**AUBURN UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING SYLLABUS**

**FALL SEMESTER 2025**

**Course Number: RSED 4910**

**Course Title: Rehabilitation and Disability Studies Practicum**

**Credit Hours: Variable**

**Class Time and Location: Tuesday, 4:00 – 4:50pm, College of Education Building, room 2233**

**Date Syllabus Prepared:** August 2025

Instructor: Nicholas Derzis, PhD, CRC, CVE

Email: [szw0023@auburn.edu](mailto:szw0023@auburn.edu)

Office Hours: By Appointment

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD AND SCHEDULES:**

This course will operate in a face-to-face format in addition to the 60–120 hours of field experience completed at an approved practicum site. Students are expected to attend all scheduled in-person class sessions, where they will engage with the instructor and peers to discuss practicum experiences and receive ongoing support.

**TEXTBOOK:**

There is no required textbook. All required readings will be posted to Canvas. *Please note that readings may be posted to and assigned on Canvas at any point in the semester.*

American Counseling Association. (2014). *2014 Code of Ethics.* Author. https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2014-code-of-ethics-finaladdress.pdf?sfvrsn=96b532c\_2

Campbell, M. K., Corpus, K., Wussow, T. M., Plummer, T., Gibbs, D., & Hix, S. (2015). Fieldwork educators’ perspectives: Professional behavior attributes of level II fieldwork students. *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy, 3*(4). https://doi.org/10.15453/2168-6408.1146

Chapin, M., McCarthy, H., Shaw, L., Bradham-Cousar, M., Chapman, R., Nosek, M., Peterson, S., Yilmaz, Z., & Ysasi, N. (2018). Disability-related counseling competencies. American Rehabilitation Counseling Association, a division of ACA. https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/competencies/arca-disability-related-counseling-competencies-final-version-5-15-19.pdf?sfvrsn=c376562c\_6

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with a supervised beginning experience in a human service organization. This experience should expose the student to issues affecting the rehabilitation process and/or the delivery of rehabilitation services.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The practicum experience is 60-120 hours at an approved rehabilitation site.

Objectives that each student must, at a minimum, accomplish are:

1. To become familiar with the organizational structure of the unit or agency including the role and function of staff.
2. To become familiar with the philosophy, mission, and goals of the unit or agency exclusive to the agency.
3. To become aware of potential legal issues that may affect the effective functioning of the unit or agency regarding delivery of services.
4. To become aware of unit or agency standards that assures quality of care and services provided.
5. To become more aware of personal prejudices and social barriers that may impede the rehabilitation process.

**COURSE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE: FALL 2025**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Dates** | **Assignment/Activities** | **Reading/Assignments** |
| 1 | 8/18 - 8/22 | Syllabus uploaded to Canvas  Initial Class 8/19 | **Practicum Forms Due 8/29**  **Semester Plan Due 8/29** |
| 2 | 8/25 – 8/29 |  | **Weekly Journal #1 Due** |
| 3 | 9/1 – 9/5 | Class meeting 9/2  **9/1 Labor Day** | **Weekly Journal #2 Due** |
| 4 | 9/8 – 9/12 |  | **Weekly Journal #3 Due** |
| 5 | 9/15 – 9/19 | Class meeting 9/16 | **Weekly Journal #4 Due** |
| 6 | 9/22 – 9/26 |  | **Weekly Journal #5 Due** |
| 7 | 9/29 – 10-3 | Class meeting 9/30 | **Weekly Journal #6 Due** |
| 8 | 10/6 – 10/10 | **Oct 9-10 Fall break** | **Weekly Journal #7 Due**  **Midterm Log Signed my Supervisor Due** |
| 9 | 10/13 – 10/17 |  | **Weekly Journal #8 Due** |
| 10 | 10/20 – 10/24 | Class meeting 10/21 | **Weekly Journal #9 Due** |
| 11 | 10/27 – 10/31 |  | **Weekly Journal #10 Due** |
| 12 | 11/3 – 11/7 |  |  |
| 13 | 11/10 – 11/14 | Class meeting 11/11 |  |
| 14 | 11/17 – 11/21 |  |  |
| 15 | 11/24 – 11/28 | **Thanksgiving Holiday** |  |
| 16 | 12/1 – 12/5 | **Dec 5 Classes end** | **Summary of Experience Due 12/5**  **Final Log Due 12/5** |
| 17 | 12/8 – 12/12 | **University Official Final Exam Period** |  |

