I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Understanding that about twenty percent of the people in any community have some form of disability, this course provides an opportunity to learn a process and accompanying information to meaningfully include persons with disabilities in church and community settings. Beginning with the Scriptural and Theological basis for inclusion as well as a brief history, the course will walk through a practical process that can wrap around children and adults with disabilities as churches seek to use the gifts and support the needs of individuals. This course will cover important information on disability areas such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disability, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Physical Disability, Emotional/Behavioral Challenges, and more. Participants will learn to construct an individualized plan that not only addresses the direction for the individual with the disability, but also highlights the plan needed for the entire congregation or peer group so they can best receive the gifts that individual brings to the congregation. Participants will leave with many practical tools and ideas to use as well as a network of resources and organizations that can continue to support them in their communities.

II. TEXTBOOKS:

**Required Reading:** (30% or more of the text is read for course work)

Carter, Erik *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities.*  


Newman, Barbara J. *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship*  

(Edit by) DeYoung, Terry and Stephenson, Mark *Inclusion Handbook.*  
**Purchase through Faith Alive Christian Resources, or CLC Network (no ISBN)**
Recommended Reading:
(less than 30% of text is read for the course work or for enrichment)

Newman, Barbara J. *Autism and Your Church*

Newman, Barbara J. *Helping Kids Include Kids with Disabilities*

Weatherbee, Katie and Philo, Jolene *Every Child Welcome*

III. GOALS:

This is an elective course which will lead students through a Scriptural and historical understanding of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the church, through which students will exhibit an understanding of the Church and its mission. The course will then move into practical application and tools for inclusion, so that students will demonstrate competence in the skills and perspectives necessary for leadership in the formation of disciples of all levels of ability.

IV. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

In order to demonstrate an understanding of the church and its mission, and to demonstrate competence in the skills and perspectives necessary for leadership in the formation of disciples of all levels of ability students will be expected to:

1. Understand the Scriptural and historical basis for inclusion of persons with disabilities
2. Be familiar with each step of the G.L.U.E. (Giving, Loving, Understanding, Encouraging) process for including persons with disabilities
3. Gain basic knowledge of a variety of disability areas
4. Develop an individualized plan for an individual with a disability
5. Execute strategies to excite and engage the entire community in the process of inclusion
6. Apply these principles to improve effectiveness in cross cultural opportunities
7. Develop a file of resources and organizations available to help support efforts of inclusiveness
8. Learn how the concept of Universal Design also impacts worship and religious education settings
V. TEACHING STRATEGIES:

**Online**- instructor and students are in physically separate locations. Although some face-to-face meetings do occur through technology, most assignments and communication take place via distance learning in which the instructor will present on certain topics, assign reading and projects to be submitted online, and in which discussion/chat sessions will be a vital part of the course.

