

University of New Hampshire
Education Department
Special Education Program

SYLLABUS

ED 854: Contemporary Issues in Developmental Disabilities

Instructor: Cheryl M. Jorgensen, Ph.D.

4 credits - Fall 2001

THIS SYLLABUS IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS: Part I is the course description and requirements; Part II contains grading policies and rubrics; Part III contains a weekly topical outline, reading assignments, and due dates.

Part I: Course Description and Requirements

This course will explore several “essential questions” pertaining to individuals who are labeled as having developmental disabilities, including:

What are differing views of the definition of “developmental disability?”

What factors influence our view of people with labels of “developmental disabilities?”

What attitudes, values, and practices contribute to quality educational and life experiences for people with a label of “developmental disabilities?”

How do beliefs, practices, and systems need to change in order to support quality educational and life experiences for people with a label of “developmental disabilities?”

What is an educator’s role in supporting quality inclusive educational experiences for students who have a “developmental disability” label?

The issues that will be explored during the first half of the course include: history of societal treatment of individuals with disabilities; medical and other models of the “causes” of disability; disability as a social construct; labeling and myths about people with disabilities; comparison between the deficit and competence paradigms of disability; the importance of supporting communication for all; and a comparison between the “human services” model of support and “individualized models of support.” During the second half of the course, there will be a particular focus on educational issues for students with labels of autism, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and/or multiple disabilities.

Teaching and Learning Styles

Learning experiences in this class will include:

- **listening** to the personal stories of and **having conversation** with people who experience a label of developmental disability and/or their family members
- **reading** the professional literature in the field
- **viewing** videotapes that depict critical issues or best practices
- guided small group and whole class **discussions**
- personal **reflection** about these topics and learning experiences and related **writing** assignments

Each class will follow the same basic format, including: handing in and handing back assignments; announcements and/or clarifying assignments; the introduction of a topic and the “essential questions” that underlie that topic; presentation of some didactic information about the topic; in-class cooperative learning (e.g., jig saw) activities for gaining new information; small group and whole class discussions; viewing of videotapes or listening to audiotapes; listening to and having dialogue with guest speakers; thinking and writing about a topic or question; and reminders about due dates for assignments.

If you have a formal accommodation plan developed in conjunction with UNH’s ACCESS (Disability Support Services) Office or would like to discuss with me the supports that you need in order to learn well in this class, please make an appointment within the first week of class. All class materials will be on Blackboard and other technological adaptations and instructional supports are available through consultation with the instructor, the ACCESS office, the Center for Academic Resources, the Counseling Center, and Computing and Information Services.

Office Hours and Contacting Me

Office: 7 Leavitt Lane, Institute on Disability, near West Lot Parking in the Printing and Mail Services Building

Phone: 862-4678

Email: cherylj@cisunix.unh.edu

I am VERY difficult to reach by phone but I check my email every day. I have office hours by appointment only, but will be on campus every Monday from 8 a.m. until after class.

Prerequisites

none

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students will have made progress towards achievement of the following competencies:

1. PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

1.1 Demonstrates through language and practice a belief in the inherent value of students with disabilities and the philosophy that disability is a natural part of the human experience.

1.2 Presumes competence in students with disabilities by having high expectations for their learning and the development of their literacy skills.

1.3 Demonstrates a belief in the value of diversity by including students in age-appropriate, typical classrooms in local schools.

1.4 Promotes the development of students' self-determination and their graduation to typical adult lives in inclusive community settings.

7. LEADERSHIP AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

7.1 Uses leadership skills to promote quality inclusive education, students' access to augmentative and alternative communication and assistive technology, and general school reform and systems change.

7.2 Provides intensive and sustained support to teams as they make decisions regarding students' educational programs.

7.3 Coordinates and provides professional development for professionals, administrators, paraprofessionals, family members, and the general community in the areas of inclusive education and communication supports for students with disabilities.

7.4 Promotes the development of students' self-determination and the leadership skills of their families by connecting them with self-advocacy and community resources.

Course Requirements

- Attend class meetings
- Participate effectively in class discussions and small group activities
- Complete the assigned reading
- Write 3 critical analysis papers that discuss an "essential question" about 3 of the assigned readings
- Write 3 Guest Speaker Reaction Papers
- Read a "first person" book and write a book report about it
- Complete the "Day in the Life" activity, experiencing a school day from the perspective of a student who experiences significant disabilities, and write a reflection paper about the experience.

Required Readings

BOOKS

You are required to read *portions* of three books this semester:

Selected chapters from both of these books:

Snow, Kathie (2001). Disability is Natural. Woodland Park, CO: BraveHeart Press.
Donnellan, Anne & Leary, Martha (1995). Movement Differences in Autism and Mental Retardation. Madison, WI: DRI Press.

All of one of these two books:

Williams, Donna (1994). Somebody, Somewhere. New York, NY: Times Press.
Sienkiewicz-Mercer, Ruth (1989). I Raise My Eyes to Say Yes. West Hartford, CT: Whole Health Books.

