

PSY 326-01: Introduction to Intellectual Impairments
Grand Valley State University
Spring 2025

Instructor Information

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Course Information

Location: Online through Blackboard
Time: Self-Guided Asynchronous Meetings
CRN: 37406
Prerequisites: PSY 101 and PSY 301

Office Hours: Email is the best way to contact me. I will try my best to get back to you as soon as possible, within 24 hours of the request. We can then schedule a virtual office visit on Blackboard or a phone meeting.

Course Description

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, and prevention and intervention strategies.

Goals and Outcomes

The goal of this class is for students to:

- describe the history of disabilities and special education supports
- investigate difference methods for assessment and diagnosis
- identify characteristics intellectual and developmental disabilities
- determine appropriate instructional strategies, accommodations, and interventions for students with disabilities.

Required Text

All reading materials will be available on Blackboard in the Weekly Content section.

Introduction to Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities readings will include:

- Salvia, J., Ysseldyke, J., Witmer, S. (2009). *Assessment: In special and inclusive education*, 11th Edition. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.
- Browder, D. M., Wood, L., Thompson, J., & Ribuffo, C. (2014). *Evidence-based practices for students with severe disabilities* (Document No. IC-3). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/>
- U.S. Department of Education (Department), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, *A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities*, Washington, D.C., 2017.
- Resources from:
 - National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)
 - The IRIS Center (Vanderbilt Peabody College)

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.

Points Possible		Grading Scale	
Flipgrid Activity	3	A	93 and above
Media Assignment	10	A-	90-92
Discussion Board	36	B+	87-89
Quizzes	30	B	83-86
<i>Group Project</i>		B-	80-82
Journal Reference	2	C+	77-79
Handout	5	C	73-76
Presentation	10	C-	70-72
Discussion Board	5	D+	67-69
Peer Review	5	D	60-66
		F	59 and Below

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Delivery

This course is taught under the online designation, meaning that the entire course is delivered online through Blackboard. A detailed calendar accompanies this course syllabus. Instructional strategies include lecture, discussions, video presentations, group projects, quizzes, and student research. We will use Blackboard extensively for all of our online activity. See below for course technologies. Our course weeks will be Monday through Sunday.

Begin Here

When you first log onto our course in Blackboard, you will click on “Begin Here” for instructions on how to navigate the course. This will include a video tour of the course.

Accessing Course Materials

The Syllabus will be located in the Syllabus section of Blackboard. All other course readings that are not part of the course pack will be placed in the section titled Readings. Click on the Discussion Board section to access discussion prompts every week. All other course materials for the week will be in the learning modules labeled by the week.

Technology Required

Required Equipment (owned or accessible)

- High-speed internet access
- Computer with a sound card and speakers; operating system that meets current Blackboard browser requirements (see below)
- Microphone (built in or external)

Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is the Course Management System

To access Blackboard, go to <https://lms.gvsu.edu/ultra/institution-page> and enter your log in and password.

This course utilizes Blackboard, GVSU's online course management system. Take a look at the GVSU Online Learning pages to find numerous materials about using Blackboard and online learning <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/>.

Use of Blackboard is integral to this course and students must log on a few times each week in order to complete course requirements, receive important announcements and updates, and communicate with instructors and other students about course content.

Check the current [technical requirements](#) to use Blackboard and [preferred browser information](#).

Technical difficulties with Blackboard

If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, contact the help desk by email or phone - helpdesk@gvsu.edu or 616-331-3513. The help website is <http://www.gvsu.edu/it/learn/>

Time Commitment

At minimum, expect to spend up to three hours per week for a total of six weeks, consuming material, completing activities, and reflecting on your work. This course will feature a variety of materials for you to explore at your leisure or save for future reference.

Participation/Attendance/Professional Conduct

This course will actively engage students in small and large online discussions. Students will be expected to demonstrate a professional attitude, time management skills, and reliability throughout the sessions. Students will be responsible for readings, research, and writing, presenting to and responding to class using the Blackboard discussion board. Class lectures, readings, and discussions will require active reflection, critical analysis, and sharing. The course content is extensive; online student participation is critical for optimum learning. During this course, we ask that you are professional. Derogatory comments, messages, or discussion posts are unprofessional and unacceptable. Please be kind to your classmates and facilitators.

