

**SPED 520.01W Exceptional Children**  
**Fall 2012**  
**On-line – Web-based**

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Office Hours: Monday 1:00 – 4:00; Wednesday 1:00 – 3:00

*It is my desire that each of you profits from this course. Please contact me via e-mail or phone or schedule to meet with me if you need any assistance. Appointments are NOT required, but are appreciated, preferred, and given priority.*

**Course Description:**

The purpose of this course is to familiarize the participants with the characteristics and learning differences of exceptional students. Legal mandates regarding special education will be discussed. Course participants will develop an understanding of the identification process and educational options for students with exceptionalities. Accommodations and modifications that may be considered to assist students with disabilities in general education setting will be explored.

**Text:**

Smith, D.D., & Tyler, N. C. (2010). Introduction to Special Education: Making a Difference (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrell (ISBN # 13:978-0-205-60056-4 / 10: 0-205-60056-5)

**Course Objectives:**

The following are the standard course objectives: The student is expected to be able to understand and will apply knowledge of:

- The philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education
- Special education terminology and definitions
- The characteristics and needs of students with disabilities
- Diversity in students with exceptionalities
- Procedures for managing the teaching and learning environment, including procedures related to the use of assistive technology
- How to communicate and collaborate effectively in a variety of professional settings including the fostering of home-school relationships

**Class Requirements/Assignments/Activities/Expectations and Grading:**

**Getting to Know You (or “All About Me”): 10 points**

Provide a short autobiography so that your classmates and I can get to know you. Give information about your degree sought, teaching experience, ambitions for the future, etc. It would be helpful to provide a picture of yourself so others “get to know you”, if possible. This assignment should be completed as part of a discussion thread for week one.

**GRADING: maximum 10 points**

**Sample Quiz: 10 points**

Week #1 contains a short, simple, sample quiz. This is intended to give you an opportunity to “practice” taking an on-line quiz, in case you have not yet had this “learning opportunity”. There are 5 questions on this quiz. PS – it’s easy, you can’t fail. There is nothing to “study” before taking the quiz, so just “dive in”.

**Grading: maximum 10 points**

### **Sample Drop Box: 20 points**

Week # 1 requires you to make an entry into the drop box. Unlike the sample quiz, which does not require you to study anything pertaining to this class, for the drop box, you are required to watch several short video clips and react to them. The video clips will serve as an introduction to special education for those unfamiliar with some of the topics that we will be discussing during the remainder of the semester.

For this assignment you will be required to watch the 9 parts of the video, *Misunderstood Minds*. This series of videos introduces you to 5 “exceptional” children and their families. The various parts of this video will help you begin to think about aspects not generally thought of with “exceptional” children. Few people would ever think about special education when first introduced to Nathan VanHoy!

1. Access the videos at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Search “Misunderstood Minds”
2. You will need to watch Chapters 1 through Chapter 8.1. All are approximately 9 minutes with the exception of 8.1 which is 4:39 minutes.

**Sample Drop Box Assignment:** Write a ½ to 1 page reaction to what you learned from watching *Misunderstood Minds*. This is to be brief, but include enough detail to show me that you watched the clips. **Post your paper to the *M.Minds* drop box in week #1.**

**GRADING: 20 points**

### **Response to Intervention Module: 50 points**

You will be assigned an activity or module on Response to Intervention (RTI). The module consists of reading and watching the videos and answering assigned questions. A handout will be available in “doc sharing” tab of eCollege giving you 1) how to access the module electronically and 2) the questions you are to answer. Your response is due to be posted in the drop box.

*This assignment can be turned in early.*

**Grading: 50 points**

### **Discussion / Reflection: (300 maximum points)**

Students are expected to participate actively in assigned discussions. For each discussion, you are to contribute at least one original thought by posting your *reflection* to a thought provoking question based on assigned readings / videos, etc. Discussions will be posted to a discussion forum as specified in each assignment. For some discussion forum posts, you will be required to respond to one or more postings of one of your classmates (*peer response*).

- Due dates for each reflection will be included in each lesson. Reflections and peer responses will not be accepted after the due date!

**GRADING: Reflections are worth 25 points each. It is anticipated that 12 discussion / reflection postings will be due throughout the semester for a total of 300 available points**

- **The 25 points may be divided between your reflection and your response to the reflection of a peer, dependant of each lesson requirements**