The books are available at the Durham Book Exchange.

READINGS PACKET

A “readings packet” is available at Durham Copy. Some of these readings will be assigned, some will be read in class, and others are for your general reference.

Part II: Grading Policy and Evaluation Rubrics

Evaluation

The student and the instructor will both evaluate each assignment using a 5-point rubric:

- 0 = Did not hand in/attempt the assignment
- 1 = Novice
- 2 = Basic
- 3 = Proficient
- 4 = Advanced Mastery

If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's evaluation of an assignment, it may be done over and the better grade will count towards the final course grade. At the end of the course, the student's self-evaluation scores and the instructor's scores will be computed. If the instructor's grade is lower than the student's self-evaluation, they will try to resolve the discrepancy through discussion. In the event that complete agreement cannot be reached, the instructor's grade will stand.

Grading

The graduate school allows the following grades to be given: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, and F. Each instructor may construct his or her own grading system, using all or some of these grading points.

GPA's are not formally calculated for graduate students. Auditing students receive AU audit credit, not grades. Only under special circumstances may a grade below a B- be counted towards a graduate degree. Refer to the graduate catalog or your program advisor for more information on grading policy at UNH.

The relationship between the rubric evaluation system and the grade for this course is as follows:

<u>Average Rubric Score Range</u>	<u>Grade</u>
0.0 up to but not including 1.0	F
1.0 up to but not including 2.0	D
2.0 up to but not including 2.5	C
2.5 up to but not including 3.0	B
3.0 up to but not including 3.5	A-
3.5 up to 4.0	A

Rubrics for Evaluating the Quality of Class Assignments and Course Requirements

ATTENDANCE

The development of leadership skills necessary for a professional special or general educator is enhanced by a collaborative learning environment. You must come to class in order to learn from the instructor's lectures, presentations by the guest speakers, small group activities, and whole class discussions.

4 = Missed one class.

3 = Missed two classes.

2 = Missed three classes.

1 = Missed four classes.

0 = Missed more than four classes.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Everyone learns differently, expresses their growing understandings at a different pace, and uses conversation and dialogue in a unique way. A professional educator must be a highly skilled communicator who can express ideas and opinions clearly, engage in reflective dialogue when differing viewpoints are held, and use effective leadership skills to support others to adopt positive attitudes towards and exemplary education programs for students with disabilities. Class participation offers valuable practice for the development of these skills.

4 = I fully engaged myself with the course material both in class and outside of class. I took full responsibility for my own learning. I helped to create an interactive, collaborative environment in class by sharing my views, encouraging my classmates to participate, and by asking questions.

3 = I took my learning seriously and was engaged with the course content both in class and outside of class. I took responsibility for my own learning but not to the greatest extent that I could have. I participated in most class discussions.

2 = I did what I needed to do this semester to meet the requirements for the course, but I did not engage myself much with the course material. I sometimes found myself daydreaming in class, correcting papers, or doing non-class related things. I made a

few positive contributions to the discussion but was content to let others talk and "carry the ball" during class. I didn't take much responsibility for my own learning.

1 = I was disengaged from the learning process and didn't attempt to speak to the instructor about this problem. I rarely made comments, asked questions, or engaged in small or large group discussions.

0 = I never participated in class.

READINGS (self-assessment only)

Only students themselves know if they have read the assigned papers or chapters. Thus, the assessment of the readings will be done only by the students.

4 = I read all the assigned reading and shared what I was reading both in and outside of class with other students, my colleagues, and perhaps my family and friends. As I was reading, I thought deeply about the viewpoints of the authors/subjects and the students that I know or teach. I found myself greatly affected by these readings and am confident that my philosophy and practice has probably changed as a result. I also shared new information or techniques with others and have begun to make some "systemic changes" in our program/school/graduate program as a result.

3 = I read most of the assigned readings and shared my reflections on the readings with some colleagues and my classmates. I enjoyed reading about new ideas and topics and implemented a few of the ideas in my daily practice or in my graduate coursework.

2 = To be honest, I didn't make the commitment to reading all of the assigned readings, or read them hurriedly the night before class. Even when I read I didn't take time to think about the implications for my practice or my career.

1 = The readings that were handed out were filed away in my course folder and I didn't do more than skim them.

0 = I didn't do the readings.

GUEST SPEAKER REACTION PAPERS/"FIRST PERSON" BOOK REPORT/"ESSENTIAL QUESTION" CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPERS

Length of a paper alone is not an indicator of quality. These papers should not be longer than 3 double-spaced pages and a concise and articulate reflection or critical analysis paper might be one page long.

4 = I used the assignments as a valuable structure for reflecting on my own learning related to the guest speaker, “first person” book, or the readings from the professional literature. My writings were well-organized, insightful, and related to my growing understanding of the topic or my daily practice. I offered several specific examples from the guest presentation, the “first person” book, and/or the professional literature to support my opinions.

