



THE  
HADLEY SCHOOL  
FOR THE BLIND

## **Introduction to Blindness and Visual Impairment ComD 3300 Course Syllabus**

### **Course Description**

The population of children and youth who are blind or visually impaired is quite varied, including those with this single disability as well as those with multiple disabilities and vision loss. Therefore, their needs are quite varied and the educational settings they are in can range from a School for the Blind, to the regular classroom, a resource room to a self-contained classroom for children with severe disabilities. This course will familiarize you with the characteristics and needs of this population of students.

In the early lessons, you will get to meet some actual children and youth with blindness or visual impairment through short videoclips. You will hear from some of them as well as some of their parents about the joys and challenges of living with vision impairment. Then you will learn about the key areas of educational programming that are most critical for these students and some of the ways in which you might be supporting their learning in these areas. In particular, you will be learning how to do this in different stages of their lives such as during the preschool years, elementary years and so on. Each time period brings a new set of unique challenges. For example, near the end of the high school years, these students will be getting ready for the adult world. Some may be ready to go on to college, others may under a job coach program, and those with severe disabilities may be transitioning into sheltered workshops. It will all depend on the nature of their disabilities as well as their abilities.

Each lesson has a Powerpoint lecture to go with it, some terms to know, readings, usually some optional practice activities, an assignment, and a short quiz. The assignments are very practical in nature. Each lesson is worth 20 points. There is a midterm worth 75 points and a final worth 75 points. The final only covers material

from midterm to the end of the course. Each week, you are asked to respond to a question related to that week's topic in a threaded discussion format.

## **Text**

The text for the course is Classroom Collaboration by Hudson, Perkins School for the Blind. Printable articles are also included for additional reading with each lesson and at times a link is provided for an article available on a particular site. Students will also be required to read a book from a recommended list that are written by individuals who are blind or visually impaired. These are personal accounts of life as an individual who is blind or visually impaired. They will be asked to write a report on the book addressing a set of questions provided by the instructor.

## **Course Objectives**

After completing this course you will be able to:

1. Describe the population of children and youth with blindness and visual impairment, their characteristics and basic needs.
2. Describe the various educational settings these children are typically in and the types of professionals involved in their programming.
3. Discuss what is meant by the "expanded core curriculum" for students with visual impairments and why those are important.
4. Define what Orientation and Mobility means, who teaches these skills and ways you as a paraeducator may be involved in reinforcing learning in this area.
5. Describe ways that you as a paraeducator can enhance the learning of social skills for the child who is visually impaired that you are working with.
6. Describe ways as a paraeducator that you can help your student who is visually impaired develop play and leisure skills as well as be more independent in helping to care for their own needs.
7. Outline some of the characteristics, educational needs and challenges faced by children and youth with vision impairments during the following major periods in their lives and ways to support their learning at these times: Infancy, Preschool, Elementary, Middle School, High School, and Getting Ready for the Adult world.

## **Lessons by Week**

- Lesson 1: Who are children and youth with blindness and visual impairment?
- Lesson 2: Meet some children and youth BVI and their families
- Lesson 3: Where are they served and by whom?
- Lesson 4: The Infancy Years
- Lesson 5: The Core and Expanded Core Curriculum
- Lesson 6: Orientation and Mobility
- Lesson 7: Social Skills
- Midterm: Test (week 8)
- Lesson 8: Play and Leisure
- Lesson 9: Building Independence (self-care, sexuality)
- Lesson10: The Preschool Years
- Lesson 11: The Elementary School Years
- Lesson 12: The Middle School Years
- Lesson 13: The High School Years
- Lesson 14: Getting Ready for the Adult World
- Final: Test (week 16)

## **How to Get Started**

Begin by clicking on "Lesson 1: "Who Are Children and Youth with Blindness and Visual Impairments?" You'll notice that as you click on a lesson link, the list expands to reveal its components, including subsections and the assignment.