
Instructor: Dr. Ann Berry PhD., Assistant Professor in Special Education

Office Location: Rounds 035

Office and/or Online Availability: Office hours: by appointment in person of via SKYPE

Office Phone: Phone: 603-535-2913 Cell: 570-412-2792  PSU E-mail: abberry@plymouth.edu

Term and Year: Winter 2014

Course Delivery: Online Dec 12 – Feb 27th

Catalog Description

Focuses on the ethics of special education laws, regulations and policies. Students will use case studies that pose ethical dilemmas in order to understand the complex issues underlying such issues as inclusion, labeling, IDEA, least restrictive environment (LRE) compliance, due process, parent involvement, awareness of ethical responsibilities, ethical decision making, confidentiality, record keeping, and informed consent. The spirit versus the letter and the morality of special education will also be explored. A special focus will be on transcating an ethic of care in school best practices that promote democratic decision making, advocacy, and the empowerment of parents.

Course Overview

Essential Questions:
• What are the major ethical issues encountered by special education professionals?
• What impact does federal legislation and mandates have in the administration of special education?
• What are responsive strategies that promote effective communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration with individuals with disabilities, families, and school personnel?
• What are the roles of administrators, general education teachers, other school personnel and parents in supporting access to the general curriculum of an individual with disabilities?
• What are successful problem solving methods that facilitate collaboration?

Learning Objectives:

By engaging in assigned readings, sample case studies, and class discussions, students will be able to:
• Identify and discuss major ethical considerations in various aspects and practices in special education
• Explain how to support the role of individuals with disabilities, their families and school and community personnel in planning an individualized program, and maintain confidential communication about individuals with disabilities and their families
• Explain how assessment procedures can respectfully include individuals with disabilities and their families
• Explain how to foster respectful and beneficial relationships among individuals and incorporate individuals with disabilities and their parents as active participants in the educational team
• Discuss ways of communicating effectively with school personnel and parents including those from diverse backgrounds and their families
• Identify resources available to parents that would assist parents in understanding their rights as protected by the IDEA and special education procedures

Students will demonstrate these objectives through their participation in discussions, reflections and their final paper and presentation.

Course Expectations:
• Students will be able to interact and work with others in their educational communities.
• Students will be required to be mindful and accepting of differences and challenges that are among professionals in the classroom.
• Students will incorporate technological and media resources in presentations.
• Students will come prepared to all classes to foster discussion on the topic.

Textbook List/Bibliography/Recommended Reading/Resources

Required Text:
3.) Use of APA 6th edition format is required of all PSU’s graduate students; it is advisable to include the APA 6th edition Publication Manual as a recommended/required resource for all courses. For assistance with APA style, see the APA website for rich resources: [http://www.apastyle.org/index.asp](http://www.apastyle.org/index.asp)

Lamson Library also has an online version that you can access several ways:
- [http://library.plymouth.edu/](http://library.plymouth.edu/)
- [http://library.plymouth.edu/how-to-cite#APA](http://library.plymouth.edu/how-to-cite#APA) - Choose APA link
- [http://plymouth.worldcat.org/oclc/10537165](http://plymouth.worldcat.org/oclc/10537165) - Choose the Read 6th ed. Online link – bottom left on screen

Recommended Text: Some sections will be posted to Moodle through Electronic Reserves

