

PSY 326-01: Introduction to Intellectual Impairments  
Grand Valley State University  
Fall 2021

**Instructor Information:**

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**Course Information:**

Location: 174 Lake Ontario Hall  
Time: 8:30 am – 9:45 am  
Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays  
Prerequisites: PSY 101 and PSY 301  
CRN: 15360

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 11:30 to 12:30 pm or by appointment. Email is the best way to contact me. I will try my best to get back to you as soon as possible.

**Course Description (from catalog):**

This class is an overview of historical perspectives, current practices, and lifespan issues for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The course covers diagnostic and assessment practices, etiology, prevention and intervention strategies.

**Objectives:** Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Explain the evolving nature of terminology and practices in the field of intellectual disabilities
2. Describe how intellectual and developmental disabilities are diagnosed, including relevant assessment instruments and issues related to classification
3. Articulate the biological and psychosocial factors that contribute to intellectual and developmental disabilities
4. Describe a variety of current interventions, including biomedical interventions, early intervention practices, and school and community-based interventions
5. Describe contemporary practices related to lifespan planning for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families
6. Explain relevant literature/research in regard to intellectual disability

**Required Text:**

- Wehmeyer, M., Brown, I., Percy, M., Shogren, K., Fung, W.L. (2017). *A comprehensive guide to intellectual & developmental disabilities (Second Edition)*. Brookes.
- Additional required readings will be placed on Blackboard.

**Grading:**

Final grades are calculated by dividing your total number of points by the total points possible. I typically round up to the next percentage point at .6 and above. I utilize the following grading scale to determine the final grade. Please note: I do NOT offer extra credit on an individual basis, nor do I negotiate final grades. Assignments will be accepted up to three days late with a 25%-point reduction. After that, they will not be accepted with the exception of specific circumstances that are approved by the instructor.

## Points Possible

Choice Assignment	20
Controversial Issues	10
Article Summary	5
Group Project	25
Peer Review	5
Application	25
Midterm	50
Final Exam	50

## Grading Scale

A	93 and above
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	59 and Below

## Course Requirements

### **Midterm and Final Examination (50 pts. each):**

A midterm and final examination are required for this course. These exams will consist of approximately 50 questions that will assess your knowledge of content across the entire term. The midterm is scheduled for October 10. ***The final exam date is Tuesday December 14 at 10:00 am.***

The final exam will focus on interventions and education of students and adults with intellectual disabilities. Questions from group presentations will be on the exam. Therefore, it is extremely important that you attend each group presentation and take notes to assist your performance on the final exam.

***Exam Policies:*** Make-up exams are only allowed in the case of an unavoidable emergency. An unavoidable emergency may include the following: serious illness, funeral, or unexpected car trouble. In order to make up an exam you **MUST** have documentation. Documentation can include: doctors note, towing or car repair receipt, program from funeral, etc. You must provide this documentation within 24 hours of the missed exam. Please note that make-up exams must be completed within 1-week of the scheduled exam date. **Failure to notify me in advance, provide documentation, or complete the exam within the time frame, will result in a zero on the exam.**

During exams, you will be required to turn off all digital devices, such as cell phones, pagers, MP3 players, iPods and hand-held computers. Any student identified with such a device powered on during an exam will receive an F on the test at the instructor's discretion.

### **Choice Assignment (20 points):**

You will get to choose which assignment to complete for this assignment. Whatever you choose, your paper should be 1-2 pages long. The choices are:

- ***Observation:***

This option involves spending at least 2 hours in a setting with children or adults with disabilities. You will need to coordinate your visit with a teacher or supervisor to get permission to join their

classroom. This option is ideal, especially if you do not have much experience with people with disabilities. Some ideas include:

- Special Education classroom within a school
- Early Childhood setting like Head Start with kids with disabilities
- Transition center for adults getting post high school services such as the Ottawa Area Center or these options in Kent County:

[http://www.kentisd.org/downloads/transition/kent\\_isd\\_transition\\_programs\\_2017\\_description.pdf](http://www.kentisd.org/downloads/transition/kent_isd_transition_programs_2017_description.pdf)

- **Interview:**

For this option, you will interview either an adult with an intellectual disability, a family member of someone with an intellectual disability, or a special education teacher. More information will be available in class.

