

SPEC 3040: Legal and Ethical Issues for Special Educators
SPRING 2012

3 Semester Hours
College of Education
Valdosta State University
Department of Early Childhood and Special Education

Conceptual Framework: Guiding Principles

(adapted from the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Program Accomplished Teacher Framework)

Dispositions Principle: Productive dispositions positively affect learners, professional growth, and the learning environment.

Equity Principle: All learners deserve high expectations and support.

Process Principle: Learning is a life-long process of development and growth.

Ownership Principle: Professionals are committed to, and assume responsibility for, the future of their disciplines.

Support Principle: Successful engagement in the process of learning requires collaboration among multiple partners.

Impact Principle: Effective practice yields evidence of learning.

Technology Principle: Technology facilitates teaching, learning, community building, and resource acquisition.

Standards Principle: Evidence-based standards systematically guide professional preparation and development.

Positively Impacting Learning Through Evidence-Based Practice

Required Textbooks

Yell, M.L. (2006) *The law and special education* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Weishaar, M.K. (2007). *Case Studies in Special Education Law: No Child Left Behind Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

In addition to the required text, students are asked to join a professionally-oriented organization (e.g., the Council for Exceptional Children, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, National Association for the Education of Young Children or others approved by the professor). Students may join most of these organizations at student membership rates. Make sure that you have your advisor's signature on your application form if necessary so that you receive the student discounted rate.

Course Description

Prerequisite: Admission to Teacher Education. A study of the legal and ethical aspects of special education and services for individuals with disabilities. Topics will include an overview of the U.S. legal system; discrimination, constitutional, statutory, regulatory issues; and case law related to special education, IDEA.

College of Education Conceptual Framework Standards (CFS)

VI. PROFESSIONALISM: Teachers recognize, participate in, and contribute to teaching as a profession.

GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES (GEO)

1. Students will demonstrate understanding of the society of the United States and its ideals.
2. Students will demonstrate cross cultural perspectives and knowledge of other societies.
3. Students will use computer and information technology when appropriate.
4. Students will express themselves clearly, logically and precisely in writing and in speaking, and they will demonstrate competence in reading and listening
5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of scientific and mathematical principles and proficiency in laboratory practices.
7. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, to evaluate, and to make inferences from oral, written and visual materials.
8. Students will demonstrate knowledge of principles of ethics and their employment in the analysis and resolution of moral problems.

Course Objectives (CO)

- CO 1. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the process of the creation of legislation based on issues that have been stimulated by judiciary positions by presenting pro and con arguments regarding issues in law and legislation. (CFS IV) (GEO 1, 3, 4, 7, 8)
- CO 2. The student will list and describe significant legal and legislative events in the history of special education. (CFS IV) (GEO 1, 3, 4, 7, 8)
- CO 3. The student will identify the components of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the Council for Exceptional Children and provide examples of violations of major tenets of that Code. (CFS IV) (GEO 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8)
- CO 4. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the governing body for monitoring and enforcing violations of teacher ethics in the State of Georgia. (CFS IV) (GEO 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8)

Course Activities / Assignments / Requirements

1. **Professional Behavior / Class Participation:** Students will read text material, case law, issues papers and participate in discussions and activities on legislation, judicial decisions and practice, ethics and standards of practice. Students will also demonstrate professional dispositions in this course (see below). (CO 1, 2, 3, 4) --- 5% of grade

There may be additional topical assignments to be completed throughout the semester. These assignments may include individual or group assignments, video viewing and analysis, web site reviews, etc. These assignments require students to respond on the basis of readings, web site visits, and information that have been discussed in class. These assignments will not be graded; but rather, these assignments, including the out of class preparation required to complete these assignments, are considered the class participation portion of the grade. Instructions for these assignments will be reviewed in class. (These activities cannot be made up in cases of absence.) (CO 3, 4) *Due as indicated by the professor*

2. **Case Response / Brief:** Students will submit a written response or a brief to case studies and judicial decisions related to core issues in special education. (CO 1, 2) *Due as indicated on course schedule* – 10% of grade
3. **Case Studies in Special Education Facilitation:** On selected class meeting dates, students will facilitate 20-25 minutes of class. These students should read the assigned case studies from Weishaar's (2007) text more in depth, and will be responsible for furthering our understanding of the topics covered in the identified cases through discussion and activities. Please respect your peers by being prepared, reading the material, and participating in discussion and activities. (CO 1, 2, 3, 4) *Due as assigned during the semester* – 5% of grade
4. **Reflection: IDEIA and Personal Practice:** Students will write a reflection on professional standards in special education, incorporating concepts from codes of ethics discussed in class. This reflection also includes a parent letter. (CO 3, 4) *Due as indicated on course schedule* – 15% of grade

5. **Professional Organization Activity:** Students will be asked to join a professionally oriented organization. Students are required to share with the professor and peers in the class some activity in this organization (to be clarified in class meetings). (CO 3, 4) *Due once in the semester – 5% of grade*
6. **Public Awareness Video:** Students will create a public awareness video related to disability law that explains a salient point of that law to a specific audience. (CO 1, 2) – 10% of grade
7. **Quizzes and Midterm Exam:** Students will complete weekly quizzes as well as a midterm exam during the course of the semester. (CO 1, 2, 3, 4) *Due as indicated on course schedule. A student may “drop” one of the weekly quiz grades; weekly quizzes may not be made up, nor may the midterm examination.* – Quizzes 15% of grade; Midterm 15% of grade
8. **Final Exam:** Students will complete a final exam at the end of the course. (CO 1, 2, 3, 4) *Due as indicated on course outline – 20% of grade*

As the professor of this course I reserve the right to add or delete objectives and assignments depending upon the progress made by the class.