Professional Standards, Course Goals/Objectives, and Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Standard(s) Assessed</th>
<th>Assessment Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Forum Posts</td>
<td>CEC Standard #1, 612.07(a)1: Foundations - A successful candidate: models, theories, philosophies, and research methods that provide the basis for special education practice; understands rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional learning needs; understands definitions and issues related to the identification of individuals with disabilities. Hallmark: Reflection and innovation</td>
<td>Discussion Forum Rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies</td>
<td>CEC Standard #9: Professional and Ethical Practice, 612.07(a)9 - A successful candidate will demonstrate: the importance of the teacher serving as a model for individuals with exceptional learning needs; methods to remain current regarding research-validated practice; acting ethically in advocating for appropriate services; developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs; the use of verbal, nonverbal, and written language effectively; demonstrate commitment to engage in evidence-based practice; and knowledge of organizations and publications relevant to individuals with disabilities. Hallmark: Professionalism and service</td>
<td>Reflections on Case Studies in Special Education Rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on Topic related to Ethical and Legal Issues in Special Education and Working With Families</td>
<td>CEC Standard #10: Collaboration, 612.07(a)1 &amp; 10, 610.02(d)2- A successful candidate will: understand the roles of individuals with exceptional learning needs, families, and school and community personnel in planning of an individualized program; maintain confidential communication about individuals with exceptional learning needs; collaborate with school personnel and community members in integrating individuals with exceptional learning needs into various settings; communicate with school personnel about the characteristics and needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs; understand co-planning and co-teaching methods to strengthen content acquisition of individuals with learning disabilities; use local community, and state and provincial resources to assist in programming with individuals with disabilities;</td>
<td>Presentation Rubric</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and select, plan, and coordinate activities of related services personnel to maximize direct instruction for individuals with disabilities. Hallmark: Scholarship and action/application; Professionalism and service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Presentation</th>
<th>CEC Standard 9 Professional and Ethical Practice, 612.07(a)9</th>
<th>Final Presentation and Handout Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hallmark: Professionalism and service; Global awareness and social responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<th>Handout for Parents</th>
<th>CEC Standard 10 Collaboration: 612.07(a)1 &amp; 10, 610.02(d)2</th>
<th>Final Presentation and Handout Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hallmark: Professionalism and service; Global awareness and social responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Content of Course Which Addresses Technological Standards/Competence**

Students will be required to employ technology in assignments, research and classroom presentations.

**Evaluation Plan/Grading Scale**

Performance-based Course Objectives:
1. Participation in discussions and weekly forums including thoughtful responses to others’ posts in our online environment
   84 points total = 61%
2. Wiki, Googledoc, other assignments
   13 points total = 10%
3. Final Presentation
   25 points = 18%
4. Handout for parents
   15 points = 11%
Total = 137

**Course Calendar/Agenda**

**Note: Due dates:** Our course week begins on a Thursday and closes the following Weds. Forum discussions are due Sunday and Weds. Initial posts are due Sunday pm by 10 and a response to at least one other post is due by Weds at 10 pm.

**Topics and Readings**

**Week 1 - December 12th: Special Education Law and other Education Initiatives that Impact Students With Disabilities and the History of Family Involvement**

Central Questions: What have been the major legislation or educational initiatives impacting the education of students with disabilities in the past 40 years? What major ethical considerations have evolved as a result? How has this legislation also impacted the family’s role in the education of their child?

**Watch Lost in Laconia (58 min)**
http://video.nhptv.org/video/1946560648/

**Read:** Chapters 1 & 2 Working With Families
Chapters 1 & 2 Education For All on Electronic Reserve on Moodle
Assignment: Lost in Laconia Forum (5 points post, 1 point response to others) Answer the following questions based on the readings and the documentary:
What have been the major legislation or educational initiatives impacting the education of students with disabilities both nationally (readings) and in NH (as discussed in the documentary)? What major ethical considerations have evolved as a result? How has this legislation also impacted the family’s role in the education of their child?

**Week 2 – Dec 19: Working with Families and Understanding their Perspective**

Read Chapters 3, 4, & 7 Working With Families
Central Questions: How might having a child with a disability impact the family’s ability to constructively engage in their child’s education? What teacher skills and dispositions would be helpful?

Read one of the following articles:

Post a reflection (1 – 2 pages max = 5 points) in the Parent’s Perspective Forum that answers the following questions: (Be sure to paste your reflection into the dialog box so we can read it there versus opening an attachment.)

1.) What were the main points of the article?
2.) What were the central issues/concerns for the parent of the student with disabilities in the article?
3.) Were (or are) these issues/concerns addressed by teachers/school district?
4.) What were the emotions involved on the part of parent, student, teachers?
5.) What did you learn about working with parents of student with disabilities from what you read? How will this insight inform your practice as a professional?

Respond to at least 1 other’s post (1 point)

Week 3 – Dec 26th – no assignments

Week 4 – Jan 2 Ethical Considerations When Working With Families and Collaboratively Resolving Conflicts.

Central Question: What attitudes and tools do we need to employ when resolving potential conflicts with families? What are our obligations as special education professionals to provide a child with the LRE - least restrictive environment and FAPE – free appropriate public education?

