Psychology 442: Psychology of Exceptionality
University of Rhode Island
Winter 2017

Instructor: Allyson Marsh, M.S.
Class: January 3rd – January 19th – M, T, TH
Start Time-End Time: 4:30pm-9:15pm
Room: Providence CCE
Email: Allyson.E.Marsh@gmail.com
Office Hours: Contact me to set up a time to meet

Course Description:
Welcome to Psychology 442—Psychology of Exceptionality! In this course, we will examine exceptionality as it relates to the contemporary context that we live in through the use of film. This includes looking at exceptionality throughout history, including legislation surrounding civil rights for individuals with exceptionalities, as well as present day issues surrounding exceptionality. We will also discuss many different areas of exceptionality and how these exceptionalities are perceived by the exceptional individuals, their friends and family, and society in general. My biggest hope is that you will leave this class with the knowledge and desire to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

Course Objectives:
Specific learning objectives include:
-Develop an understanding of:
  -What the term “exceptionality” encompasses
  -Exceptionality as a social construct
  -The impact of labeling
  -Legislation and history of educational equality for exceptional students
  -Educational placements/accommodations for exceptional students and transitioning services
  -Specific Exceptionalities:
    Orthopedic/Physical Disabilities
    Communication Disorders
    Visual/hearing impairments
    Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
    Behavioral Exceptionalities – Emotional Disturbed Students
    Autism Spectrum Disorders
    Learning Disabilities
    Intellectual Disabilities
    Gifted and Talented Individuals
  -Exceptionality and the Family
  -Stigma and Exceptionality

Beyond the specific goals for the course, I have a number of overarching learning outcomes for us. These include:
- **Effective Oral and Written Communication:** facilitated through our class discussions (both collectively and in small groups) and through analytical and reflective essays. Students will be able to present a well-researched description of a specific disability.
- **Critical Thinking**: facilitated through written assignments, class discussions, and practical application of course material. *Students will constantly look for deeper meaning and new ways of thinking about topics covered both in and out of class.*

- **Multicultural Perspective**: facilitated through readings and discussions about perceptions of exceptionalities across diverse communities: *Students will be knowledgeable and keep an open mind concerning views and beliefs of different economic, geographic, and ethnic cultures.*

- **Advocating for others**: facilitated through class activities and presentations: *Students will apply the knowledge learned in this class to advocating for those whose rights are not being respected/are not being treated the way they should be.*

**Readings & Short Videos:**
Students will be required to read multiple articles and watch short videos prior to each class. The readings and videos will be available on Sakai.

**Course Organization:**
We have a number of advantages that promise to make this an exciting and valuable learning experience for all of us. As upper level students, you are coming to this course with a background in psychology and with some knowledge of and interest in the subject matter. Given that exceptionality is a daily presence in our environment, we are also coming to this course with a set of experiences, beliefs, and values that will inform and enrich our discussions. I have selected readings and films that I think are interesting and that will provide a solid groundwork for learning about exceptionalities.

**Policies and Procedures:**

*Academic Accommodations:*
Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we may arrange reasonable accommodations. Students with disabilities, who need accommodations, call the Academic Skills Center at 277-5221.

*Academic Honesty:*
Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student’s name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student’s own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student’s own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty.
- Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently
- Unauthorized possession or access to exams
- Unauthorized communication during exams
- Unauthorized use of another’s work or preparing work for another student
- Taking an exam for another student
- Altering or attempting to alter grades
- The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams
- Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references
- Facilitating or aiding another’s academic dishonesty
• Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the instructors.

*Academic Skills Center:*
This is a challenging course. Success requires that you keep pace with the work, understand course concepts, and study effectively. The Academic Skills Center, located in Room 239, offers a variety of services to students who wish to develop and sharpen their learning skills and improve their performance. Students should stop by the Center for further information and assistance or call 401-277-5221. All services provided by the Center are free and available in the following areas:

*Bias Response Team:*
Each member of the University community has the responsibility to foster an environment of acceptance, mutual respect, and understanding. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to contact the URI Bias Response Team http://www.uri.edu/brt/ where you will find people and resources to help.

*URI Email*
Throughout the semester, I will send emails with updates related to the course. It is your responsibility to check your URI email at least once every day for course messages. “I didn’t check my email” is not an acceptable excuse for missing important course information.

