

 Syllabus

Syllabus

EDU 721: Special Education Law

4 Credits, Online

Winter Term 2009, January 10 - April 3

(Holidays: Martin Luther King Day, 1/19)



Last Updated: November 20, 2008

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Course Description

The current field of special education was established by law and further refined through the courts in litigation. In this class, students trace the historical development of federal, state, and local laws and regulations such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Acts (IDEA) and the New Hampshire Standards for the Education of Students with Disabilities. Learners will gain an understanding of the relationship between constitutional law, statutory law, regulatory law and case law as it relates to current special education law. The focus on policies and procedures provides the background future teachers and paraprofessionals need to fulfill their legal and ethical responsibilities and to understand the changing dynamics of special education law.

Prerequisites

PSY 509 Human Development or PSY 508 Child Development, and EDU 510 Foundations of Education

Learning Outcomes

This course is designed for prospective general and special education teachers. This course may also assist paraprofessionals in increasing their knowledge and understanding of their roles. It is intended to impart knowledge about legislation at the federal and state levels. The course will aid prospective teacher candidates in understanding the law and legal proceedings that govern special education.

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

1. examine and analyze the historical development of special education law.
2. identify and examine principles established by litigation that affect the education of students with disabilities.
3. explain and evaluate legal rights and responsibilities of special needs students and their families, teachers, and schools.
4. analyze and evaluate state and federal legislation regarding students with disabilities in relation to educational practices.
5. examine and prioritize ethical issues teachers may encounter in relation to special needs students and their families.
6. compare and contrast state and local policies and procedures for the education of students with disabilities.
7. reflect on best practices through written assignments and through selection of work samples

for their professional portfolio.

Course Resources

Textbook:

Weber, Mark C., Mawdsley, Ralph, and Redfield, S. (2008). **Special Education Law: Cases and Materials**. Newark, NJ. Matthew Bender and Co. Inc., LexisNexis ISBN-10: 1422420728 (ISBN-13: 9781422420720)

The textbook is available online at MBS Direct at: <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/gsc.htm> (The course-CRN number for ordering this textbook is: 20120). Textbooks can also be purchased from MBS via phone, mail or fax. For additional information, visit the [Online Bookstore](#) section of the college web site.

PLEASE NOTE: It is the learner's responsibility to have purchased all required course materials before the start of the course. Learners are expected to meet all course expectations even if the shipment of a required textbook or other learning resource is delayed. Be sure to choose the shipping option that will get your text/resource delivered in a timely manner.

Blackboard Orientations

There are no face-to-face sessions for this course. If you have never taken an Online Interactive Course (OIC) at the college, we highly recommend that you attend one of the [2-hour Blackboard Orientation sessions](#) available throughout the state. If you choose not to attend a face-to-face session, you are encouraged to view our new [Online Orientation with audio](#) at your own convenience.

Description of Course Activities and Requirements

This course is organized around major themes in special education law, federal and state legislation and federal, state and local cases that have shaped the practice of special education in our schools. Students will be asked to brief three cases during the course, complete 3 quizzes and a final exam, and contribute weekly to the discussion board forums.

Participation in the course and on the Discussion Board

Participation means logging in every other day or so, being active in the Discussion Sessions and displaying knowledge of the reading material on a weekly basis. At the start of each module, I will post one or two chapter-related discussion questions. You will be asked to post your opinions, ideas, and reactions for others to see at his/her convenience. During the week, you are to respond to the postings of two other students. The key to making this interaction meaningful is not how many times you post; it's the quality of your thinking and reflection that counts the most. Participation is worth 30% of your grade (see below). See the Participation Rubric within the Course Contents for additional details on how you'll be graded on your participation.

Chat Sessions

Throughout this course the instructor plans to hold question and answer (Q & A) chat sessions. In the Q & A chats, students will have the opportunity to speak with the instructor and ask questions about the assignments, project, and their progress in the course.