Read Chapters 5 & 9 Working With Families and case study 7.2 Jacob

We will use the case study Jacob 7.2 as the background for a role-play between parents, special education administrator, speech pathologist, social worker, and early childhood education teacher. I will divide you into IEP teams (of about 4 - 5). Pretend that we are at that IFSP (IEP) meeting where placement is being decided upon. Only this time (instead of the way it worked out and ended up in due process) I would like you to communicate with each other using the collaboration skills described on page 70 of your text (WWF) and active listening skills (e.g., summarizing and restating pg 73 - 76). You will also be asked to employ the problem-solving framework on pages 81 – 83 and the additional suggestions for resolving conflicts constructively pg 83 – 84. By using these tools it is hoped that we can have a do over of this FSP meeting and attempt to reach a resolution to this conflict.

1.) In your assigned role, state your position for a FAPE and LRE for Jacob using the details in the case study and creatively elaborating the details where it will serve your purposes. This will be your initial post (due Sunday).
2.) Then Monday – Weds talk with the other members of the IFSP (IEP) team(at least 2 additional posts by Weds).

Case Studies in Special Education: Wrestling with Ethical and Legal Considerations: Moodle Assignments weeks 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 Jan 9, 16, 23, 30, Feb 6, & 13.

Central Questions: What are the legal and ethical dilemmas that arise in the provision of special education? What is our legal and ethical responsibilities (these may not be the same thing.) as special educators? How might we resolve these issues while communicating respect to others involved?

1- 2 case studies each week. Read corresponding chapters/materials with each topic.
  a. Write a 1 – 2 page reflection for each case study that answers all of the questions (BOTH “Legal Issues and “Other Issues” questions but NOT the Activity) posed at the end of the Case Study, and reflects your understanding of the week’s readings. If not directly stated in your discussion of the questions be sure your reflection includes:
a. a summary of the **law or legal issues** involved,
   - the issues and ethical considerations raised by the case study, and the week’s readings,
   - a possible resolution strategy, or alternative course of action.
   - **Be sure to reflect on how this case and your understanding of the issues will influence your practice in the education of students with disabilities.**

b. Post your reflection to the discussion forum for that topic (5 points) by Sunday of the week it is assigned. POST IN THE DIALOG BOX rather than as an attachment.
   - Note: Moodle hint for putting Word formatted text into a dialog box with out messing up the format:
     - In the second row of options at the top of the dialogue box look 3 buttons over from the right for a button with a small clipboard and a W on it.
     - Click on that, which will open up a separate window – Paste your formatted text in there.
     - Hit “Insert” and your formatting should be retained.

c. Respond to at least 1 other post (1 point) by the Weds that follows by 10 pm (so you will have 1 full week to post and respond to other’s posts). Your participation points for these weeks will be accorded based on your thoughtful responses to others’ posts. You can relate an insight, pose a question, summarize a personal experience, or voice an opinion. Your discussion should be informed by the Discussion Forum Rubric (at end of syllabus).

Resources: Council For Exceptional Children (2010). Special Education Professional Ethical Principles
   NICHY (n.d.). The Basic Special Education Process under IDEA 2004
   FAPE (n.d.). Understanding the Special Education Process; An Overview For Parents

**Week 5 – Jan 9:**

**Ethical Considerations in Rural Special Education WIKI**

Read: Rude and Whetstone (2008). Ethical Considerations for Special Educators in Rural America.

Engage with others in the class in a wiki discussion around these questions: Are the issues for delivery of services in special education different in rural settings? How so? What happens when specific services, teachers, or resources are just not available in rural districts? What then? What type of additional ethical consideration must we keep in mind? Post at least 2 contributions to the wiki by including your name by your post in parenthesis (Ann) by Sunday. Then check back Monday – Weds to see what your classmates have to say and add at least one more thought by Weds.

**Ethical Consideration Topic 1: Eligibility /Evaluation** What happens if parents and school disagree??

   - Read: First half of Chapter 10 Working With Families
   - Case Study 4.1 Jon OR Anna 6.2   For Jon– Additional question: This case study ends with consensus – but what happens when parents do not want their child evaluated and or identified in kindergarten? What then?
   - Assignment: Reflection Forum using the criteria

**Week 6 – Jan 16:**

**Ethical Consideration Topic 2: Least Restrictive Environment** Push In Services vs. Pull Out and Inclusion vs. Separate Setting

Read: Education For All Chapter 3 on Electronic Reserve on Moodle

Case Study 9.2 Andrew

Assignment: Reflection Forum

**Ethical Consideration Topic 3: Provision of Services** Who decided who provides services, how much, and when? (NCLB highly-qualified?? RTI groups?? ) What happens when parents and school disagree?