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & STUDENT EVALUATION:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignments:** | Points |
| 1. Practicum Forms | 10 |
| 2. Semester Plan for Hours | 10 |
| 3. Evaluation Forms | 10 |
| 4. Weekly Journal (10 @ 3.5pts each) | 35 |
| 5. Hours Log | 15 |
| 6. Summary of Experience | 20 |
| **Total** | **100** |

**Grading Scale**

This class is a pass/fail course with grades of S or U.

**1. Practicum Forms (10 points):**

Before a student can begin earning practicum hours, the following forms must be completed and submitted to the course instructor:

1. The ***Practicum Proposal*** form must be turned in with site information no later than the second week of classes. The course instructor must approve the proposed practicum site at this time. The course instructor reserves the right to deny any site placements based on qualification of site supervisor, proposed experience, or insufficient information provided.
2. The ***Practicum Supervisor Letter of Agreement*** form must be signed by your site supervisor and submitted to the course instructor. The site supervisor is the person at your practicum site who is responsible for verifying the number of hours worked each week.
3. The ***Auburn University College of Education Memorandum on Professionalism***form must be signed by both the student and site supervisor and submitted by the student.

Remember, students cannot begin logging hours at the practicum site until all three forms have been submitted to the course instructor.

**2. Semester Plan for Hours (10 points):**

In an effort to help you succeed in this course, you will create a semester plan for yourself. This will serve as a way for you to stay accountable to your plan, knowledgeable on your progress throughout the semester, and keep me informed as well. A document will be provided to you to utilize.

At the midpoint in the semester, you will be asked to make changes to this document based on how many hours you still need to collect for the second half of the semester. This activity is in place solely to help you succeed.

**3. Evaluation Form (10 points):**

There is a *new* evaluation system for RSED Practicum/Internship field experience students via the Auburn University survey software, *Qualtrics*. This link will be emailed to your site supervisor at the end of the semester and returned directly to the instructor via *Qualtrics* survey response method. Students will receive a copy of this evaluation *after* it has been turned into the instructor.

***\*\*\*There will be no more paper-based field experience evaluation forms\*\*\****

**4. Weekly Journals (10 journals at 3.5 pts each):**

As a part of the practicum experience, each student will keep a weekly log or journal for each week of the practicum. These entries should be an opportunity for reflection.  
For example, write about questions you have, things you do not understand, things you see that you think could be done differently, things that make you angry, things that you like, things that happen to reinforce your decision to work in this field and things that happen that make you question your decision to work in this field, etc. Discuss how the field experience is developing you as a future practitioner.

*All students are expected to complete the weekly journal entries. Even if you are not at your site that week, students are still expected to submit a journal entry via Canvas, for a total of 10 journal entries for the semester.*

**5. Log of Hours (15 points):**

Students will utilize the *Semester Hour Log* form to log hours accrued at the practicum site. Students should update this form weekly, providing a weekly hour allotment, a brief description of tasks that earned hours for the week, and calculate total hours earned thus far. This form should be uploaded to Canvas weekly by Sunday at 11:59pm. **It will be required that this form be signed by the site supervisor at midterm and final points in the semester** – The midterm form is different for midterm check point.

