central to the purpose and pursuit of any academic community is academic integrity. All members of the Westminster community, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators, are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity, in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the College.”

“Academic dishonesty is a profound violation of this code of behavior”.

Academic misconduct will be addressed according to Westminster’s policy.

Special Needs

Students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations, as determined by the institution, after proper documentation of the disability has been received. At Westminster College, the Office of Disability Resources is responsible for determining necessary supports and accommodations to assist the student, in accordance with ADA guidelines/regulations. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the faculty member at the beginning of the school term, if reasonable accommodations are needed. Students with documented disabilities must be provided equal educational opportunities; therefore, reasonable accommodations will be made with the assistance of the Office of Disability Resources. A student must demonstrate competence in the areas covered within the scope of this course in order for successful completion of this course.
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Chapter Assignment**: Working alone or in dyads, you will design one course assignment that corresponds to the chapter(s) you will be presenting. This assignment should be based on the information provided in your book and is a way to ensure your classmates are reading the chapters before your presentation. You will email your “assignment” to me the week before your scheduled presentation and I will upload it to the Content section of our class D2L site by the Thursday before your presentation week. The students in class will be responsible for retrieving the assignment from the D2L class site and completing the work before the chapter is covered in class. This assignment can be either comprehension questions, creating a chapter outline, further research into related cases, etc. You may be as creative as you wish. The assignment will be collected at the beginning of each class and graded by both the group member(s) and myself following class that day. (25 points)

2. **Chapter Presentation**: Working alone or in dyads, you will design a one-hour long lesson presentation on an assigned book chapter(s). Your lesson will have 5 components.

   a. Each presentation will have 15-20 minutes of **direct instruction**. This can include your Introduction/Anticipatory set, if you’d like. (20 points)

   b. 20-25 minutes of your presentation will focus on a **group-based activity**. (20 points)

   c. You will incorporate at least **2 instructional methods** into your lesson. One will be a general education method (think Universal Design-such as Choral Reading, for example) and one special education method (i.e. Semantic map). Participation is required for all methods. [Many of you have already had the general ed. block and you will be covering special ed. methods/interventions in block this semester.] The purpose of this requirement is to encourage you to use what you are learning about in other classes and apply it to an actual lesson that you will teach your peers. (20 points)

   d. To conclude the lesson, you will have **1 accountability measure** incorporated into your lesson. (You may choose to add more.) Some other examples could be Pre/Post Tests, Group project. (20 points)

   e. Lastly, you will provide the class with **one “take away”** piece of information for future reference (i.e. Study aid for the PECT tests or a Journal Article about your topic). (20 points)

3. **Students will conduct an in-depth study** of what skills and dispositions are found with each of Danielson’s Four Domains. Students will write a 5-7 page literature review that outlines one sub-category per domain. (You will explain the actual Domain and then choose one sub-category to discuss). You will use current research linked to the sub-domains as found in the literature. Additionally, students will include one original source to support at least one theory or best practice for each domain (i.e. Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development). The final section of your paper will be an application section in which you will turn in one artifact that connects to each domain. You must follow APA style and sources must be reference-based or peer-reviewed-not Wikipedia 😔. (100 points)

4. **Class Participation**: Through active class participation, students will demonstrate an understanding of material (e.g. required readings, professional knowledge) covered and synthesize their knowledge in weekly coursework and class discussions. Any student missing two or more classes may be asked to withdraw. Unexcused absences and tardiness will have a negative impact on a student’s grade. All assignments will be due on
pre-determined dates. Turning in late assignments will result in a 5% drop in grade, unless excuse is accompanied by a written medical note or documented family emergency. Additionally, a professional manner at your field placement sites is expected. If the student believes he/she has incurred unfair treatment at the field site, contact the faculty member as soon as possible to address the issue. **Texting is prohibited during class.** Final grade will be affected (at the discretion of the faculty) if student engages in this activity. (50 points)

**FINAL GRADE:** The grading scale will be as follows:

**Grading**

- 94-100 Of all possible points= A
- 92-93 = A-
- 90-91 = B+
- 84-89 = B
- 82-83 = B-
- 80-81 = C+
- 74-79 = C
- 72-73 = C-
- 65-71 Of all possible points= D

Below 65= Failure of course

**Education majors must earn a minimum of a 3.0 in this course.**

**NOTE: The content of this syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.**

**Class Schedule: Spring 2018 Schedule**

The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule below as needed. Students are responsible for all the material in the class and textbook (even if we have not covered the textbook topics in class).

**Assessment & Testing Schedule**

- *NOTE: Chapter Reflections are due by the beginning of class each Wednesday for the weekly chapters assigned.*

**Legal Issues Schedule**

- Week 1
  - Jan. 17 **Chap. 1**
  - Ch. 1 and Ch. 2

- Week 2
  - Jan. 24 **Chap. 2-3**
  - Ch. 3 Presentation

- Week 3
  - Jan. 31 **Chap. 4/5**
  - Ch. 4 Presentation

- **Student Inventory Due**

- Week 4
  - Chap. 6/7
  - Ch. 5 Presentation

Feb. 13th 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Room 305
Week 5  **Chap. 8/9**  Ch. 6 Presentation
Feb. 14  *Kuwalo Visit 2/19*

Week 6  **Chap. 10/11**  Ch. 7 Presentation
Feb. 21  *Author Visit 2/27*  *Danielson Paper due*

Week 7  **Chap. 12/13**  Ch. 8 Presentation
Feb. 27th Tuesday room 305 from 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Week 8  **Chap. 14**  Ch. 9 Presentation
March 14

Week 9  **Chap. 15**  Ch. 10 Presentation
March 21

Week 10  **Chap. 16**  Ch. 11 Presentation

**Practicum and Other End of the Semester Important Information to Know:**

April 3-13th  First Practicum Placement
April 30th  All Group Meeting 10:00 a.m. IEP information; 10:30 a.m. De-brief
April 16-27th:  Second Practicum Placement
April 18th:  URAC
Mock IEP: May 4th 9:00 a.m.