### **RULES ABOUT DISCUSSIONS, REFLECTIONS AND PEER RESPONSES**

- These assignments are to encourage **thoughtful** reflection and expression of your views. This is a college class so postings called “drive by” postings (such as: “that’s great”, “yea I agree”, “good idea”, “You go girl!”) are not welcome and will NOT receive a high grade.
- There are few “wrong” answers. As said, these assignments are to encourage thought and reflection. I expect all students in this class have different education and professional experiences and have different goals in life. New ideas and new ways of looking at things are encouraged. For those of you with a “lifetime” in special education, we can always learn from those less indoctrinated into our system. More importantly, remember that your colleagues new to the field will probably think more like our student’s families, so we need to listen to and learn from their perspective. Be creative and have fun with it. Scoring will be based on timeliness, correctness of any factual information, and your ability to justify your opinion.
- There is no minimum length like you may have had in other classes. Conversely, I don’t encourage really long answers – remember your peers have to read it (as well as me) and they are just as cramped for time as you are. Generally, a few sentences or a short paragraph is sufficient.
- In responding to another person’s post, be considerate and respectful. You may not agree – and do not have to. We all learn by being challenged to think deeper and consider more alternatives. I encourage “talking” out new ideas and perspectives. BUT, if you disagree, you are expected to express your disagreement in a respectful way.
- Typically, your grade will not be based on writing mechanics or correctness of grammar and punctuation. Good writing mechanics shows a respect for your reader, however, and allows me to score your response (and not your grammar). If your writing and grammar compromises my reading and understanding, you will not receive a high score. On this note – I don’t speak “text” very well, so don’t use text abbreviations and expect me to understand. Just, play it safe and don’t use these abbreviations.

### **Chapter Tests / Quizzes: Points 360**

For each chapter, you will have a quiz that will cover all information on that chapter. These quizzes are intended to test your knowledge of information from the chapter and to give you an idea of what to expect on the course examinations. Quizzes will have a “cut off” date and time after which they will not be available. Some quizzes will be timed. For others, you will be allowed to take the quiz multiple times until the cut off time or until you reach the grade that satisfies you. Quizzes are open book, open notes, but closed to your peers (it must be your own work). For the timed quizzes, you will need to have a good, general understanding of all the material in advance of taking the quiz in order to complete it accurately and timely.

**GRADING: Quizzes are worth 30 points each for 12 lessons = 360 total available points**

### **Analysis of Family Study: 50 total points**

You will be required to complete an Analysis of Family Study based on an interview you complete with a family of a school aged child (ages 3 to 21) with a special learning need or a physical disability. This assignment is intended to focus your thoughts on analyzing how families experience “disability” and how their experiences either support or conflict with the special education process and services that have been studied in this class. Additional information will be provided on your interview and the report to be submitted on your analysis of this experience.

**GRADING: 50 points**

***This assignment can be turned in before the due date***

## **Research Paper: 100 points**

This assignment is intended to support and expand the “Analysis of Family Study” described above. For this assignment, each student is to write a research paper of a minimum of five (5) double spaced pages of text (excluding abstract and reference page) on the disabling condition or exceptionality of the child from your family interview. Your research paper should be in APA style and include an abstract and reference list. Citations of your all reference should be included in the text. A minimum of 3 **journal articles** must be cited. Feel free to use other citations (web pages, your text book, etc.) – as long as each is correctly cited per APA. Research papers must be posted to the designated drop box where it will be reviewed by “turn-it-in” for plagiarism and excessive use of your source material or excessive direct quotations. If, after review, the professor feels that your paper is unduly used material from other sources, it will be returned to you for correction or not graded. How do you avoid this? Make sure the majority of your paper is your original thought. Limit your use of direct or verbatim quotations. Note that only changing a few words in a passage of text does NOT constitute “original thought”. Make sure that any use of someone else’s work MUST be cited appropriately.

### **Reminders:**

- Include abstract summarizing your topic. As this paper is being turned in electronically, you do NOT have to include a cover page.
- Include 5 pages of text *with citations throughout* the text
  - Narrow your topic in order to sufficiently cover your focus. For example, “autism” is much too broad to cover in 5 pages. Possible topics might include: “teaching social skills to students with autism”, “assessment for ADHD”, or “what a teacher needs to know about childhood diabetes”.
- Include a reference page
  - Must use 3 journal articles. You can use any number of additional references (your text, websites, etc.).
  - ***All references cited in the paper must be included in the reference list and all references included in the reference list must be cited in the paper***
- Double space your paper and put your name on it
- Turn your paper in to the appropriate drop box

**GRADING: 100 points maximum**

## **Assessments (Tests) (3 tests at 50 points each=150 points)**

Three (3) tests (two during the semester and one final exam) will be given to measure your comprehension and ability to apply the course content. Assessments may consist of both objective questions and/or short essay questions. Exams 1 and 2 will be posted to on-line to eCollege and taken from your home or university computer lab. Specific time periods will be allocated for each examination. These 2 exams are closed book (no access to notes/book) unless otherwise specified.

Exam 3, the final exam, will be “take home” meaning it is open book or that you can use all resources available to you. The final exam will focus on the last chapters studied during the semester but, additionally, will include highlights from throughout the semester. The final exam is intended to support preparation for your Master’s comprehensive exam.