**6. Summary of Field Experience (20 points):**

All students are required to write a *Summary of Field Experience* at the end of the semester. This is in addition to weekly discussion posts and responses. In this paper, you will address the following topics:

1. **Site Information** – about ½ page – What site did you attend? What was your main role at the site? Approximately how many hours per week did you go to your site?
2. **Greatest Impact** – about ½ page – Over the course of the semester, what did you do that had the greatest impact on your site or clients? In other words, what did you do that you’re most proud of this semester?
3. **Greatest Challenge** – about ½ page – Over the course of the semester, what stands out to you as the biggest challenge/obstacle that you faced? How did you overcome this? What do you wish you had known before this happened?
4. **Area of Growth** – about ½ page – Think back to your first week this semester and your first day at your site. In what way(s) have you grown as a person? How have you grown as a clinician or professional? How have you grown as a student?
5. **Course Thoughts** – about ½ page – If you were to take this course again, what would you like to see done differently and why? What do you feel helped you succeed the most this semester?

When writing this paper, you will utilize APA format. You should have a title page and your text should start on the second page of your file. Your text should be written in Times New Roman and size 12 font with one-inch margins. When formatting your paper, there should be a header at the top of each section. The headers will be: Site Information, Greatest Impact, Greatest Challenge, Area of Growth, and Course Thoughts. While you will not be penalized for your use of APA formatting, please consult the following website as a resource should you need it: <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_sample_paper.html>

**7. Site Visit**

A representative of the rehabilitation program will conduct a site visit at least once per semester for each intern. This will provide the RSED faculty a chance to evaluate the student at their internship site, meet with site personnel, and to meet with the student to discuss the field experience.

**OTHER COURSE DETAILS:**

**EVALUATION FORM**

There is a *new* evaluation system for RSED Practicum/Internship field experience students via the Auburn University survey software, *Qualtrics*. This link will be emailed to your site supervisor at the end of the semester and returned directly to the instructor via *Qualtrics* survey response method. Students will receive a copy of this evaluation *after* it has been turned into the instructor.

***\*\*\*There will be no more paper-based field experience evaluation forms\*\*\****

**IDENTIFICATION BADGES**

Some sites require students to obtain and wear College of Education ID badges. Please note that the cost for a badge is $5. *If your site requires a badge, you will need to request one from the course instructor via email by the second week of classes.*

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This is a professional-level practicum course, and your attendance reflects your readiness for fieldwork and future employment. You are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings—whether in person or via Zoom—and to be present at your practicum site as arranged.

We will meet in person for the first class, followed by **bi-weekly Zoom sessions** throughout the semester. These meetings are critical to your success and provide opportunities for supervision, support, and shared learning.

If you attend via Zoom, your **camera must remain on** for the duration of class. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence.

You are allowed **up to two unexcused absences** from class meetings without penalty. A third unexcused absence will result in a **letter grade deduction**. Further unexcused absences may result in a failing grade for the course.

**Unexcused absences include:**

* Failing to show up without notifying the instructor
* Attending class without your camera on
* Forgetting class or not checking Canvas

If you must miss a class due to a **university-approved excuse**, you must **notify the instructor in advance** and submit documentation.

You are also expected to **attend your practicum site as scheduled**, and to communicate promptly with both your **site supervisor** and **course instructor** if you are absent from your field placement.

Your engagement—both in the classroom and at your practicum site—is essential for successful completion of this course.

**CORE ACCREDITATION**

Auburn University’s Rehabilitation and Disability Studies program is on the CORE registry for undergraduate programs. This course meets the standards set for the supervised clinical internship experience.

**LIABILITY COVERAGE**

Student’s officially registered and enrolled at Auburn University are covered by professional liability insurance in the amount of $1,000,000. Students who may need to document this coverage may request such from Dr. Weaver.

**CLASS POLICY STATEMENTS:**

**Excused Absences**: Students are granted excused absences from class for the following reasons: Illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student’s immediate family, death of a member of the student’s immediate family, trips for student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for University classes, trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoena for a court appearance and religious holidays. Students who wish to have an excused absence from this class for any other reason must contact the instructor in advance of the absence to request permission. The instructor will weigh the merits of the request and render a decision. When feasible, the student must notify the instructor prior to the occurrence of any excused absences, but in no case shall such notification occur more than one week after the absence. Appropriate documentation for all excused absences is required.

