

**New York University**  
**Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development**

**Special Education, Disabilities Studies and Contemporary Art**

**Spring 2012**

**Instructor: Rytva Soni**

**Course Description**

In this course, we will examine the history of Special Education in the American public education system, as well as what it means to be a student with a disability today. We will study legal, social and cultural implications of having a disability in school in America today. The current trend in American schools is the full inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education environment, making it the responsibility of the classroom teacher to effectively integrate all students into the classroom. The teacher must be aware of both the nature of their student's disabilities and a range of strategies to help every student to succeed in their classwork. There are 14 generally recognized disability classifications today, each with its own unique impact on the educational life of the affected student. As art educators, we have a unique opportunity to help our students succeed in school: we will look at the current research into multiple intelligences and learning styles, where it becomes evident that using the arts; music, visual arts and dance, can allow access points to many students into the world of learning. Collaborating with general education teachers can help inform our pedagogical practice as well as deepen the educational experience of our students. We will explore that collaboration.

We will learn about the Individual Education Plan (IEP) that is developed for every student in special education, and how to use that as a teaching tool. We will learn to partner with the family, community, our colleagues and our students as we create a differentiated and welcoming classroom environment for all of our students.

**Required Texts**

- Alice M. Hammel and Ryan M. Hourigan (2011), *Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs: A Label-Free Approach*
- Tomlinson, Carol Ann (2001), *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*
- Deutsch Smith, Deborah, (any edition) *Introduction to Special Education: Making a Difference*
- Burnette, J., & Lokerson, J. E. (2006). Art teachers and special education law. In B. L. Gerber & D. M. Guay (Eds.), *Reaching and teaching students with special needs through art* (pp. 15–25). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.

## Assignments

**Assignment 1:** Attend at least one film in the **Reel Abilities: NY Disabilities Film Festival**. Write 1 page response

**Assignment 2:** Make a PSA defining one of the 14 defined disabilities. Use art as a lens to look at the disability

**Assignment 3:** Choose one disability and describe how it might manifest in the classroom. (It is fine if this is a situation you have experienced in your student teaching) What accommodations or strategies would you employ to help these students in your class? 2-3 pages. Cite at least 3 sources.

**Assignment 4:** There are organizations and NFPs related to almost every disability, offering tremendous resources and information. Research a successful contemporary artist with disabilities. 3 page paper exploring their disability, their art and the relationship between the two.

**Final Project:** Each student will be assigned an academic subject, a specific disability, and an age range to work with. Create a curricular unit of 3-4 lessons to accommodate both the students with disabilities in the classroom as well as the general education students. Be sure to integrate art fully with the indicated academic subject you were assigned in a way that increases student access.

## Evaluation:

Class participation, including attendance, reading and work completion:	10%
Assignment 1: ReelAbilities film festival response	10%
Assignment 2: PSA	10%
Assignment 3: Strategies for your students:	15%
Assignment 4: Art and disability	20%
Final Project: Collaborative Unit Plan	35%

## Evaluation Criteria

A = Excellent This work demonstrates comprehensive and solid understanding of course material and presents thoughtful interpretations, well-focused and original insights and well-reasoned analysis. "A" work includes skillful use of source materials and illuminating examples and illustrations. "A" work is fluent, thorough and shows some creative flair.

B = Good This work demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of course material, presenting a reasonable degree of insight and broad level of analysis. Work reflects competence, but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding. Source material, along with examples and illustrations, are used appropriately. "B" work is reasonable, clear, appropriate and complete.

C = Adequate/Fair This work demonstrates a basic understanding of course material but remains incomplete, superficial or expresses some important errors or weaknesses. Source material may be used inadequately or somewhat inappropriately. The work may lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations and may be hard to follow or vague.

D = Unsatisfactory This work demonstrates a serious lack of understanding and fails to demonstrate the most rudimentary elements of the course assignment. Sources may be used inappropriately or not at all. The work may be inarticulate or extremely difficult to read.

F = Failed. Work was not submitted or completed according to parameters (page length, topical focus, types of sources), or completely failed to express the most basic and elementary aspects of the course.

Plus (+) or minus (-) grades indicate your range with the aforementioned grades.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are responsible for understanding and complying with the NYU Steinhardt Statement on Academic Integrity. Please read that statement, which

Is available at <[http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic\\_integrity](http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity)>.

### **Students with disabilities**

Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the <<http://www.nyu.edu/csd>>Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 719 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

### **University Policy on Student Conduct**

The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University. This relationship takes an honor code for granted. Mutual trust, respect and responsibility are foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A University graduate school education aims not only to produce high quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens. For specific details about the NYU University Policy on Student Conduct please download and refer to the [NYU guide on student conduct](#).