**Assignments & Grading:**
*All assignments, except for the Research Paper and the PowerPoint presentation, should be submitted online through the SAKAI website – I will not accept printed copies or emailed papers.*

1.) **Reflective essays on films (2 Essays – 50 points each)**
As important as it is to be exposed to information via a variety of methods, part of the experience involves processing this information and reflecting on it. Films provide important exposure and insight into the lives of individuals with exceptionalities and they function as critical teaching tools in this class. Therefore, throughout the semester, you will be asked to write 2 reflections about your reactions to the films. The reflective essays should be 5 pages long.

*The first reflection will be about the first 4 classes (1/3, 1/5, 1/9, 1/10) and the second reflection will be about the last 3 classes (1/12, 1/17, 1/19).*

**Criteria for Reflection Papers**
Your reflection paper includes:
-5 full pages (Do not include a header to the paper – You should start on the first line of the page)
  -Use of correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar
  -One-inch margins on each side of the paper
  -Times New Roman Size Twelve Font
  -Double Spaced
  -Your personal reactions to the film, lecture, and readings
1. Discuss specific issues, facts, or vignettes that you found particularly interesting or surprising
2. What did you learn about individuals with exceptionalities?
3. Discuss how the film relates to our class discussion/lecture.
4. Questions/Comments for further discussion?
   *You do not need to answer each of these in every reflection paper.

*Please do not just summarize the films, instead reflect!

2.) Research Paper/ Presentation (100 points)
Each student will complete a Research Paper about a topic that will be randomly assigned. You will also complete a PowerPoint presentation aimed at disseminating information about the specific disability to the class.

Presentation
You need to present an overview of the disability using a PowerPoint presentation. The information in the presentation should come solely from the information in peer-reviewed articles/books or approved* research based websites (WebMD and Wikipedia should NOT be used). I am not going to give you a min/max number of slides but your presentation should be 5 minutes in length. Please turn in a paper copy of your PowerPoint presentation on the day of your presentation and pass out handouts of the presentation to each student in the class. Your presentation needs to include a list of references. If I do not receive a paper copy of the presentation or the list of references, you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

Research Paper
You need to present your findings about the topic in a 5 page APA or MLA style paper (the title page and reference page do not count towards the page number).

Minimum Criteria for Research Paper
Your research paper includes:
- Summary of the key points of your topic of interest
- Introduction and Conclusion
- Information obtained from three peer-reviewed journal articles or approved* research based websites (WebMD and Wikipedia should not be used).
- 5 pages (not including the title page and reference page)
- Title page
- Reference Page
- APA or MLA Style
- Page numbers
- Citations within the text (all information obtained from references should be cited, not just quotes)
- No personal pronouns (“I” or me”)
- Use of correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar
- Transitions from one topic to the next
- One-inch margins on each side of the paper
- Times New Roman Size Twelve Font
- Double Spaced

*If you are going to use a website, you need to email me the link so that I can approve it.
4.) Final Take Home Exam (50 points)
The Final Take Home Exam is an 8-question essay exam that relates to the class lectures, readings, and films.

Grading (based on points):
225-250 A range
224.9-200 B range
199.9-175 C range
174.9–150 D range
149.9 and below F range

Attendance Policy
Attendance at all seminars is expected. You will be marked absent if you are more than 15 minutes late for class.

-If you miss one class, you will receive 15 points off of your final grade.
If you are unable to attend a seminar for legitimate reasons, you must responsibly and professionally communicate this to me. I will not take away any points if you communicate with me about your illness before the class session and provide medical documentation within one week.

-If you miss two classes for any reason, you will not receive credit for the course.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>Introduction to Course and Course Themes; Defining Exceptionality; Exceptionality as a social construct; Labeling, Legislation, history of education equality for exceptional students; Educational placements/accommodations for exceptional students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>●If you have a laptop, please bring it to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder; Speech and Language Disorders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>Visual Impairments; Autism Spectrum Disorders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/12</td>
<td>Gifted and Talented; Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>●PRESENTATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>●Reflection Due before Midnight The reflection should only be about the first 4 classes (1/3, 1/5, 1/9, 1/10) ●Research Paper Due before Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>No Class – MLK Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>Behavioral/Emotional Disorders; Hearing Impairments</td>
<td>●PRESENTATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>Physical Disabilities, Health Disabilities, and Low-Incidence Disabilities</td>
<td>●PRESENTATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exceptionality and the Family, Stigma and Exceptionality, Advocating for those with Exceptionalities</td>
<td>●Final Exam Due by Midnight ●Reflection Due before Midnight The reflection should be about the last 3 classes (1/12, 1/17, 1/19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>