- **Disabilities in Media:**

Understandably, it may be difficult to find someone to interview for this assignment. If so, the other option is the Disabilities in Media paper. For this assignment, you will be asked to watch a movie or TV show episodes that feature a character with a developmental disability. Based on what we have learned in class readings and discussions, you will write a 1-2 page paper on if the character's disability was accurately portrayed. More detailed information on what is expected will be provided.

### **Controversial Issues Discussion Board (10 points)**

For this assignment, you will be assigned a controversial issue in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities to research and describe your opinion on the issue. The purpose of this assignment is to: (1) have you think about the pros and cons of a controversial issue in the field of intellectual disabilities, (2) have you reflect on your own biases and how these biases might affect your opinion on the issue, and (3) help you reflect on the quality of information available on this topic.

You will present your information in a group discussion board thread. All members of your group will be given a different controversy. After writing your initial response, you will then go onto your group member's threads and reply to their controversial responses. More information will be given in class

### **Group Project (30 points total):**

*Article Summary- 5 points*

*Presentation- 20 points*

*Handout- 5 points*

You will be paired in groups of three to four people to complete this project and come up with a presentation. The purpose of this project is to research the efficacy of an intervention for strategy that relevant to children or adults with disabilities. Make it relevant to the field in which you would like to pursue a career in. You will be required to: read and summarize empirical research, synthesize information, and prepare a power point and handout for practitioners. Although you may choose your own topic, I will provide a list of suggested topics. Any topic that is not on the list must be approved by me.

It is expected that *all* group members will fully participate and contribute to this assignment. Working effectively together as a group is an important skill to be gained from completing this assignment, as special education and working with exceptional children is also a team-process. Participation

includes: attending groups meetings (electronic or in-person), actively participating in group meetings, responding to e-mails from group members, completing tasks in a timely manner, and ensuring assigned tasks are high-quality. If one of your group members is not fully participating, please talk with the group member early on. If you are not comfortable, I am happy to facilitate a discussion.

### **Group Project Peer Review (5 points):**

Your intervention group will complete a rating form on each group member's participation. Please keep in mind while working in the group that you will be rated on the following areas: Attendance, contributions, preparation and cooperation. *If a group member receives an average rating below 5 (out of 10), the maximum number of points on the project for that member will be 70%, regardless of the grade on the project.*

### **Application Assignments (25 points):**

During the semester, I will assign small assignments during class. Typically, assignments will be worth about 5 points. These assignments may include: in-class group activities, article responses, or case studies. The assignments will be announced in-class. Late assignments will not be accepted under any circumstances. If you miss an in-class activity, you will not be able to make it up (even if the absence is excused). In addition, because assignments will typically be given out in class, and may not be posted on blackboard, it is your responsibility to talk to classmates to determine if an assignment was given. Extra credit opportunity! There will be more assignments than the 25 points possible. If you attend all classes and participate, you are likely to get extra credit.

### **Extra Credit Opportunity (5 points):**

Aside from the potential extra application points, you can also participate in an activity geared towards people with disabilities for the semester. You will have to provide evidence that you participated such as a signed letter from a supervisor or other formal documentation. This must be completed DURING THE SEMESTER. Some examples of things you can participate in are: GVSU Best Buddies, Special Olympics, and Arts in Motion. Please check with me to make sure your activity counts towards extra credit.

## **Course Policies**

**Attendance:** Lecture attendance is essential for earning a satisfactory grade in this class.

Attendance will not be taken during lectures. If you do need to miss a class period, please be aware of the following: (1) I will not go over the lecture with you or help you complete the lecture notes (you must consult with a peer in this class), (2) I present a significant amount of content that is not in the textbook and this content is often on the exams, and (3) I often provide time in-class to work on your group project. Group members often get frustrated with individuals who are not in class to assist.