   - Read: Case Study 10.2 Maria
   - Assignment: Reflection Forum

**Week 7 – Jan 23:**
Ethical Consideration Topic 4: Meeting IEP goals: When are appropriate services appropriate, time constraints, use of general education classroom and teachers. So many goals so little time!
Read: Chapter 8 Working with Families – Creating IEPs
Case Study 2.1 Brandon
Assignment: Reflection Forum

Ethical Consideration Topic 5: Gaining the cooperation of the general education teacher –and related service providers – Whose job is it anyway? What if gened isn’t following the plan?
Case Study 8.1 Rhonda
Assignment: Reflection Forum

Week 8 – Jan 30:
Ethical Consideration Topic 6: Accommodations and Modifications: Impact of NCLB
Case Study 6.1 Carlos
Assignment: Reflection Forum

Ethical Consideration Topic 7: Discipline Manifestation Determination
Read Chapter 1 Overview of IDEA and NCLB Case Studies in Special Education Law
Case Study 5.2 Terrance
Assignment: Reflection Forum
Assignment: Post an idea for your Final Presentation topic.

Week 9 – Feb 6
Ethical Consideration Topic 8: Disproportionate Identification of Minority Students EBD and ID. Lack of fluidity of placements once identified
Read: Chapter 6 Working With Families Cultural Competence and Working With Families from Diverse Backgrounds
Chapter 5 Education for All Reducing Disproportionate Representation in Special Education (posted on Moodle)
Case Study 8.2 Jameca
Assignment: Reflection Forum

Ethical Consideration Topic 9: Parent Participation
Read: Chapter 3 Working With Families Family Members’ Roles and Characteristics
Read: Trussell et al., 2008. Ethical Practices and Parent Participation in Rural Special Education
Case Study 10.1 Dan
Assignment: Reflection Forum

Week 10 Feb 13th
Ethical Consideration Topic 10: Transition Services - Our ethical responsibility to consider post-secondary outcomes and the life skills practicality of services
Read: Chapter Last half of Chapter 10 and 11 Working With Families
Wagner et al., 2012. A National Picture of Parent and Youth Participation in IEP and Transition Planning Meetings
Read: Case Study 7.1 Thomas OR 3.2 Paul
Assignment: Reflection Forum

Assignment: Explore different parent information, support, and resources online through local, state, and national organizations between now and the end of the course.
Examples -
http://www.parentinformationcenter.org
http://nichcy.org/schoolage/parental-rights

Upload the url and a short summary (a few sentences) of an online parent resource you have researched, and the information they provide to parents. This information can be part of your final paper. Post to the Moodle Googledoc so we can all share in these resources between now and the end of the course.
Assignment: Provide a brief overview (this could be in outline format) of your investigation into your Final Presentation Topic: what have you learned through your research to date on your topic? Provide a reference list in APA format.

- Your references for your topic should include at least 3 nonweb-based sources from the special education literature on your topic (your text(s), other books, journal articles) along with several web-based resources.
- Include your personal perspective on the issue and the rationale for that position.

Week 11 - Feb 20 Topics for Further Consideration
Debrief on ethical considerations raised through consideration of each topic. Additional considerations in special education not previously discussed will be addressed.

Assignment: Select a topic for further consideration that still bothers you, or identify a new topic you have encountered that we have not yet discussed, perhaps working with students with disabilities and their parents or in the Trussell et al. (2008) article assigned for week 9.

Forum – Topics for Further Consideration: Post your topic and a short summary of the dilemmas and/or ethical/legal considerations that remain problematic in your view. Then throughout the week lead the discussion of your topic as others post and reply to your topic (2 points). Respond to at least 2 other topics and engage in the discussion around them (2 points).

Week 12 – Feb 27th Sharing of Final Project Presentation on a WWF topic related to special education and the ethical and legal considerations we have been discussing throughout the scope of this course through a narrated PP to Moodle dropbox.