### **Course Evaluation & Grading:**

“Getting to Know You” Post	10
Sample Quiz	10
Misunderstood Minds “sample drop box”	20
RTI Module	50
Reflections 12 @ 25 points	300
Chapter Tests 12 @ 30 points	360

Analysis of Family Interview	50
Research Paper	100
Examinations 3 @ 50	<u>150</u>

***Total possible points*** ***1060***

### **Grading Criteria:**

A = 90%; B = 80%; C = 70%; D = 60%; F = < 60%

### **Communication & Support:**

If you have a question that others in the class may also be having, please post those questions to my Virtual Office on eCollege. Please consult virtual office to see if a question has already been answered before sending me an e-mail. Responses to emails will be made Monday through Friday within 48 hours unless out-of-office notification has been provided. Please note that I will not guarantee response to virtual office posts or emails during weekends, holidays, or in the evenings. If you have any questions or need clarifications on any aspect of the course, please post early in the week.

As a student enrolled at Texas A&M University-Commerce, you have access to an email account via MyLeo. ALL class emails from your instructor will be sent from eCollege (and all other university emails) and WILL GO TO YOUR MyLeo ACCOUNT. Please be sure to check this email account frequently and regularly.

### **Technology Requirements:**

This is a totally on-line course that will be conducted within eCollege (the class will NOT meet face-to-face). eCollege works best within a Microsoft Windows environment, and requires a high speed internet connection (not dial-up). This means you should use a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0 or 8.0). The course will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari (2.0 or better). eCollege also supports the Firefox/Mozilla (3.0 or better) on both Windows and Mac operating systems. It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to eCollege, click on the “myCourses” tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu/login.aspx>. You will need your CWID and password to login to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

### **Contacting eCollege for Technical Support:**

The following support options are available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week

- Help: Click on the “help” button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e., “How do I submit to dropbox?”, “How do I post to discussion board?”, etc.
- Chat Support: Click on the “Live Support” on the toolbar within your course to chat with an eCollege representative.
- Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (toll free) to speak with an eCollege Technical Support Representative
- Email: [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative

## **Other Important Notes:**

### **Students with Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
**Texas A&M University-Commerce**  
**Gee Library, Room 132**  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 - Fax (903) 468-8148**  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

- All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*)
  - All students are expected to display professional behaviors (dispositions) expected of educators and to demonstrate these behaviors in their interactions with K-12 students, families, your colleagues, the professor, and communities at all times. These professional behaviors consist of such behaviors as professional responsibility, professional and personal integrity, collegiality, and commitment to learning. Failure to display professional behaviors can result in counseling by the professor and result in lowering of the course grade.
  - Academic Dishonesty. To be successful in this class, you must invest time for study. Honesty is expected. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, collusion) will NOT be tolerated and will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. A second infraction will result in automatic failure of the class. Dishonesty is defined as (i) the use of unauthorized materials, (ii) any communication with peers during quizzes, (iii) representing another's work as one's own (i.e. plagiarism) or (iv) fabricating information. The professor reserves the right to determine occurrences of cheating.
  - Plagiarism occurs at any time that another's ideas or words are used as your own without attribution. Direct quotations must be cited and set off from other text by quotation marks (".."). Paraphrasing of another's ideas must also be cited (although this does not require quotation marks). Copying from other students and two or more students who work together and turning in the exact same work (unless it's an assigned group project) also constitute plagiarism.
    - For many assignments, students are encouraged to work together. However, if individual submission of the assignment is required, the final product must be your own work.
- All assignments must be turned in on the assigned due date. ***Unexcused assignments turned in after the due date will be returned ungraded.***
  - **For assignments that require discussion board posting, late postings (reflection or response) will not be allowed, as the purpose is to stimulate discussion, which is compromised if postings are not timely.**

- Ensure that the assignment guidelines presented in the syllabus are followed. It is important that all assignments are organized according to headings and subheadings delineated in the guidelines. ***Failure to do so will result in an ungraded assignment or a lower evaluation.***
- **Make/Up exam.** There will be NO make/up activities or exams for this course unless a true emergency exists. Students are expected to submit relevant documentation ( e.g. doctor’s note, funeral notice, etc.) when requesting a make/up examination.
- **Written Assignments.** Written assignments MUST be typed using double spaced lines, include your name, and have page numbers. In addition, work submitted should reflect a professional quality in terms of scope, depth, writing mechanics, and appearance that would be expected of students at a prestigious university. Proofread all assignments as only materials with minimal or no errors will receive high scores.
- **Person First Language:** Our language is a reflection of our attitudes. Always refer to persons with disabilities with respect. ***Degrading terminology will not be tolerated.*** In this class we will strive to use “people first” language at all times. “People First” language always refers to the person first and not as a label or a category. For example, refer to “a student with autism” and not “an autistic” or “students with disabilities” and not “disabled students”. In addition, avoid such stigmatizing terminology as “confined to a wheelchair” (say “uses a wheelchair” instead.).
- *If you have suggestions, comments, questions, or concerns about the class or the assignments, please call or see the instructor. Please do not save your suggestions for the evaluation at the end of the term when it is too late to implement your suggestions.*