Quizzes

Quizzes are meant to ensure your mastery of basic concepts, vocabulary and applications from each module. These quizzes will be multiple choice and are not timed. More information provided within the course. Quizzes are worth 30% of your final grade.

Student Case Briefs

Throughout the course students will be asked to read various court rulings and administrative hearing decisions and prepare three case briefs. A case brief is a short summary and analysis of a case, prepared by the student, as a tool to understand the decision. Student briefs are useful for discussion and preparation for exams. A format for preparing your student case briefs will be provided for you. See the Student Case Brief page for additional instructions. See the Guidelines for Writing a Student Brief in Course Contents for additional details. It will help you organize your notes, in a systematic way, in order to sort out the parties, identify the issues, ascertain what was decided, and analyze the reasoning behind decisions taken by the courts. Student Case Briefs are worth 30% of your final grade.

Final Exam

The final exam consists of three parts. Part one is multiple choice and matching, part two is short answer and part three is an essay question. The final is a summative assessment of the concepts, vocabulary and case law that learners have become familiar with during the term. The Final Exam is worth 10% of your final grade.

Performance Evaluation

Grades will be assigned using Granite State College guidelines, rubrics and scales. It is anticipated that there will be text and online reading and off-line writing each week.

Course grades will be based on an evaluation of the student's performance on the following:

Activity	% of Final Grade
Course Participation	30%
Quizzes	30%
Student Case Briefs	30%
Final Exam	10%
Total	100%

Granite State College Standard Grading Scale

Grade	Percent	Grade Points	Level of Achievement
A	95-100	4.0	Excellent
A ⁻	90-94	3.67	
B ⁺	87-89	3.33	Good
B	84-86	3.0	
B ⁻	80-83	2.67	
C ⁺	77-79	2.33	*Acceptable
C	74-76	2.0	
C ⁻	70-73	1.67	†

D ⁺	67-69	1.33	Poor
D	64-66	1.00	
D ⁻	60-63	0.67	
F	≤59	0	Failure, no credit
*A grade of C or better is required to fulfill requirements in the major, minor, or general education core at GSC. Please consult the GSC catalog for details.			
† A grade of C ⁻ or below generally does not transfer to other academic institutions.			

Course Schedule & Topics

This course is organized into eight modules, each centered on key aspects of understanding the law and legal proceedings that govern special education. The outline of the general reading assignments and discussion topics is provided below. Note, though, that this schedule may change and the final version is posted within the course. More details on specific assignments are available within the course when you register for this class.

Module Title and Date	Module Description	Assignments
Module 1: Becoming a Learning Community Jan. 10 - 16	In Module One we will get to know each other as we become familiar with the online tools we will use in the course, preview our text and categorize the laws and cases we will be covering. Also, instruction will be provided for the brief writing project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Read Chapters 1 & 2
Module 2 : The Legal System and the History of Special Education Jan. 17 - 23	This module will build the foundation for students to discover how laws are developed in an interactive process of legislation, regulation and litigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 3 & 4 • Quiz on Chapters 1-3 • Discussion Board postings
Module 3: People First - Roles in the Special Education Process Jan. 24 - Feb.6	This module explores the roles of students, parents, teachers, administrators and other related service providers. Constitutional protection, eligibility criteria to be identified as a child with an educational disability, case law under section 504 and special situations are the legal topics that will be covered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 5 & 6 • Discussion postings • First brief due to instructor
Module 4: Three legal concepts in IDEA - FAPE, LRE and Related Service Feb. 7 - 13	Students will apply the Rowley Standard, least restrictive environment philosophy and the provision of related services determination to court cases and local hearing decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 7 -10 • Quiz (ch.4-8) • Discussion postings
Module 5: The First Amendment and Educational Services: School Choice, Incarcerated Juveniles, Transition Services and Cost Issues.	Constitutional issues covering the separation of church and state, the juxtaposition between IDEA requiring education in least restrictive environments and the realities of incarcerated youth, and who pays for which services are all issues that will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 11, 12 & 13. • Second Brief due to instructor. • Discussion postings