3 = I used the assignment as a structure for reflecting on my own learning related to the guest speaker, “first person” book, or professional literature. I offered one or two specific examples from the guest presentation or the “first person” book to support my opinions. Sometimes, however, they were written in haste, and I could have spent more time reflecting on the relationship between the topic and my work.

2 = For the most part I wrote superficial papers, didn’t pay attention to writing conventions, and rarely thought about the implications for my practice. I didn’t use examples from the presentations, the “first person” book, or the reading to support my opinions.

1 = For the most part the papers had little meaning for me, and rarely did I use them as a tool for reflecting on my own learning. They were perfunctory, hastily written, and superficial. I didn’t use examples from the presentations, the “first person” book, or the literature to support my opinions.

0 = I did not do the papers.

“A DAY IN THE LIFE” ACTIVITY AND REFLECTION PAPER

Educators often begin their professional education by learning to “observe” and “assess” students. The purpose of this assignment is different – it is meant to offer you an opportunity to experience a school day from the perspective of a student with a label of developmental disability. It offers an opportunity to compare a student’s real life experience with the “ideals” expressed in the course readings and guest presentations.

4 = I approached this activity eagerly, realizing that teachers rarely get an opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of our students -- to experience school from their perspective. I followed the student through all of his/her school day and my reflections were comprehensive and well thought out, with detailed focus on communication demands and opportunities. As a result of doing this assignment I have already changed at least one aspect of how I think about or approach the work of including students. I wrote a high quality paper.

3 = Although I was a bit worried about the time it would take to do this assignment, I completed the assignment as required. I followed the student through about half of his/her day, paying special attention to communication demands and opportunities. I wrote a quality paper for this assignment.

2 = When this assignment was handed out all I could think about was how much time it would take. I didn't really make the commitment to experience a whole school day from a student's perspective because I just wasn't convinced that any big "ah ha's" would come of it, so truthfully, I just followed the student for part of the day. I completed the paper as required but probably won't make any changes in my thinking or practice as a result of this assignment.

1 = I neglected to complete this assignment and didn't speak to the instructors about making it up.

0 = I did not do this assignment.

Part III: Topical Outline, Reading Assignments, and Due Dates

Date/Class	Topic	Presenter/s (Guest presenters in italics)	Reading	As
9/10 #1	Course description, essential questions for the course, schedule, assignments, personal introductions	Cheryl Jorgensen	<u>Disability is Natural</u> Chapters 1 and 2 1 st person book (read all by the end of the semester)	
9/17 #2	History	Cheryl Jorgensen	<u>Disability is Natural</u> Chapter 3	
9/24 #3 w/ ED 751/851 class	Models Family Perspective	Cheryl Jorgensen Beth Dixon	<u>Disability is Natural</u> Chapters 4 and 5	Fi pa
10/1 #4	Labeling	Cheryl Jorgensen	Disability is Natural Chapter 6 <u>Movement Differences</u> Section I	
10/8 #5 w/ ED 751/851 class	Competence	Rae Sonnenmeier Cheryl Jorgensen	<u>Movement Differences</u> Section II	

Date/Class	Topic	Presenter	Reading	As
10/22 #6 w/ ED 751/851 class	Competence	<i>Jeff Williamson</i> <i>Zachary Rossetti</i> Cheryl Jorgensen	Disability is Natural Chapters 7, 8, 9	Fir rea
10/29 #7	Old versus New Systems	Mary Schuh Cheryl Jorgensen	<u>Disability is Natural</u> Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13	Se an
11/5 #8	New Paradigm of "Disability"	<i>Cheryl Jorgensen</i>	"The Evolution of Best Practices in Educating Students with Severe Disabilities"	
11/13 #9	History of Special Education and Inclusive Education	Cheryl Jorgensen	<u>Disability is Natural</u> Chapter 16 "Rings Around Rosie"	Se pr pa
11/19 #10	Infants and Toddlers: Family Centered Early Supports and Services	<i>Leigh Zoellick</i> <i>Ann Dillon</i> Cheryl Jorgensen	"Preparing the Ground for What is to Come" <u>Inclusive Schooling Practices: Pedagogical and Research Foundations</u> Pgs. 37-71	

Date/Class	Topic	Presenter	Reading	As
11/21 #11	Rationale for Inclusive Education	Cheryl Jorgensen	"Philosophical Foundations of Inclusive Restructuring Schools" "Organizational Factors Related to Student Success"	Th pa
11/26 #12	Inclusive Education: Best Practices	Carol Tashie Cheryl Jorgensen	"What Have We Learned About Creating Inclusive Elementary Schools?" <u>Changes in Latitude, Changes in Attitude</u>	
12/3 #13	Inclusive Education: Strategies and Supports Role of Inclusion Facilitators	Frank Sgambati Cheryl Jorgensen	<u>Disability is Natural</u> Chapter 15	Th rea
12/10 #14	Course Wrap-Up: A Life in the Community	Jocelyn Gallant Cheryl Jorgensen		"