

Grand Valley State University

PSY 304-01: Psychology and Education of the Exceptional Child

Spring 2025

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Course Summary

Psychology 304 is a survey course in the broad field of exceptionality. This course will introduce both a psychological and educational perspective to the study of exceptionality in children and will cover topics ranging from disabilities to giftedness. Over the course of the semester, you will be exposed to various terminology and approaches used when working with exceptional children. In addition to reviewing different disabilities, this course will emphasize evidence-based practices, school-wide prevention models, and other current issues in the field of exceptionality.

Course Objectives

The following course objectives are from the syllabus of record and are therefore applicable for all sections of this course, regardless of the assigned instructor. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Describe the purpose and goals of special education services.
- 2) Describe the term “exceptional children” and its relation to services in schools.
- 3) Compare and contrast different methods of assessment in schools.
- 4) Describe the diagnostic process in school settings.
- 5) Apply ethical and legal standards in Special Education to various scenarios.
- 6) Describe characteristics, contributing factors, and intervention strategies for a wide range of disabilities in school settings.
- 7) Critically evaluate research relevant to exceptional children.

Readings

- GVSU SAVE Program will provide required text (access via Blackboard): Heward, W. L., Alber-Morgan, S.R., & Konrad, M. (2022). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education*, 12th Edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson. Alternatively, you can opt-out and purchase a hard copy from on [Amazon](#) or [Pearson](#).
- Selected additional readings will be placed on Blackboard as PDF files.

Course Delivery

This course is taught under the **online designation**, meaning that the entire course is delivered online through Blackboard. The course will employ an asynchronous meeting model; this means that there will not be meetings at a set time. The class is self-guided, and you will need to navigate through the materials and requirements throughout each week. At a minimum, expect to spend 6-8 hours per week for a total of six weeks reading, viewing materials, and completing activities and assignments. A detailed calendar accompanies this course syllabus. Instructional strategies include lecture, video, group discussion, individual assignments, a group project, and quizzes.

You will be assigned a working group for the entire course. As a group, you will work to complete certain activities and together complete a group presentation on a given topic. I expect each student to be an active participant in his/her group, and you will submit peer evaluations as part of the group presentation. One of the benefits of an online class session is that you can participate when it is convenient, and please realize that your group members are reading and responding to messages at different times. This is the challenge of participating in an online class session where there are scheduled activities and discussions, so it is important that you check back often so keep an activity/discussion moving along. You are expected to access the course site and contribute several *different* times throughout the week.

We will use Blackboard Ultra extensively for all of our online activity. Please also refer to the technology requirements below. On Blackboard Ultra you will see that the course is organized into learning modules, each lasting one week (Monday – Sunday). Each week you will have required readings, videos/lectures, a small group discussion/activity, an individual assignment, and a quiz. In addition, you will write one paper and complete one group presentation over the course of the semester. When you first login to our Blackboard Ultra course site, you will see an initial announcement inviting you to click on the “Begin Here” folder. In that area you will find a video tour of the course site. On a regular basis (several times each week), you will access the weekly modules folders, assignment folder, and “Discussions” tab. Once you have completed the video tour, let me know if you have questions.

Technology Requirements & Assistance

You must have access to the following to complete the weekly learning modules:

- High-speed internet access
- Computer with ability to watch videos; Google chrome is the recommended browser
- Video camera & microphone (built into computer or external)
- Microsoft Word & program to read pdf files

While tablets, smartphones and other mobile devices may allow for the completion of some coursework, they are not guaranteed to work in all areas. Please ensure you have a Windows or Mac based computer available to complete coursework. This computer must have programs to read PDF and Microsoft Word documents. Please submit any assignments as Microsoft Word files as I will not accept incompatible programs. As a GVSU student, you have access to Microsoft Office 365 for free (<https://www.gvsu.edu/it/downloading-office-365-from-microsoft-223.htm>).

To access Blackboard Ultra, go to <https://lms.gvsu.edu/ultra/> and enter your log in and password. Use of Blackboard Ultra is integral to this course. If you experience technical problems with Blackboard Ultra, contact the IT (it@gvsu.edu or 616-331-2101). The help website is <https://www.gvsu.edu/it/>.

Participation, Support, & Communication

I am committed to creating a learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and valued. As a class, we will approach discussions with respect and civility to build a culture based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. Debate is expected and welcomed, but personal attacks will not be tolerated. Often words often come across “more directly and harshly” in written form of communication, since there are no facial expression, gestures, or tone of voice to help convey your message fully. I strive to create an open and welcoming classroom for all students and if I ever miss the mark, please don’t hesitate to contact me. We are learning together.

You are expected to check Blackboard Ultra and your GVSU Email every other day for new announcements and postings for activities/discussion boards. Online courses require perseverance, self-discipline, self-motivation, and the ability to work independently – more so than face-to-face on-campus classes. It is very important that you keep in touch with me and with your fellow classmates in this course. They cannot help you and you cannot help them if you are not around through Email, on the discussion boards. Students will be expected to demonstrate a professional attitude, time management skills, and reliability throughout the course. Students will be responsible for readings and lectures, as well as completing individual assignments and small group activities/discussions. The course content is extensive; online student participation is critical for optimum learning.