Assignments:
1. Prepare a presentation of your topic by narrating a PP Using Kaltura or mybrainshark (see my narrated screencasts on how to set this up). When you present we will be the "parent" audience so present your topic to us as if we were a group of "parents." See rubric for criteria.
2. Upload the url or link to your narrated PP to Moodle Forum by Sunday 10 pm.
3. Also upload your Parent Handout for others in the class to refer to. A handout should be a concise summary of your topic in parent friendly language. (A handout is NOT a print out of your PowerPoint slides.) See Moodle for some examples, and the rubric for criteria.
4. Then watch at least two other presentations and respond to your classmates by Weds.

Instructor Additions
Missed and/or Late Assignments: Assignments are due on the date of the class listed in the Syllabus. ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE CONSIDERED LATE IF THEY ARE NOT RECEIVED BY 10 PM EST. Late assignments will be accorded partial credit.

Assessment Rubrics
Reflections on Case Studies in Special Education. The student will in a 1 – 2 page entry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflections on Case Studies in Special Education. The student will in a 1 – 2 page entry:</th>
<th>1 point</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addresses all of the questions posed at the end of the case study</td>
<td>1 point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summarize the law or legal issues involved</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State the issues and ethical considerations raised by the case study and materials for that week</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a possible resolution strategy or alternative course of action</td>
<td>.5 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect on how this case study and your understanding of the issues involved will influence your practice in the education of students with</td>
<td>1 point</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Meet criteria (4,5,6) for reflective writing as described on the Reflective Writing Rubric.  .5 points
Response to at least 1 other’s post 1 point
Total: /6

Final Project – Narrated Powerpoint Presentation

- Students will choose an issue directly related to special education and the ethical and legal considerations we have been discussing throughout the scope of this course.
- A proposal for the topic must be submitted to the Moodle Dropbox in week 8 to receive instructor feedback.
- An overview of your topic with references must be presented to the Moodle Dropbox in week 10 to receive instructor feedback.
- Students will research the topic using the special education literature on their topic and include information available to parents on the issue through local and state resource centers and websites. (e.g. http://www.parentinformationcenter.org/ or http://nichcy.org/schoolage/parental-rights)
- Students will prepare 2 components for the final project
  1.) A narrated PP presentation on the topic for parents
  2.) A handout for parents’ easy reference on the topic

1.) Presentation (20 minutes is suggested but this can go longer).
   - The presentation and handout will be geared toward educating parents/families on the topic. You will present by narrating a PP as if we were parents in the audience.
   - Narrate your PP by using Kaltura on Moodle (see my narrated screencast on how to set this up).
   - For additional support in using Kaltura to create a narrated slide presentation, beyond my short screencast, Moodle Help also has a tutorial.
     - First go to Moodle Help go.plymouth.edu/moodlehelp and select Moodle 2 for students.
     - At the very top of the page are a bunch of options and you want to select Kaltura. In the dropdown menu select “Posting a screen capture video to a discussion forum”
     - Scroll down to the instructions for students. There is also a short instructional video which is helpful. Sometimes I keep the video going (and pause it) or the instructions open as I go through the steps of something new. (Always trying out new things!)
     - The HELP desk at the library is available for in person or tec support with Kaltura if you want to go in or give them a call should something arise. I am also available and willing to support you. ITS Helpdesk Services (Information on ITS Services, including Service Desk hours of operation) Phone: (603) 535-2929; Email: helpdesk@plymouth.edu
   - OR you can use another narrated Power Point using myBrainshark http://www.brainshark.com/mybrainshark.
   - Either format should not use animations or action transitions between slides, as those will overload the system.
   - These presentations can then be used to educate parents on the topic.

2.) Handout
   - Create a handout, pamphlet, or informational guide that parents could use as a resource to either reference during the presentation OR have as a resource following the presentation. This handout will be posted along with the presentation so the class members can reference it while listening to the presentation.