**Lecture note:** Typically, I will post my lecture notes on blackboard prior to lecture. These notes typically outline the lecture, and do not contain all important information. Therefore, it is recommended that you take notes during lecture, as you will be held accountable for the lecture content, including information that is not posted on the slides. Although I will make every effort to post slides prior to lecture, it is not guaranteed. It is likely that there will be days that slides are not posted prior to class. Please do not email me and ask when the slides will be posted. In addition, some slides may be changed/added after I post.

**Preparation for lecture:** I expect that all students will be fully prepared for lecture. This is defined as reading the assigned text *prior* to the lecture and identifying any questions for clarification. I often plan small group activities/discussions for during lecture, and it is essential that you are prepared to fully participate/benefit from these activities.

**Electronic Devices:** All electronic devices (cell phones, i-pods, etc.) are to be **turned off and put away** during lecture. There will be exceptions. For example, if conducting polls, I may ask you to use your phones or laptop computers to answer. Please refrain from text messaging, emailing, surfing the web, etc. during lecture. This is very disruptive to other students. Laptop computers are permitted for taking course notes only. If it becomes apparent during the term that laptops are being used for other purposes (emailing, instant messaging, surfing the web, etc.) I reserve the right to institute a “no laptop policy.”

**Canceled Classes:** If classes are canceled at the university, any exam or assignment missed due to the cancellation will take place at the next scheduled class meeting time. If I cancel a class, I will notify the class via email.

**Assignment Submissions:**

Assignments are due at the start of class on the due date. Assignments should be turned in electronically via Blackboard. Assignments turned in after the start of class will be considered late. Late assignments will be accepted up to 3 days beyond the due date with a 25% deduction in points (i.e., if the deadline is Tuesday, work will be accepted through Friday). Late assignments should also be submitted via Blackboard.

## **University Policies**

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to adhere to the university’s policies on Academic Honesty. These policies are described in the catalog and in the Student Code. Cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with as per the procedures described in the Student Code.

**Plagiarism:** As described in Section 223.01 of the Student Code, “any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches or the writings of other students ... Any student who fails to give credit in written or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.” In sum, copying the work of any other individual, whether that of another student, researcher, author or editor is considered plagiarism. This is not acceptable and will be dealt with according to the policies set forth in the Student Code, which may include receiving a 0 on the assignment, failing the course, and/or other university consequences. If you have questions regarding the appropriate use of citations and plagiarism, please contact the instructor BEFORE turning the assignment in. Please note that taking extensive content word-for-word from a journal, book or website is considered plagiarism.

**Fire Procedures:**

Immediately proceed to the nearest exit during a fire alarm. Do not use elevators. More information is available on the University’s Emergency website located at <http://www.gvsu.edu/emergency>.

## **Commitment to Inclusion & Equity & University Anti-Harassment/Non-Discrimination**

As adopted by the Board of Trustees, in Administrative Manual Chapter 1, Grand Valley State University is committed to inclusion and equity and strives to establish a climate that welcomes and affirms the contributions of all students and employees. The University is guided by values for inclusiveness and community, which are integral to our mission to educate students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies, and to enrich the community through excellent teaching, active scholarship, and public service. The University strives to provide all members of its community an inclusive environment and equitable opportunities for success.

The University is also committed to maintaining a climate conducive to an educational, living, and employment environment that is free from unlawful acts of harassment and discrimination, as well as those defined by this policy. All members of the community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others. It is neither the purpose nor intent of this policy to infringe on the First Amendment or academic freedom as defined by the University.

The University is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution, consistent with its obligations as a federal contractor. It encourages diversity and provides equal opportunity in education, employment, all of its programs, and the use of its facilities. It is committed to protecting the constitutional and statutory civil rights of persons connected with the University.

Members of the University community, including students, employees, faculty, staff, administrators, Board members, consultants, vendors, others engaged to do business with the University, candidates for employment or admissions, and visitors or guests have the right to be free from acts of harassment and discrimination, including sexual misconduct, as defined by this policy. In accordance with applicable federal and state law and this policy, acts of discrimination or harassment by members of the campus community are prohibited if they discriminate or harass on the basis of age, color, disability, familial status, height, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex/gender (including gender identity and expression), sexual orientation, veteran or active duty military status or weight. This includes inappropriate limitation of, access to, or participation in educational, employment, athletic, social, cultural, or other university programs and activities. The University will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities. Limitations are lawful if they are: directly related to a legitimate university purpose, required by law, or lawfully required by a grant or contract between the university and the state or federal government. For the purposes of this policy, sex-/gender-based harassment includes sexual misconduct, sexual assault, interpersonal or relationship violence, and stalking.