Professional Classroom Behavior and Interactions / Class Participation

Preservice students enrolled in SPEC 3040 **MUST** demonstrate professional dispositions as defined by NCATE. **Professional Dispositions** include the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth (NCATE, 2000). Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment.

Students will demonstrate professional dispositions by exhibiting the following professional behaviors:

1. Respect your learning and the learning of others
 1. Turn off your cell phones and beepers.
 2. Take responsibility for your own professional learning.
 3. Take responsibility for contacting the professor via email or by phone prior to an absence and by taking responsibility for getting class notes/materials from peers.
 4. Arrive at class at the designated class start time.
2. Come Prepared for the work
 1. Prepare for class by reading the assigned materials.
 2. Turn in completed assignments on designated due dates.
3. Step up and share ideas honestly
 1. Participate in class discussions in a variety of ways.
 2. Don’t be afraid to share your ideas or ask questions as needed.
 3. Interact in a professional manner (verbally and nonverbally) with other preservice students and professor.
4. Demonstrate open-minded, active listening
 1. Listen to understand, interpret, and evaluate what you hear.

2. Focus your attention on the speaker.
3. Suspend your own frame of reference by avoiding judgment and other internal mental activities in order to fully attend to the speaker.
5. This list of professional behaviors is not limited to only the above professional behaviors—other professional behaviors may be taken into account by the professor when grading the student at the end of the semester.

Attendance Policy

"The University expects that all students shall attend all regularly scheduled class meetings held for instruction or examination. . . . **A student who misses more than 20% of the scheduled classes of a course will be subject to receiving a failing grade in the course**" (*Undergraduate Catalog 2005-2006*, p. 79). **However, you are still required to submit the assignments on the scheduled due dates.** Coming late to class is incompatible with demonstrating **professional dispositions** appropriate to teacher educators.

Class Participation Points will be earned in the following ways:

- 2 points = being in class on time and following group norms during the class session.
- 1 point = being tardy to class or needing to leave early
- 0 points = non attendance

Late Submissions

Late submissions of assignments within less than three days from their due date will result in a 10% point reduction of the total points earned for the assignment. **Submissions later than three days from the due date will not be accepted and thus will not earn any points.** In order to be successful in this class, you must submit assignments in the timeframe designated for specific assignments.

APA Style

The Department of Early Childhood and Special Education officially endorsed the style of the American Psychological Association (APA) for the completion of all written assignments unless otherwise stated. Therefore, all assignments that are prepared outside of class must be produced using a word processing computer program, 12-point font, and double-spaced. Please reference the American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC. as needed.

[If you have difficulty preparing written assignments tutors are available in the Writing Center to assist you. The Writing Center is located in 204 West Hall (333-7387). The Center is open from 8 AM to 10 PM, Monday through Thursday and 8 AM to 3 PM on Friday. The Center staff urges you to call and make an appointment to ensure the availability of a knowledgeable tutor.]

All assignments must be the original work of the student submitting the work. References and citations are required when referring to the work of others.

Dewar College of Education Policy Statement on Plagiarism

Below is information directly quoted from the *Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures*:

Academic integrity is the responsibility of all VSU faculty and students. Faculty members should promote academic integrity by including clear instruction on the components of academic integrity and clearly defining the penalties for cheating and plagiarism in their course syllabi. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Academic Integrity Policy as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct and the faculty member's syllabi. All students are expected to do their own work and to uphold a high standard of academic ethics.

The full text of the *Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures* is available on the Academic Affairs website (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyatVSU.shtml>).

The consequences for acts of academic dishonesty in the Dewar College of Education are:

FIRST OFFENSE:

1. The faculty member will administer an academic response (e.g. resubmit / retake assignment, failure of the assignment, failure of the course).
2. The faculty member will complete a Level Two Dewar College of Education Concern form (<http://www.valdosta.edu/coe/studentsinfo.shtml>).
3. The faculty member will complete a Valdosta State University Report of Academic Dishonesty (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyatVSU.shtml>).

SECOND OFFENSE:

1. The faculty member will administer an academic response (e.g. resubmit / retake assignment, failure of the assignment, failure of the course).
2. The faculty member will complete a Level Two Dewar College of Education Concern form (<http://www.valdosta.edu/coe/studentsinfo.shtml>). According to the Dewar College of Education Concern Form Policy, "a second level two concern form will result in the student being dismissed from his/her program of study. This dismissal will result in an automatic review by the COE Undergraduate Policies Committee."
3. The faculty member will complete a Valdosta State University Report of Academic Dishonesty (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyatVSU.shtml>). According to the Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures document, "after a second (or subsequent) Report of Academic Dishonesty has been submitted to the Student Conduct Office in the Dean of Students Office, official charges will be drawn up and the disciplinary matter will be referred to the Valdosta State University Judicial Committee."

Accommodations Statement

Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in the Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (V/VP) and 219-1348 (TTY).

Professor

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