VI. CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND READINGS:
This section provides a week by week overview of the course’s progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detailed Session Description</th>
<th>Homework</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
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| 1 – Overview, Statistics, and History; Why is this topic so important? | • Complete introductions within the group via online chat  
• Review course outline  
• Look at the history of Special Education in the US, apply that to church settings, and arrive at an explanation of the word “inclusion”  
• Examine inclusive as well as separated environments in a church setting  
• Review statistics and stories that support the importance of this topic for pastors, churches, and community leaders | • Read Appendix A from the G.L.U.E. Training Manual  
• Read Appendix A, Carter  
• View video “There is no Asterisk” on The5Stages website  
• Reflect on your own stage of interaction with persons with disabilities by submitting a 1-2 page written reflection based on the 5 stages.  
• Post in online forum |
| 2 – GLUE Introduction: Beginning with Scripture | • Discuss the GLUE process (a six-step process to help a church plan for an individual as well as the congregation)  
• Highlight stories from parents who have children with disabilities as well as adults with disabilities that demonstrate the need for the GLUE process  
• Review Appendix A from the GLUE Training Manual which covers some of the Scriptural and Theological thinking behind inclusion in churches  
• Experience practical ideas for | • Write a devotional, newsletter article, or children’s message from the resources discussed  
• Read Chapter 1, Carter  
• Research key documents and supports from within your own denomination, summarize and reference those documents, and present that information online for the group.  
• Post in online forum |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Communicating those truths to both children and adult peers in community with persons who have disabilities</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3 – Person Centered Planning – Getting to know myself and others</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discuss Step 1 of GLUE – Convincing leadership and appointing a coordinator</td>
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<td>• Begin Discussion of Step 2 – contacting families and individuals, introducing GLUE to church, person centered planning</td>
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<td>• Understand that knowing more about the individual’s story will help to decide how you respond to the situation</td>
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<td>• Complete the puzzle piece activity and getting to know your own God-given design</td>
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<td>• Discuss ideas of how to identify people within a congregation and allowing them to be willing participants in this process</td>
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<td>• Fill out the GLUE adult survey with themselves as the subject.</td>
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<td>• Identify an individual to be part of their GLUE process, contact that person for permission, and send that person the appropriate GLUE survey.</td>
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<td>• Fill out the church survey from the GLUE Training Manual (including physical accessibility issues) based on their current church setting</td>
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<td>• Read Chapter 2, Carter</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship, Newman and fill out the person centered planning tool for your individual</td>
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<td>• Post in online forum</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4 – Information -Your Best Approach: Learn a little bit about many disability areas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider knowledge “in general” about a variety of disability areas</td>
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<td>• Review statistics and stories of accurate information being critical to the inclusion process</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Using Dr. Mel Levine’s neurodevelopmental links as a basis, receive information on Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Memory Loss, Learning Disabilities, Visual Impairments, Hearing Impairments, Speech and Language Impairments, Cognitive</td>
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<tr>
<td>• From a suggested library of choices, read 1 resource to better understand “in general” the individual they have chosen</td>
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<td>• Write a 1-2 page summary of that information applying it specifically to the intersection of disability and church.</td>
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<td>• Post in online forum</td>
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<td>5 – Case Studies: Getting to know some individuals and begin a plan</td>
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<td>6 – Toolbox Day: Tools your church or community can use for the individual and tools for your church or community to become receptive</td>
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<td>7 – Fieldtrip: Enjoy spending time in an inclusive community Accessibility Audit</td>
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| 8 – Resource and Organization Review: Discover many needed supports | website | • Learn about Friendship Ministries, UMC supports, CRC and RCA supports, Joni & Friends, ADnet, CLC Network, MNA, CICW, Nathaniel’s Hope, Hope Network, Compassionate Heart Ministry, and Key Ministry.  
  
  • Think about their individual and what might be helpful for that person | • Choose 1 resource to review from each of these organization’s websites  
  
  • Create a document that lists each organization and what they provide  
  
  • Discover 1 additional organization to add to the list provided  
  
  • Read Chapter 6 and 7, Carter  
  
  • Read Inclusion Handbook by CRC and RCA  
  
  • Post in online forum |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 9 – Action Plan and GLUE Teams: Setting up an actual plan | • Discuss Step 4 from the GLUE process – the action plan  
  
  • Go over case studies from a variety of churches  
  
  • Think about plans that program inclusively, separately, or a variety of both | • Prepare the action plan and decide if a GLUE team is necessary for your individual  
  
  • Read Chapter 5, Carter  
  
  • Post in online forum |
| 10 – Action Plan and GLUE Teams: Sharing the plans - Gratitude Gathering: Launching the plan and celebrating inclusiveness | • Discuss Step 5 - informational meetings and get to know me sessions  
  
  • Look at Step 6  
  
  • Talk about commissioning services, the importance of reviewing the plan, and a gratitude gathering  
  
  • Discuss the GLUE process beyond persons | • Complete the “Get to know me” packet  
  
  • Write the outline for a worship service using the concept of Vertical Habits while noting how your individual will participate  
  
  • Complete the final packet and plan for your |
Universal Design for Worship

| with disabilities. Think about the pieces of this process and how this can enhance a church’s ability to engage in cross cultural ministries and build a stronger community in general |
| Discuss the concept of Universal Design in relationship to worship and religious education |

individual
- Complete final essay questions provided by instructor
- Post in online forum

VII: SEMINARY STANDARDS:

A. Inclusive language
United Theological Seminary has an official policy regarding the use of Inclusive Language. The policy may be found in the Seminary Catalog and further explained in the Student Handbook. If you have specific questions, please see the instructor.