### ***Creating an Equitable and Inclusive Learning Environment***

As an instructor, I will strive to create an equitable and inclusive learning environment in our class. It is my and the university's goal that you feel able to share information about your experiences as a student. University faculty and staff will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. There is some information that may need to be shared with the university, especially regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on GVSU's campus. Below are additional resources available for support:

- **Title IX, Sexual Misconduct Policy, and Gender- and Sexual-Based Harassment Policy:** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. Title IX's sex discrimination prohibition also protects students from discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. If you or

someone you know has been harassed, assaulted, or denied services on the basis of sex or gender, you can find the appropriate resources at [www.gvsu.edu/titleix](http://www.gvsu.edu/titleix) or contact the University's Title IX Coordinator, Theresa Rowland at 616-331-9530 or [rowlanth@gvsu.edu](mailto:rowlanth@gvsu.edu).

- **Disabilities Support Resources:** If you have special needs because of a learning, physical or other disability, please contact the instructor as well as Disability Support Resources (DSR) at 616-331-2490 for assistance as soon as possible. Even if you have already documented your disability with DSR, please make an appointment with your faculty member to discuss your specific needs. Furthermore, if you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating the classroom and/or building in an emergency during in-person meetings, please make your instructor aware so that the university can develop a plan to assist you. You may also access resources at <http://www.gvsu.edu/dsr>. The university is eager to work with you to meet your learning goals. All discussions related to disabilities will remain confidential.
- **Gender Expression and Identity:** Students whose preferred names do not match their state issued identification may have their preferred name on their GVSU ID card, the name associated with their student email account and in Blackboard, an online learning tool for discussions and class group collaborations. Students must make these requests by contacting Bill Widmaier ([widmaieb@gvsu.edu](mailto:widmaieb@gvsu.edu)) in the Registrar's Office. He will take your request and contact the Blackboard administrator to make the change. He also contacts professors to inform them that your name in Banner will not match the name in Blackboard. More information is available at <http://www.gvsu.edu/lgbtrc/name-gender-markers-130.htm>.
- **Bias Incidents or Harassment:** Anytime you or anyone in the GVSU community feels belittled, disrespected, threatened, or unsafe because of who you are, the entire university community is diminished. That's why it's important to report all bias incidents--even those intended as jokes. While Grand Valley safeguards individuals' constitutional rights and protected speech, the university is also committed to inclusion and equity. Grand Valley exercises the right to engage in educational dialogue and seeks constructive responses to address bias incidents. Go to <http://www.gvsu.edu/inclusion/bias-incidents.htm> to report bias incidents or for more information. In addition, for faculty/staff related complaints, you can file an informal complaint with the Division of Inclusion and Equity at [inclusion@gvsu.edu](mailto:inclusion@gvsu.edu) or 616-331-3296. For student related complaints, you can also contact the Dean of Students office at 616-331-3585.
- **Student Well-Being:** As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can negatively impact your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence, difficulty eating or sleeping, loss/grief, and/or alcohol/drug problems. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and affect your ability to participate in day-to-day activities. In order to support you during such challenging times, GVSU provides a number of confidential resources to all enrolled students, including the University Counseling Center (<http://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/> or 616-331-3266) and the Student Ombuds, Takeelia Garrett ([garrett@gvsu.edu](mailto:garrett@gvsu.edu)).