Groups

You will be assigned to a working group for the entire course. As a group you will facilitate a whole class discussion, have group-only discussion and assigned tasks. Together, you will complete the final group project on interventions. I anticipate that each of you will be active participants in your groups, and you will submit peer evaluations as part of a measure of this. You will find the peer evaluation form under Assignments.

Accessing the Library

Many of GVSU's library resources can be accessed online [Distance and Off-Campus Learning Services](#) with many journal articles available on demand. You must have an active GVSU student account to take advantage of the library's resources and services.

Some courses may have reading materials in course reserve. To access course reserve, [click here](#).

Writing Center

The Writing Center is available to assist with all kinds of writing tasks and they will give feedback on writing assignments. It is not just for students who struggle with writing. They can help any student improve writing skills. Writing Center [online services](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you need specific accommodations and you have a documented disability, you will need to contact the Disability Support Resources Office at 616-331-2490 to coordinate accommodations. If you plan to request accommodations in this course, please let me know right away so I can assist you.

Course Organization

Asynchronous Meetings

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 students will need to navigate through the materials and requirements throughout the week. The professor will post mini-lectures online to accompany your readings.

Readings (weekly)

You will have book chapters and articles to read weekly. It is critical to stay up on the readings. This is where you will learn much of the content.

Learning Units (one-week modules)

The learning units will be a foundational part of the course and this is where you will find instructions for each one-week segment of the course including reading assignments, course content presentations, practice activities, and assignments. Units will open up one week at a time and an assignment will be due at the end of the week. All previous units will be open throughout the course. Each unit will have embedded questions and practice activities associated with the content.

Discussion board – (each learning unit)

Discussion board questions will be posted with each unit to promote discussion related to the topics covered in the unit. You will participate in the discussion topics with the whole group. A grading rubric is provided on the Blackboard site under Documents.

Quizzes

You will complete a quiz to go along with each learning unit. These will be low stakes and every week to assess your progress in a formative manner. The questions will be from the readings, lectures, and group presentations. They will be a combination of question types and you may use your materials to assist you.

Assignments – (each Learning Unit)

You will have an assignment associated with each learning unit. These will vary in type and length, but most will involve practice or application of concepts from the unit content. These are graded and will constitute an important part of your learning and grade for the course. 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.

Questions for the Professor

Please consider the Three Before Me rule, where before emailing me concerning technical questions or other class logistics (due dates, assignment clarification, and the like), try learning your answer through three other means first:

1. For technical support, contact the Help Desk by phone (616.331.2101) or email: helpdesk@gvsu.edu. You can also review the support documents in our Blackboard course site or by clicking the “Help” button at the top of your Blackboard window.
2. Refer to course resources such as the syllabus, calendar, assignment details that are posted under Assignments, discussions, including the FAQ forum. Everyone is welcome to post questions and to *answer questions* that are posted there!
3. Email another student in the class and/or post your question on the Question forum (Discussion Board)

Direct any questions that cannot be answered in these ways to the professor via email through Blackboard.

Course Requirements

You are expected to check Blackboard every couple of days for any new announcements and postings on the Discussion Board. 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 e-mail, on the discussion board or in your private Blackboard journal. If you need technical assistance with Blackboard, please go to this website: <http://www.gvsu.edu/elearn/help/> you can also contact the GVSU helpdesk at (616)331-2101 or by sending an email to Blackboard Administration at bbadmin@gvsu.edu

Assignment Due Dates

Assignments are due by 11:59 PM EST on the due dates listed in the course schedule below. Assignments should be turned in under the assignment tab on blackboard. Assignments turned in after this time 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.