B. Academic Integrity
Student integrity regarding all work assigned in this class is a basic expectation of the Seminary community. A detailed policy regarding what constitutes a violation of academic integrity can be found in the Student Handbook.

C. Online Confidentiality
One of the highlights of the online classroom is that students can draw from the experiences shared during class discussions and in written work. However, it is imperative that students do not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. In addition, students are expected to honor the privacy and confidentiality of their classmates by not disclosing online conversations with those outside of the classroom.

D. Statement on Disability
Any student who may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Registrar’s office.

VIII: USING ONLINE RESOURCES:
For information about how to access UnitedOnline and where to find help if you need it may be found on the seminary website at http://www.united.edu. Help guides are also in the student computer lab and in the Student Handbook.

IX. EVALUATION:

A. Assignments:
1. Post in online forum three times weekly
2. Written reflections (1-2 pg.s)
3. Prepare a children’s message or devotional on the topic of including persons with disabilities
4. Compose summaries of research and information gathered during interviews (up to 5pg.s)
5. Compile organizational information
6. Complete forms and idea sheets for individual plan
7. Complete all of the components of an individual plan based on a person the student knows or a case study provided
8. Design a worship service based on the Vertical Habits model
9. Complete culminating essay questions

B. Method of Determining Grade:
   Post 3 times weekly to the online forum ............20%
   Writings (summaries, completed forms) .................15%
   Message/devotional on the topic AND Worship Service Outline ..........15%
   Individualized plan based on person ......................25%
   Culminating essay questions ..............................25%

Total: 100%

X. STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS:

It is very important for students to submit a course evaluation toward the end of the semester. Instructors do not see the student evaluations at all until after the instructors have submitted the students’ final official grades. Students should feel free to evaluate the course without any negative ramifications.

XI. REFERENCES: (In order of appearance in weekly sessions)
   • (Elim Christian services) http://www.the5stages.com/
   • Levine, Mel *A Mind at A Time*, (Neurodevelopmental model)
   • Friendship Ministries http://www.friendship.org/
   • UMC supports http://www.umcor.org/Search-for-Projects/Projects/3021054 and http://peopleofgrace.org/open_doors_ministry
   • Joni And Friends http://www.joniandfriends.org/
   • ADnet http://www.adnetonline.org/
   • CLC Network http://www.clcnetwork.org
   • MNA Special Needs http://pcamna.org/special-needs/
   • CICW http://worship.calvin.edu/
   • Nathaniel’s Hope http://www.nathanielshope.org/
   • Hope Network http://hopenetwork.org/
   • Compassionate Heart Ministry http://www.compheart.org/
   • Key Ministry http://www.keyministry.org/

OTHER LEARNING HELPS AND POSSIBLE RESOURCES:
   • *Including Children with Disabilities* (DVD) from CLC Network
   • *Autism: A Christian Repsonse* (DVD) from CLC Network
   • *Inclusion Awareness Kit* from CLC Network
- **Body Building** by Barbara J. Newman, from CLC Network
- **Church Welcome Story** by Barbara J. Newman, from CLC Network
- **Same Lake Different Boat** by Stephanie Hubach, available at CLC Network
- **Kids in the Syndrome Mix** by Dr. Martin Kutscher
- **The Out of Sync Child** by Carol Kranowitz
- **Reaching For a New Potential** by Dr. Oren Mason, available at CLC Network
- **The Easter Book** by Barbara J. Newman, Faith Alive Publishers
- HeartShapers curriculum by Standard Publishing
- (Blog) Making Us Whole  [www.clcnetwork.org/blog](http://www.clcnetwork.org/blog)
- Really Good Stuff  [www.ReallyGoodStuff.com](http://www.ReallyGoodStuff.com)
- The Therapy Shoppe  [www.TheTherapyShoppe.com](http://www.TheTherapyShoppe.com)
- Autism Speaks  [https://www.autismspeaks.org/](https://www.autismspeaks.org/)
- Zeeland Christian School  [www.zcs.org](http://www.zcs.org)