I also want to hear from you! If you email me and don't hear back within 36 hours, please send a follow-up email. I am here to support your learning, but I may not know how to best support you if you fail to communicate. For example, if you run into challenges balancing work or family obligations or have unforeseen personal difficulties that are impacting your ability to be successful, please reach out to me so we can work together to form a plan.

If I cannot personally provide the support you need, I may direct you to some of the valuable campus resources. I also encourage you to be proactive and utilize these supports on your own. Most students access resources at some point at GVSU. Resources include:

- Psych Friends Peer Mentoring: <https://www.gvsu.edu/psychology/psych-friends-477.htm>
- Tutoring & Reading Center: <https://www.gvsu.edu/trc/>
- University Counseling Center: <https://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/>
- LGBT Resource Center: <https://www.gvsu.edu/lgbtrc/>
- Financial Hardship: <https://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/financial-hardship-requests-226.htm>

General Course Policies

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

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Many students have visible or invisible disabilities and the university offers accommodations that allow them to be successful. If you have a documented disability or suspect you have an undocumented disability, please contact the Disability Support Resources office (215 The Blue Connection) by calling (331-2490) or emailing (dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu). If you need accommodations, please provide me with your memo from Disability Support Resources. In addition, it is often helpful to discuss together the support you will need to be successful; these discussions will remain confidential. Furthermore, if you think you will need assistance evacuating the classroom and/or building in an emergency, please contact me so I can develop a plan to assist you.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

The materials presented in this class are copyright protected and may not be used without my prior consent. Intentional misuse of the intellectual property of another may subject the user to penalties up to and including dismissal. You are responsible for making yourself aware of and for understanding the policies and procedures that pertain to academic integrity including GVSU Student Code. It is your responsibility as a student to maintain academic integrity and not give any appearance of a violation.

Specifically:

1. No student shall knowingly, without authorization, procure, provide, or accept any materials which contain questions or answers to any examination or assignment.

2. No student shall, without authorization, complete, in part or in total, any examination or assignment for another person.
3. No student shall, without authorization, allow any examination or assignment to be completed, in part or in total, by another person.
4. No student shall knowingly plagiarize or copy the work of another person and submit it as his or her own.
5. No student shall submit work that has been previously graded or is being submitted concurrently to more than one course without authorization from the instructor(s) of the class(es) to which the student wishes to submit it.

You are capable of meeting expectations for this course. If you are concerned about how you are performing in the course, please contact me instead of considering academic misconduct. If you are uncertain about plagiarism prior to submission of an assignment, project, or quiz, come speak with me so I can assist you. There is no harm in asking if you are not sure if you are plagiarizing. There *is* harm in plagiarizing and then telling me afterwards that you did not know you did anything wrong.

Coursework Requirements & Grading

<u>Coursework:</u>	<u>Points:</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>	
Weekly Quizzes	120	94 above	A
Critical Issue Group Presentation	30	90-93	A-
Research Summary Paper	30	87-89	B+
Weekly Small Group Activities/Discussions	30	83-86	B
Weekly Individual Assignments	<u>30</u>	80-82	B-
Total Points:	240	77-79	C+
		73-76	C
		70-72	C-
		67-69	D+
		60-66	D
		59 & below	F

To calculate your final grade, add up the points you have earned (and those you expect to earn), divide by total points, multiply by 100, and compare to the grading scale.

Weekly Quizzes (6 quizzes, 20 points each = 120 points)

- Description - There will be six quizzes (one per learning module) for this course. Quizzes will consist of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions drawn from the textbook, other readings, and from information provided during lectures. Some questions on the quizzes will be drawn specifically from lectures, even if those concepts are not covered in your text. As well, quizzes may include material from the textbook that has not been discussed during lectures. You may use your class resources when completing the quizzes, but quizzes will have a time limit (60 minutes) and can only be completed once.
- Deadline - Quizzes must be completed by 11:59pm EST on Sunday at the end of each week. Quizzes not taken before the deadline will be graded as a zero and will not be reopened for make-ups.

Critical Issue Group Presentation (30 points)

- Description – The critical issue group presentation requires that your small group work together to research and present on a critical issue in the field. As a group, you will research your topic as well as identify and integrate two internet-based resources and two research articles on the topic. Together you will write a script for the presentation and 1+ people from the group will record the

presentation using Panopto (<https://www.gvsu.edu/elearn/help/panopto-68.htm>). More information about this assignment will be available on Blackboard.

- Plagiarism – Please refer to the “Academic Integrity” section summarized previously in the syllabus.
- Submitting Assignments – Each group member will be responsible for submitting a copy of the presentation, the link(s) to the Panopto presentation(s), and the group rating form by Wednesday June 18th at 11:59 PM EST.