Multimedia Assignment (10 points)

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 in the Assignment section on Blackboard. **This assignment is due by May 18 at 11:59 PM EST.**

Blackboard Discussion Board (6 points each x 6= 36 points)

Discussion is an integral part of this course and necessary for success. As such, there will be opportunities to engage in the Discussion Board every week and a large percent of your grade will be based on participation in the discussion.

I do not like to be prescriptive about how many times you must post, but I understand that for some of you, this is important for a guideline. Therefore, at minimum, I expect that you will post at least once in direct response to *each* initial thread in the week's forum (most weeks there will be 2-3), always building on the thread before yours, and you will respond to the posts of at least two of your classmates *for each* thread. Please follow the posted rubric for online discussion (in Blackboard, under Documents) for guidelines as to substantive and timely posts. You will be using this rubric for self-assessment and I will be using it for formative and summative assessment.

Your initial discussion board responses are due by 11:59 PM EST on the Tuesday of each week. You must then reply to 2 of your classmates on each thread throughout the week. These responses are due by the last day of the learning unit (Sunday) at 11:59 PM EST.

If you post a question or comment, be sure to return to the Discussion Board later to see if someone has responded to your question or comment. Following up in a timely manner will ensure that a discussion does not hang up or end without issues being resolved or outstanding questions being addressed. Student-to-student discussions are a valuable part of this, and any, class.

Your discussion should **add** to the topic. Statements of agreement in response to a topic or a peer response often demonstrate a lack of substantive content and should be avoided. It is 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.

The last two weeks of discussion board will be facilitated by the groups presenting that week. The groups will be responsible for posting the initial thread by the beginning of the learning unit (**post by 11:59 PM EST the Sunday before**) and responding to classmates. See the assignment description on Blackboard for more information.

Netiquette:

Although many of us have experience with e-mail, online discussion is different because we're communicating "one to many" rather than "one to one." Therefore, it's important that we maintain a sense of freedom to express our thoughts while at the same time providing a safe atmosphere for that expression. Please keep this mind as you are communicating with others.

All participants should maintain a professional attitude and manner of discussion. While spirited debate is encouraged, unprofessional behavior is not tolerated. Often times, words often come across "more directly and harshly" in this written form of communication, since there are no facial gestures, expression or tone of voice to help convey your message fully. Your contributions should not be overly negative or personal in nature.

Quizzes (5 points each x 6= 30 points)

You will complete a quiz to go along with each learning unit. These quizzes are graded with a small number of points assigned. You may use your course materials to assist you in answering the questions. **You will complete the quizzes by the end of each learning unit (Sunday) at 11:59 PM EST.**

Group Project

You will be paired in groups of four to five 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. I will assign the groups and topics.

- The group will create a power point presentation using Google Slides and select a group member to narrate the script over the power point slides using the Panopto tool on Blackboard (instructions will be on the Blackboard page).
- You will integrate the research to:
 - Describe the intervention
 - Give examples
 - Give a summary of what the research says
 - Demonstrate how the intervention works
 - Show and explain the handout **(Handout due by June 1 at 11:59 PM EST)**
- Discussion Board: Your group will facilitate one of the discussion board threads that week. You must designate a group member to post the initial question relevant to your topic. Then you must each actively respond to comments and ask follow-up questions. You must each respond to at least 6 different classmates throughout the week.

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. More details, including a rubric, will be posted in the Assignments section. **Your Peer Review is due by June 8 at 11:59 PM EST.**

You will need to view the contents of all group presentations during the week of their presentations. Information from their presentations will be a part of your weekly quizzes.

University Policies

The following links provide information regarding policies that apply to all courses taught at Grand Valley State University.

