New York University
Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development
Department of Teaching and Learning
Special Education Programs

SPCED-GE 2124 (001)
Individuals with Exceptionalities in School and Community

Semester: Fall, 2014
Instructor: Jay Gottlieb Ph.: (212) 998-5097
Office hours: Tues. 2:00-4:00PM e-mail: jg4@nyu.edu
and by appt. (office on 3rd fl. East Building)

A one-semester graduate course introducing key concepts in special education. The student is responsible for all reading materials and to attend all lectures. A final examination covering readings and lecture material will be given at the conclusion of the semester. The course will cover several major topics that affect individuals with exceptionalities. These include but are not limited to: the impact of history on current practices; State and Federal litigation and legislation, including IDEA and Sec. 504; unique and common aspects of various disabilities, including the role of legal definitions and social perspectives; the concepts of necessity and sufficiency of educational services; special education as preparation for life.

Please note that the class lectures will focus primarily, but not exclusively, on issues related to special education in urban schools. The characteristics and needs of students in urban schools are often different from those who attend suburban and rural school systems, as are the resources available to deal with those needs. These differences will be highlighted throughout the discussion on so-called high-incidence disabilities.

Instructor will distribute via e-mail weekly handouts throughout semester which students are required to read and be prepared to discuss in class. The emailed readings will be directed toward the lecture topic each week and will comprise the bulk of required readings. About 40 readings will be assigned during the semester and sent via email.

Students are also advised to read relevant chapters in the assigned text to gain a more comprehensive overview of special education. The text, identified below, does not concentrate on urban issues.


Course objectives:

At conclusion of course students will be expected to know:
- Historical basis for special education services in schools
- Legal and judicial underpinnings of special education
- Definitions of various categories of disability
- Characteristics of children enrolled in urban special education programs
- Range (continuum) of services available, preschool through post-secondary school
- Empirically determined efficacy of special education and related services
- Issues in racial disproportionately in special education placements

Weekly Lecture Topics

(note: the topics below may or may not be covered during the assigned week. Much depends on the quality of classroom discussion. If the discussion is rich and ongoing, it may delay the introduction of a new topic.

Session and Topic

September 2
Introduction to course and history of special education. Overview of course and requirements. Then, history of special education in public schools and the influences that led to the present state of special education. Determining purposes for special education; role of culture, immigration, assessment in shaping present-day special education.

September 9
Legislation and litigation. Judicial involvement in the schools beginning with Brown v. Board of Education. Federal litigation, including Larry P. V. Riles, Pace v. Hannon; Diana v. Stewart; Hobson v. Hansen, etc. establish role of judiciary in shaping practices. Conflicting judicial opinions require federal legislation to systematize practices. Passage of PL 94-142 in 1975; IDEA and its Amendments; Passage of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 504. Comparison of IDEA and Section 504. If possible, a special education attorney may provide the bulk of this lecture session.

September 16
Analysis of IDEA and corresponding State legislation. Six core principles. Defining LRE at the federal, state, and local levels; the IEP and its focus on observable (valid) behavior and assessments.

September 23
The IEP. Group work on IEP development and interpretation. Use of clinical information (educational and psychological evaluations) to help formulate the IEP. (instructor will provide completed IEP’s.)

September 30
Special education assessments. Contextualized within Protection in Evaluation Procedures as appearing in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Concepts of validity and reliability
reviewed. Also, discussion of standardized assessments, curriculum-based assessment and observational assessments.

October 7
Definitions and Models of disabilities. Legal (from IDEA and State legislation); Social interactionist (interaction between child characteristics and the environment in which characteristics are manifest); psychometric (especially for LD and MR); limitations of current definitions, including impact of fiscal constraints. Include consideration of racial/ethnic disproportions and reasons why.

**Characteristics of disabilities.**

October 21. Cognitive- Focus on levels of mental retardation and learning disabilities.

October 28. Social/affective. Focus on different models of thinking about emotional disturbances and autism.

November 4. Severe disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders, blindness, deafness and multiple disabilities.

November 11. Physical and neurological disabilities, including ADD/ADHD. (Review papers due)

**Outcomes 9 and their complexities**

November 18.
Efficacy of services. For whom and under what circumstances does special education work? Limitations of conclusions that can be drawn regarding efficacy. Discuss pedagogical approaches as they relate to outcomes, including curriculum adaptation. Analysis of efficacy of special education services in general and separately for self-contained placements; and for less restrictive placements. One session will be devoted to obtaining web-based assessment data from several school districts.

November 25
Individual, home, and society. Analysis of the tension that exists between the wishes of parents and the ability of society to deliver what parents want. Fiscal and political constraints; role of teachers, caregivers and their unions; balancing the needs of accountability for all and the rights and needs of the individual, using high-stakes assessments --including modifications-- as an illustrative example.

December 2
Educating children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. What is the least restrictive environment and how do we know that special needs youngsters are receiving the education they require in the least restrictive environment. An analysis of the strengths and limitations of our current conception of the LRE.
December 9
Ancillary topics and summary.

Requirements and Grading

Students will be required to submit a brief paper (about 6 pages) on one of three topics in special education: (1) the efficacy of the least restrictive environment; (2) the value of the IEP, or (3) uses of classroom assessments. Structure and requirements for the papers will be discussed in late September. Papers are due November 11, 2014.

The final exam will count for 60% of the grade. Content for the final exam will be drawn equally from readings and lectures. The paper will count 25% of the grade and class participation will count for the remaining 15%.