Final Presentation Criteria

| Summarizes topic, related to ethical and legal considerations in special education, in a way that could be easily understood by parents. | 5 points |
| Includes at least 3 nonweb-based sources from | 4 |
the special education literature on the topic (your text(s), other books, journal articles) 4
Includes information available to parents on the issue through local, state, and national resource centers and websites.
APA format is adhered to throughout presentation and in reference section.
Presentation is organized in a way that the listener can follow and relate to information being presented.
Presenter has confident delivery of information; shows evidence that the speaker is knowledgeable about the subject.
Discussion section includes the presenter’s personal perspective on the issue and the rationale for that position.
Total: /25 points

Handout Criteria
Handout, pamphlet, or informational guide is something that parents could use either as a resource on the topic during the presentation OR have as a resource following the presentation. 7 points
Handout uses clear user-friendly language. 3 points
Handout is a concise presentation of information or resources and is professionally presented (not a printout of PP slides) 5 points
Total: /15 points

Conceptual Framework: College of Graduate Studies Hallmarks:

Learners are encouraged to be active agents in their graduate programs through dynamic collaboration with our diverse faculty of scholars and practitioners. The graduate programs foster inquiry and critical thinking through a commitment to the following Hallmarks:
- Leadership and advocacy
- Scholarship and action/application
- Reflection and innovation
- Professionalism and service
- Global awareness and social responsibility

University Policies and Procedures

Incompletes: An instructor may decide to enter a grade of incomplete (IC) on a student's record if unusual circumstances prevent completion of the course on time, and a minimal portion of the total class work needs to be completed. The course must be completed by the date specified by the instructor which cannot exceed one year beyond the original term of course completion. If the course is not completed by this date, the grade specified by the instructor will be recorded. If no grade is specified, a default grade of F will be recorded. The instructor is responsible for documenting and notifying the student of the work to be completed and the deadline. A student may not graduate with an incomplete on his or her transcript.
ADA Policy: Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should contact the PASS office in Lamson library (535-2270) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with the PASS Office. If you have a Letter of Academic Accommodation for this course from the PASS office, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that adaptations can be made to meet your needs. Course materials online comply with the Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications Standards in accordance with ADA Section 508.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is the foundation of the pursuit of knowledge. All members of the academic community are expected to be dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge in an honest, responsible, respectful, and ethical manner. Every violation of academic integrity is an affront to the academic community. Violations of academic integrity make fair evaluation impossible and cast doubt upon the seriousness with which students accept the responsibility of acquiring an education. Members of the academic community are expected to report all instances of those violations of academic integrity that come to their attention. Both faculty and administration consider it their duty, as guardians of academic standards and intellectual honesty, to enforce the academic integrity policy by prosecuting all cases of violation of academic integrity to the fullest extent. Students are urged to consider that it is the toleration of violations of academic integrity, and not the reporting of it, that is dishonorable. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for more information and the entire policy.

Sensitive Materials: Material in this course, in some instances, may be sensitive or emotionally provocative. As you review the syllabus, or at any time during the course, please let your instructor know if you anticipate, or are having, a problem with any assignment or classroom activity. We can then discuss how this assignment or activity is necessary for meeting course competencies and whether an alternative assignment or activity can be considered. We can also discuss campus resources that you may find helpful in dealing with your concerns.

Plymouth State University Curtailed Operations Information: Plymouth State University normally remains open through inclement weather. Because most students live within minutes of the campus, every effort is made to avoid an official closing. There may be times, however, when an emergency or extreme weather conditions necessitate a general closing of the University. Please sign up for PSU Alert Emergency Text Messaging at: plymouth.edu/alerts If you are wondering, call the storm line (603-535-3535) or check the PSU website.

Lamson Library and Learning Commons Access to the IT Help Desk is available at 603-535-2929. Log in to MyPlymouth to access all of the Lamson Library and Learning Common resources and services. The Writing Center and the PASS office are located in the lower level of Lamson; the Help Desk in on the Main Floor.

Discussion Forum Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Exemplary 2</th>
<th>Satisfactory 1</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory 0</th>
<th>Points Received Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of original posting</td>
<td>Discussion forum response illustrates an understanding of the material and is supported by readings, personal experiences, or the stories of others.</td>
<td>Discussion forum response illustrates an understanding of the material. Concepts are illustrated with personal experiences, or the stories of others.</td>
<td>Discussion forum response illustrates a minimal or no understanding of the material. There is little or no supporting evidence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Work is free of grammatical and spelling errors.</td>
<td>Work has 2 or less grammatical or spelling errors.</td>
<td>Work has 3 or more grammatical or spelling errors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Discussions</td>
<td>Discussion forum assignment was shared early in the week</td>
<td>Discussion forum assignment was posted.</td>
<td>Posted discussion forum assignment, but too late</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Participation</td>
<td>so others could respond</td>
<td>for others to comment</td>
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<td>----------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted comments to at least two other colleagues per forum and continued responding to comments to their discussion forum assignment.</td>
<td>posted comments to at least two other colleagues.</td>
<td>Occasionally posted responses to other participants’ comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Quality of Feedback to others | Feedback to colleagues is constructive, specific, provides new perspectives and serves to extend the conversation rather than end it. | Feedback to colleagues is respectful and provides new perspectives. | Feedback to colleagues is general in nature. |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Posting is in the spirit of dialog (collaborative) rather than debate (argumentative). | Feedback to colleagues is constructive, specific, provides new perspectives and serves to extend the conversation rather than end it. | Feedback to colleagues is respectful and provides new perspectives. | Feedback to colleagues is general in nature. |