General Academic Policies are found on the Registrar's website:

[General Academic Policies](#)

Schedules for the Academic Calendar and Final Exams are found on the Registrar's website:

[Academic Calendar and Final Exam Schedule](#)

Academic Integrity Policy is found on the Student Conduct, Intervention, & Support website:

[Academic Integrity](#)

Americans with Disabilities Act Philosophy Statement is found on the Disability Support Resources website:

[Philosophy Statement](#)

Commitment to Inclusion & Equity and University Anti-Harassment/Non-Discrimination Statement is found on the Division of Inclusion & Equity website:

[Inclusion & Equity – Anti-Harassment/Non-Discrimination](#)

Title IX information on Sex-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct is found on the Title IX website:

[Title IX Information](#)

Policy Websites:

[Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

[Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment Policy](#)

[Anti-Harassment Policy](#)

[Consensual Relationship Policy](#)

Face coverings, such as masks, are required to be worn in the classroom. Students who have forgotten their face coverings may get a disposable mask at a campus office. The evidence is clear that [face coverings are a crucial part of keeping coronavirus at bay](#) and [support the university's commitment to providing all members of its community with an inclusive living and learning environment with equitable opportunities for success](#). [GVSU's policy on face coverings](#) is posted on the Lakers Together web site. Students who are not able to wear a face covering due to a medical condition should [contact Disability Support Services \(DSR\)](#) to discuss their individual situation.

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 (garrettt@gvsu.edu).

Course Schedule

Below is the schedule for topics, readings, tasks, and due dates for the semester. Any changes to the syllabus or course schedule will be posted to the Announcements on the course Blackboard page and emailed to you.

Week of	Topics	Time on Task	Submit
			Note: This column is for formal assignments that you will submit by the day/date listed. Assignments will be due by the "End of the day", meaning 11:59pm EST. Unless otherwise stated, go to "Assignments" in Blackboard to find assignment details and how to submit.
<p>May 5-11</p> <p>Make sure you have read the syllabus, announcements, and reviewed the online course tour. (In Bb>Begin Here)</p>	<p><i>Syllabus and Introduction to Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities</i></p>	<p>Read:</p> <p>Readings on BB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person First Language • Disability Etiquette • Law Chart • IDEA Process <p>Chapter 1 of Beirne Smith</p> <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-Lecture • Introduction Videos on Flipgrid • Willowbrook Expose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board • Complete Quiz by May 11 at 11:59 EST.
<p>May 12-18</p>	<p><i>Definitions and Assessment/Diagnosis</i></p>	<p>Read:</p> <p>Readings on Blackboard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ID Fact Sheet • Multiple Disabilities • Deaf Blindness • Incidence • Assessment (Author: Salvia, Chapter 2) <p>Chapter 2 Beirne Smith</p> <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-Lectures • Movie or TV shows for the assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabilities in Media Assignment by May 18 at 11:59 EST • Discussion Board • Complete Quiz

May 19-25	<i>Psychosocial Causes & Controversial Issues</i>	<p>Read: Article on Blackboard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Facts Sheet <p>Beirne-Smith Chapter 5</p> <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-Lectures Including Samuel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Complete Quiz Submit your group project references by May 25 at 11:59 PM EST
May 26-June 1	<i>Biological Causes</i>	<p>Read: Articles on Blackboard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cerebral Palsy Down Syndrome <p>Beirne-Smith Chapter 6</p> <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-Lectures Clips on Biologically Caused Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Project Handout due by June 1 at 11:59 PM EST Groups 1-3 Post Videos by June 1 (post before 11:59 PM EST) Discussion Board Complete Quiz
June 2-8	<i>Characteristics of Mild and Severe Disabilities & Early Intervention</i>	<p>Read: Articles on Blackboard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Interventions <p>Following Links:</p> <p>http://do2learn.com/disabilities/CharacteristicsAndStrategies/IntellectualDisability_Characteristics.html</p> <p>http://www.projectidealonline.org/v/intellectual-disabilities/</p> <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini Lectures Group Presentations 1-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Complete Quiz Groups 4-6 Post Videos by June 8 (post before 11:59 PM EST the night before) Submit Peer Review for group project by June 8 at 11:59 PM EST
June 9-15	<i>Instructional Strategies & Transition to Adulthood</i>	<p>Read: Articles on Blackboard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence Based Interventions Transition- Self Determination Early Childhood Transition <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-Lectures Group Presentations 4-6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Complete Quiz by June 15 at 11:59 PM EST