**Make-Up Policy:** Arrangements to make up missed major examination (e.g. hour exams, mid-term exams) due to properly authorized excused absences. Except in extraordinary circumstance, no make-up exams will be arranged during the last three days before the final exam period begins. Normally, a makeup exam shall occur within one week from the time the student initiates arrangements.

**Accommodations:** Students who need accommodations should submit their approved accommodations through the AIM Student Portal on AU Access and follow-up with the instructor about an appointment. It is important for the student to complete these steps as soon as possible; accommodations are not retroactive. Students who have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, should contact the Office of Accessibility at: ACCESSIBILITY@auburn.edu or (334) 844-2096 (V/TT). The Office of Accessibility is located in Haley Center 1228.

**Academic Honesty:** All portions of the Auburn University Student Academic Honesty code (Title XII) found in the Student Policy eHandbook. will apply to this class. All academic honesty violations or alleged violations of the SGA Code of Laws will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee.

**Classroom Behavior:** The Auburn University Classroom Behavior Policy is strictly followed in the course; please refer to the Student Policy eHandbook for details of this policy.

**Emergency Contingency statement:** If normal class and/or activities are disrupted due to illness, emergency, or crisis situation, the syllabus and other course plans and assignments may be modified to allow completion of the course. If this occurs, an addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials.

**AI Policy: Not Permitted in this Course for Assignments**

In this course, it is expected that all submitted work is produced by the students themselves, whether individually or collaboratively. Students must not seek the assistance of Generative AI Tools like ChatGPT or Copilot for graded assignments. Use of a Generative AI Tool to complete an assignment constitutes academic dishonesty. Students may use Generative AI tools as a study tool, but be forewarned that AI tools are not trustworthy.

**Use of Electronics:** Cell phones must be put on silent and stored during class times, unless the instructor is notified of special circumstances (e.g., on-call professional services, family emergencies). Computers and electronic notepads are welcomed, but may be used for class purposes only and must not be a distraction.

**Mental Health:** If you or someone you know needs support, you are encouraged to contact Auburn Cares at 334-844-1305 or auburn.edu/auburncares. Auburn Cares will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

Student Counseling & Psychological Services provides confidential, no-cost mental health counseling and psychiatric services to Auburn Students. You can speak with a counselor 24/7/365 by calling 334-844-5123. Learn more about mental health information on campus at auburn.edu/scps.

**Basic Needs:** Any student experiencing food insecurity or an unexpected financial crisis is encouraged to contact Auburn Cares at 334-844-1305 or auburn.edu/auburncares for resources and support.

**Sexual Misconduct Resources Statement:** Auburn University faculty are committed to supporting our students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. Please be aware that if you choose to confide in a faculty member regarding an issue of sexual misconduct, dating violence, or stalking, we are obligated to inform the Title IX Office, who can assist you with filing a formal complaint, No-Contact Directives, and obtaining supportive measures. Find more information at auburn.edu/titleix.

If you would like to speak with someone confidentially, Safe Harbor (334-844-7233) and Student Counseling & Psychological Services (334-844-5123) are both confidential resources. Safe Harbor provides support to students who have experienced sexual or relationship violence by connecting them with academic, medical, mental health, and safety resources. For additional information, visit auburn.edu/safeharbor.

**SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER:**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed due to the developmental needs of the students. In the event that changes are deemed necessary, the instructor will inform students at the earliest date possible in class or via email.

A picture containing food

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DEPARTMENT OF

SPECIAL EDUCATION,

REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING

**RSED 4910: Practicum in Rehabilitation and Disability Studies**

**Pre-Approved Practicum Sites**

Please be aware that this is not an all-inclusive list. These are only some of the more popular places that students have utilized recently:

* Full Life Ahead Family Camp
* Rehabworks Auburn
* East Alabama Medical Center
* The Red Cross
* The Achievement Center
* Storybook Farm
* Best Buddies
* Project Uplift (for one credit hour of practicum)
* Unity Wellness Center (HIV/AIDS outreach, prevention)
* The Big House
* Expressions of a Brave Heart
* Group Home
* Exceptional Foundation of East Alabama
* Special Olympics
* City of Auburn Parks and Rec