## RESOURCES

### **Writing Center:**

The Fred Meijer Center for Writing, with locations at the Allendale and Pew/Downtown Grand Rapids, is available to help you with writing in any of your classes. Also, through your Gmail account, you have access to online consultations through GoogleDocs. Writing consultants, who are fellow GVSU students, are trained to help you with all stages of your writing process, from brainstorming to organizing to editing your papers. The Center's services are free and appointments are available. Simply bring a draft of your paper, the assignment sheet, and your questions/concerns about the writing to any of the Center's locations:

Allendale:

Lake Ontario Hall 120; Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. & Friday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. & Sunday 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Knowledge Market: Mary Idema Pew Library (1st floor) - Sunday - Thursday 6:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Online via Google Docs - Monday - Wednesday 8:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Pew Campus Downtown:

Eberhard Center 101 - Monday - Thursday 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Knowledge Market: Steelcase Library - Monday - Thursday 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

CHS Building 100 - Tuesday-Wednesday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

### **Speech Lab:**

The mission of the Grand Valley State University Speech Lab is to empower speakers to shape their lives professions and society through confident and effective public presentations. Speech consultants, who are fellow GVSU undergraduates, are trained to assist with all parts of the speechmaking process including choosing a topic, organizing your thoughts, and practicing presentations. The Speech Lab is located in 154 Lake Michigan Hall (Allendale) and services are free for all Grand Valley undergraduates. For more information about the Lab, its hours, downtown locations, and to make an appointment, please visit the Lab website at:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/speechlab>.



## Course Schedule

Readings are due the date of the lecture topic. It is possible that this schedule will change, as some weeks we will move more rapidly, and some more slowly. However, general deadlines will remain the same unless otherwise indicated by the professor.

Date	Topic and Activities	Assignments Due	Readings
Week 1: 8/31 & 9/2	Syllabus and class introduction  Introduction to developmental disabilities		Review Syllabus & Assignment Descriptions  Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 1  BB Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person First Language</li> <li>• Disability Etiquette</li> <li>• Law Chart</li> <li>• IDEA Process</li> </ul>
Week 2: 9/7 & 9/9	History of Intellectual Disabilities  9/7: View Willowbrook on own		Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 2  Video: 25 Years After Willowbrook
Week 3: 9/14 & 9/16	History of Intellectual Disabilities, continued  Definitions and Terminology		Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 2  BB reading (9/16): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ID Fact Sheet</li> <li>• Incidence</li> <li>• Bierne Smith chapter 2</li> </ul>
Week 4: 9/21 & 9/23	Introduction to Early Development and Psychosocial Causes		Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 9, 18, 19
Week 5: 9/28 & 9/30	Genetics and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities  The Nervous System	<b>Choice Assignment Due 9/30</b>	Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 10 & 11

Week 6: 10/5 & 10/7	Biological Causes		Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 13
Week 7: 10/12 & 10/14	Midterm 10/12  Specific Disorders in Class Research & Presentations 10/14	<b>Midterm 10/12</b>	Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 14,15,17 20, 21 for presentation references
Week 8: 10/19 & 10/21	Assessment and Introduction to Services and Supports	<b>Group article summaries due 10/21</b>	Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 24, 25 26
Week 9: 10/26 & 10/28	10/28: Autism and Intellectual Disabilities	<b>FALL BREAK 10/26</b>	Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 16
Week 10: 11/2 & 11/4	Characteristics of Mild and Severe Disabilities	Group Presentations 1-4 on November 4	Blackboard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings to be posted</li> </ul>
Week 10: 11/9 & 11/11	Early Development and Interventions	11/11: Including Samuel	Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapters 33 & 34
Week 11: 11/16 & 11/18	Academic interventions and education	Group Presentations 5-9 on November 18	Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 36  Blackboard: Evidence Based Interventions
Week 12: 11/23 & 11/25  (No class 11/25)	Behavior and social interventions	<b>Thanksgiving: No class on 11/25</b>	Wehmeyer, et. al.:  Chapters 28, 29, 47
Week 13: 11/30 & 12/2	Lecture: Transition to adulthood	Group Presentations 10-14 on 12/2	Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapter 37-40
Week 14: 12/7 & 12/9	Disability Advocacy  View Intellectual Lives and In Class Discussion	<b>Peer Ratings due 12/7</b>	Wehmeyer, et. al.: Chapters 3-7

Final Week:	<b>Final Exam Date</b> <b>Tuesday December 14 at</b> <b>10:00 am</b>		
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