## Graduate Writing Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Elements</th>
<th>1 Misses Target</th>
<th>2 Does Not Meet Standard</th>
<th>3 Approaching Target</th>
<th>4 On Target</th>
<th>5 Completely Meets Standard</th>
<th>6 Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Lacks purpose</td>
<td>Unclear purpose</td>
<td>Limited expression of purpose</td>
<td>Purpose is clearly expressed</td>
<td>Purpose is clearly expressed and is justified</td>
<td>Purpose is clearly expressed; data is integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td>Inappropriate response to thesis, or lacks thesis; no topic development</td>
<td>Undeveloped or vague thesis, theme or topic</td>
<td>Rudimentary development of thesis, theme or topic; limited in depth or clarity</td>
<td>Good development of thesis, theme or topic; conclusion is more than a summary</td>
<td>Fully developed thesis, theme or topic; writer draws a conclusion</td>
<td>Fully developed, original, insightful thesis, theme or topic &amp; conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content/ Sources</strong></td>
<td>Writer has not included appropriate content and/or sources</td>
<td>Writer has used limited resources, &amp;/or has relied on non-refereed sources</td>
<td>Writer has used limited, though appropriate, resources</td>
<td>Writer has used sufficient, appropriate sources to support thesis, theme or topic</td>
<td>Writer has used significant primary source material to support thesis, theme or topic</td>
<td>Writer has integrated and synthesized significant primary source material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Details</strong></td>
<td>Virtually no relevant details</td>
<td>Few relevant details</td>
<td>Details lack elaboration; important details omitted</td>
<td>Details are adequate &amp; relevant</td>
<td>Details are specific &amp; enhance development</td>
<td>Rich supporting details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Lacks organization</td>
<td>Unclear organizational strategy</td>
<td>Organization strategy includes transitions</td>
<td>Logical progression of ideas</td>
<td>Logical &amp; controlled organization from beginning to end; non-formulaic</td>
<td>Writer expresses relationships among ideas; careful &amp; subtle organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentences</strong></td>
<td>Many fragments, fused sentences &amp;/or run-ons</td>
<td>Poor sentence structure</td>
<td>Complete sentences</td>
<td>Complete sentences; some sentence variety</td>
<td>Sentence variety &amp; patterns are appropriate for style &amp; effect</td>
<td>Sentence variety &amp; patterns are used to enhance style &amp; effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Choice</strong></td>
<td>Extremely limited vocabulary</td>
<td>Limited vocabulary</td>
<td>Appropriate vocabulary</td>
<td>Effective diction</td>
<td>Varied, precise diction</td>
<td>Sophisticated diction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar, Usage, Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Errors in grammar, usage &amp; mechanics interfere with communication</td>
<td>Errors in grammar, usage &amp; mechanics are distracting</td>
<td>Errors in grammar, usage &amp; mechanics are disproportionate to length &amp; complexity of piece</td>
<td>Some errors in grammar, usage &amp; mechanics but they do not distract significantly from the overall quality of the piece</td>
<td>Few or no errors in grammar, usage or mechanics</td>
<td>Mastery of grammar, usage &amp; mechanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required Style, Format, Reference List (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.)</strong></td>
<td>Errors in citations, formatting &amp; writing interfere with communication, or work contains plagiarized content</td>
<td>Errors in citations, formatting &amp; writing are distracting</td>
<td>Several errors in citations, formatting &amp; writing, &amp;/or errors appear to be careless</td>
<td>Few errors in the application of required writing style, format, citations &amp;/or reference list</td>
<td>No errors in the application of the required style in any part of the paper</td>
<td>Mastery of all applicable style requirements throughout the work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>