Feb. 14 - 27	be explored in this module.	
Module 6: Due Process and Compensatory Education Feb. 28 - Mar. 6	This module will explore issues of the fourteenth amendment and a student's property right to education, privacy issues as related to school and medical records and the consequences for misconduct in special education cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text Chapters 14, 15 & 16. • Quiz (Chap 13 -16) • Discussion postings.
Module 7: Remedies: The Outcomes Mar. 7 - 20	This module includes exploration of the remedies in special education such as reimbursement, compensatory education, and attorney's fees are remedies that have been legislated and litigated in special education cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 17 & 18 • Third brief due to instructor • Discussion postings
Module 8: The Future of Special Education Law March 21 - Apr. 3	What future trends are developing that will impact special education in our schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 19. • Final exam

Note: The content of this syllabus is subject to change as needed.

Library Resources

Granite State College has a Virtual Library (<http://www.granite.edu/current-students/virtual-library/>) available 24/7 with access to the full-text of thousands of journals and professional periodicals, an online Reference Room, selected Internet resources, writer's resources, research and citation help, and a collection of tutorials. The databases are password protected.

See GSC Library tab in MyGranite for username and password. In addition, the **Library Info** link in the course menu provides direct links to research databases, *Research FAQs* and more.

Academic Resources and Information Services

Academic assistance to students is available at GSC Centers at no additional charge in such areas as basic skills preparation in reading, writing and math; study skills and research and citation help. Academic Resources staff members work closely with faculty and students toward academic success. A whole range of tools is available, including study and time management tips, APA and MLA citation assistance, access to learning resources online, and feedback on course writing projects. To contact an Academic Resource and Information Coordinator, see the Academic Resource Link on the Resources page in the course menu or go directly to http://bbresources.granite.edu/course_docs/acad_resources.htm.

Technical Assistance

For assistance with issues related to accessing the MyGranite portal, GSC email, Webrock, online courses or other technical issues related to any of the Blackboard tools, please visit the GSC Technical Assistance Center (<http://bbresources.granite.edu/techassist/help.htm>) for answers to the most frequently asked questions or to submit an online help request form. Or call **1-888-372-4270** (Hours: M-F, 8:30-5:00, messages checked twice daily on weekends. Extended hours for the week before start of the term and first week of the term: M-Th, 8:00-7:00.)

Documented Disabilities / Americans with Disabilities Act

Granite State College will provide qualified individuals with disabilities the same educational opportunities available to persons without disabilities. When an individual's documented disability creates a barrier to educational opportunities, the College will attempt reasonable accommodation to remove the barrier. If you need assistance, we recommend that you make contact early to ensure that your requests can be reviewed prior to the start of each term. If you wish to apply for accommodations, contact your academic advisor or the Dean of Learner Services in Concord. See the complete Granite State College policy in the current college catalog for further details.

Academic Honesty

An academic community is based on honesty and integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty are not acceptable at Granite State College. Faculty and students have a joint responsibility to ensure the integrity of learning.

All work that you submit must be your own except in those instances when your instructor gives specific permission to collaborate. When quoting, summarizing or explaining ideas that are based on another's work, whether in print or online, make sure to cite references appropriately. Plagiarism is using another's words or even paraphrasing another's work without giving proper credit through the use of citations.

For Granite State College's complete [academic honesty policy](#), see the current college catalog.

Conduct in the Online Classroom

Membership in society implies minimal norms for civil behavior towards one another. It is Granite State College's expectation that all members of our college community treat faculty, staff, and fellow learners with respect. Learners need to be knowledgeable of and comply with college policies. Each individual is accountable for his/her actions and for the consequences of any behavior that is inconsistent with these values and expectations.

Institutional Assessment

Assessment is an ongoing process that enables the College to improve its programs, courses, and teaching methods. Institutional evaluation may be embedded in tests, exams, and other measurements of student learning. As members of a learning community, students, faculty, and staff will be expected to participate in the important process of assessment on occasion. Confidentiality of any data that identify participants is maintained.