Research Summary Paper (30 points)

- Description – There will be one research paper for this course. This paper will be a summary of two research studies of classroom interventions for children with disabilities; one research study will be provided, and you will be responsible for finding the second study that meets specific criteria. I anticipate this paper will be approximately 5-6 pages long. Further details about this paper will be available on Blackboard.
- Plagiarism – Please refer to the “Academic Integrity and Plagiarism” section summarized previously in the syllabus. I have the right to fail you on an assignment or fail you for the course for plagiarism.
- Submitting Assignments – Paper MUST be double-spaced and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins on all sides. References should follow APA style, 6th edition. Paper is due Monday June 2nd at 11:59 PM EST and must be turned in as a Microsoft Word document on Blackboard. Papers 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 Monday, work will be accepted through Thursday). Late assignments must still be submitted on Blackboard.

Weekly Group Activities (6 activities, 5 points each = 30 points)

- Description – You will have one small group activity associated with each learning module. These will vary in type and length, but most will involve applying concepts or discussing interesting topics. Grading will be based on timeliness of responses, number of responses, and whether the content of the responses is substantive. Your responses should **add** to the topic. Statements of agreement often demonstrate a lack of substantive content and should be avoided. It can also helpful to include a citation in the form of an article, book or URL to support your comments or to direct peers to additional reading on the subject.
- Submitting Responses & Deadline - Each learning module will have instructions about how initial posts and responses will be submitted to your group (Discussion board, etc.). Your initial response to your group is due by 11:59 PM EST on the Wednesday of each week. You required replies to your group members are due by Sunday at 11:59 PM EST.

Weekly Individual Assignments (6 assignments, 5 points each = 30 points)

- Description - You will have one individual assignment associated with each learning module. These will vary in type and length, but most will involve practice or application of concepts from the module content. All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner (typed, and free from spelling/grammatical errors). More information about each of these assignments will be provided on Blackboard.
- Submitting Assignments & Deadline – Each learning module will have an assignment dropbox where your individual assignment will be submitted. Each individual assignment must be submitted by 11:59 PM EST on the Wednesday of each week.

Course Topics/Schedule

Week and Topic	Dates	Required Reading
1: Foundations (Parts 1 & 2)	May 5 – May 11	Chapters 1, 2
2: Foundations (Part 3), RTI/MTSS, & Assessment	May 12 – May 18	Chapter 3 Posted pdf Review Chapter 2
3: Early Childhood & Learning Problems (Specific Learning Disabilities)	May 19 – May 25	Chapters 14 & 5
4: Intellectual Disabilities & Communication Disorders (Speech/Language Impairments)	May 26 – June 1	Chapters 4 & 8
5: Behavior Problems (Emotional Impairments) & ADHD	June 2 – June 8	Chapter 6 & Chapter 11 (only section on ADHD)
6: ASD & Gifted/Talented	June 9 – June 15	Chapters 7 & 13
7: “Exam” Week	June 16 – June 18	None

Course Calendar

*Important Note: This calendar runs Monday – Sunday to correspond with the course’s weekly module schedule;
All times listed are for Eastern Standard Time (EST)*

Week	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	May 5 Introduction Videos due by 11:59pm	May 5	May 7 Group Activity 1 Initial Post due 11:59pm Individual Assignment 1 due 11:59pm	May 8	May 9	May 10	May 11 Group Activity 1 Two Replies due 11:59pm Quiz 1 due 11:59pm
2	May 12	May 13	May 14 Group Activity 2 Initial Post due 11:59pm Individual Assignment 2 due 11:59pm	May 15	May 16	May 17	May 18 Group Decisions due 11:59pm Quiz 2 due 11:59pm
3	May 19 Submit Research Summary paper article for approval via E-mail by 11:59pm	May 20	May 21 Group Activity 3 Initial Post due 11:59pm Individual Assignment 3 due 11:59pm	May 22	May 23	May 24	May 25 Group Activity 3 Two Replies due 11:59pm Quiz 3 due 11:59pm
4	May 26 Memorial Day	May 27	May 28 Group Activity 4 Initial Post due 11:59pm Individual Assignment 4 due 11:59pm	May 29	May 30	May 31	June 1 Group Activity 4 Two Replies due 11:59pm Quiz 4 due 11:59pm
5	June 2 Research Summary Paper due 11:59pm	June 3	June 4 Group Activity 5 Initial Post due 11:59pm Individual Assignment 5 due 11:59pm	June 5	June 6	June 7	June 8 Group Activity 5 Two Replies due 11:59pm Quiz 5 due 11:59pm
6	June 9	June 10	June 11 Group Activity 6 Initial Post due 11:59pm Individual Assignment 6 due 11:59pm	June 12	June 13	June 14	June 15 Group Activity 6 Two Replies due 11:59pm Quiz 6 due 11:59pm
7	June 16	June 17	June 18 Critical Issue Group Presentation due by 11:59pm				