**Week 1:**

Introduction to the course and each other

Distribute cards and have students write what they *know* about disabilities on one side and what they *feel* about disabilities on the other. Collect, shuffle and redistribute cards. Go around room for student self-introductions – tell us something about yourself, then read the card you received.

Class discussion about card knowledge and feelings regarding people with disabilities. Set class guidelines together.

Reading for week 2:

- Deborah Deutsch Smith, *Introduction to Special Education; Making a Difference* - Chapter 1
- Reading: Alice M. Hammel and Ryan M. Hourigan (2011), *Teaching Music to Students with Special Needs: A Label-Free Approach* pp3-38

**Week 2:**

Introduction to Disabilities and Special Education

Define disabilities. Historical overview of Special Education in the public schools in America and implications for all teachers. Specifics of ADA, IDEA, FAPE, NCLB, LRE

Reading for week 3:

- Hammel & Hourigan, pp 45-91
- Deutsch Smith, chapter 2

**Week 3:** Special Education laws continued. The IEP and 504. What are they? What is the difference? What are the classroom teacher's responsibilities to students with disabilities in their classroom?

Assignment 1: attend at least one film in the **ReelAbilities: NY Disabilities Film Festival**. Write 1 page response

**Festival. Write 1 page response**

Reading for week 4:

- Deutsch Smith, chapter 3

**Week 4:** Overview of the 14 disabilities – what are they and how do they manifest?

Implications for the classroom. The role of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Assignment 2, PSA defining one of the 14 disabilities, looking through the lens of art as a vehicle of expression. Due week 7

Reading for week 5:

- Deutsch Smith, chapters 4,5,6

- Blackboard reading: Andra Nyman & Anne Jenkins; *Issues and Approaches to Art for Students with Special Needs* pages tba

**Week 5:** High incidence disabilities; explore manifestations and accommodations, in and out of the art classroom.

Reading for week 6:

- Deutsch Smith, chapters 7,8,9

**Week 6:** Low incidence disabilities. Prevalence, definitions and characteristics. Societal response and family realities. What can we expect in the art classroom, and how do we adapt our lessons for inclusion?

Reading for week 7 (blackboard):

- *Harnessing the Power of Art for Children with Special Needs* by Maureen McCarthy;
- Excerpts from *Art Education and Disability Studies perspectives on Mental Illness Discourses* by John K. Derby

**Week 7:** PSA's due – screening and discussions of student PSAs

Reading for week 8:

- *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms*, Carol Ann Tomlinson, pp 1-31, 39-93
- Hammel/Hourigan, chapters 5, 6

**Week 8:** What is Differentiation? Learning in the art classroom.

Learning styles Inventories – Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Creating a differentiated art classroom.

Assignment 3 given out, due week 9.

- Tomlinson, pp 32-38

**Week 9:** Many of the behavioral issues that we see in the art classroom can be disability- based. Developing strategies to intervene before behaviors derail the class. Class discussion about differentiating an art classroom through use of art supplies and materials to meet student need and capability.

Readings for week 9:

- Hammel & Hourigan, chapter 5
- Bernett and Lokerson reading TBA

**Week 10:** In any given art classroom, at least 10% of your students will be diagnosed with disabilities. (as many might be undiagnosed) How do you strategize for the inclusive art classroom?

Readings for week 10:

- Tomlinson, pp42-85
- Blackboard readings TBA

**Week 11:** Visiting Teaching artist TBA. Collaboration – inter-and intra-departmental.

Using art as a tool to access other knowledge: Art is a powerful tool with which to allow students with many disabilities explore and expand their access to academics. Art teachers today increase their value in within the faculty when they can collaborate successfully with academic teachers.

Assignment 4: research successful contemporary artists with disabilities. 3 page paper exploring their disability, their art and the relationship between the two. Due week 12.

**Week 12:** Visiting Teaching artist continued.

Final Project Assigned: Create a unit plan of at least 4 lessons showing collaboration between art and an academic subject. Indicate what age, subject, disability(ies) you are planning for. Gear this to what you have learned about how the contemporary artists you researched felt that art did, or might have allowed them greater access to their educational experience. (for example, students with dyslexia who can show their learning through art, rather than just writing)

Blackboard readings TBA

**Week 13:** Students will present the unit plans and accommodations they have created for their final project (half class).

**Week 14:** Final Projects presentations –balance of class. Course wrap-up