

SYLLABUS - SPED 346.01W & .02W
Introduction to Exceptional Children
Summer II 2014
On-Line / Web based

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Office Hours: As this is an on-line (web-based) course, office hours will be by appointment only. Please feel free to notify me (preferably by e-mail) to schedule an appointment.

Course Description:

This course will provide a survey of populations with exceptionalities. Attention will be given to the cause of these deviations and their effect upon the individual's development. Professional roles of the special education team members as well as the policies and regulations applicable to special education programs in general will be covered.

Text:

Hallahan, D.P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P.C. (2012). *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education* (12th Ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (ISBN # 13:978-0-13-703370-6 / 10:0-13-703370-2

Course Objectives:

The following are the standard course objectives: The student is expected to be able to

001	Understand and apply knowledge of the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities
004	Understand and apply knowledge of procedures for managing the teaching and learning environment, including procedures related to the use of assistive technology
010	Understand the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education, and
012	Know how to communicate and collaborate effectively in a variety of professional settings.

**Class Requirements/Assignments/Activities/Expectations and Grading:
Week # 1 included 3 assignments intended to help you learn to use eCollege:**

1. A discussion forum called “Getting to Know You”
2. A sample quiz based on the information contained in this syllabus
3. A drop box post on a series of videos called “*Misunderstood Minds*”

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

Post 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 or anything else you think we will find interesting. It would be helpful to provide a picture of yourself so others “get to know you”, if possible but feel free to include pictures of your kids, your dog, etc.. This assignment should be completed as a discussion thread for week one.

GRADING: maximum 10 points

Sample Quiz: 15 points

Week #1 contains a short, 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 15 questions on this quiz. There is nothing to study and no chapters to read. Most of the questions come directly from this syllabus, so review the syllabus first. Just “dive in”.

Grading: maximum 15 points

Sample Drop Box: 25 points

Week # 1 requires you to make an entry into the drop box. To complete this assignment you are required to watch a series of 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. We will refer to these video clips 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. Search “Misunderstood Minds”
2. 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 your watching the *Misunderstood Minds* videos. For example, you might write about what you learned, what surprised you, how what you saw agrees or disagrees with your past experiences or how these videos will help effect you as a teacher. Your paper is to be brief, but include enough detail to show me that you watched all the clips. **Post your paper to the M.Minds drop box in week #1.**

GRADING: 25points

Discussion / Reflection: (150 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 but are will generally be midnight Monday. Reflections/peer responses will not be accepted after the due date!

GRADING: Reflections are worth 25 points each. It is anticipated that 6 discussion / reflection postings will be due throughout the semester for a total of 150 available points (2 discussions each week 1, week 2, and week 3).

- **If you are required to “respond” to the reflection of a peer, the 25 points will be divided between your reflection and your peer response.**

**** You will be assigned a group of your peers to “discuss” with. This will enable you to get to know (albeit electronically) a few people in the course. You are highly encouraged to post with your group, but are not restricted to do so. For example, assume an assignment requires you to respond to the posting of a

peer by tomorrow night. You are going out of town tomorrow and no one in your group has posted yet. So what do you do? Post your response with another group. OR, you are assigned to post with Group 3, but you “mess up” and post with group 2 instead. Typically, this is not a problem. If I can find it, you will receive credit – but to eliminate the worry of my finding it, try to post with your group if at all possible.

**** Discussion Posts are meant to be discussions, even though they are electronic. For that reason, you WILL NOT receive any credit for posting after the due date. No exceptions!

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. 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, however, shows a respect for your reader, and allows me to score your response (and not your grammar). If the 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 300

For most chapters, you will have a quiz that will cover information from 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 final examination. Most quizzes will be timed and will have a “cut off” date and time after which they will not be available. However, for some quizzes, you will be allowed to take the quiz multiple times until the cut off time or until you reach the grade that satisfies you. These quizzes are open book, open notes, but closed to your peers (it must be your own work). As the quizzes will be timed 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 10 lessons = 300 total available points (NOTE: 5 quizzes are scheduled for week #2 and 5 quizzes for week # 3)

Film Analysis: 50 total points - *This assignments can be turned in before the due date*

This assignment will allow students to analyze how society experiences “disability” as it is portrayed in film. Additional information on requirements of your film analysis and a list of approved films is provided in DocSharing.

GRADING 50 points

Assessments (Tests) (1 final exam at 50 points maximum score)

The only test to be given during the summer semester is one comprehensive final examination. The final examination is intended to measure your comprehension and ability to apply the course content. The final exam may consist of both objective questions and/or short essay questions and will be posted to on-line to eCollege and taken from your home or university computer lab. A specific time period will be allocated for the examination. The final exam is closed book (no access to notes/book, etc.).

NOTE:

Any student with an “A” average on all previously submitted materials & assignments will be exempt from taking the final exam.

Course Evaluation & Grading:

“Getting to Know You” Post	10
Sample Quiz	15
Sample Drop Box – Misunderstood Minds	25
Discussions 6 @ 25 points	150
Chapter Quizzes 10 @ 30 points	300
Film Analysis	50
Total possible IF EXEMPT from final	550
Final Exam	50
Total possible WITH final exam	600

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 in eCollege. Please consult Virtual Office to see if a question has already been answered before sending me an e-mail. *** (see 3 before me rule below). 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.

A Note About the Virtual Office: The Virtual Office is a public forum. Everyone else in the class can read everything you write there. If you need to contact me about something of a personal nature, feel free to e-mail me.

Three Before Me Rule: The 3 before me rule simply means, before you e-mail me with a question, (when is an assignment due, how do I turn it in, how many points is it worth, etc.), you are to attempt 3 times to answer your question. What are some suggested ways you can do this?

You could: read your syllabus, review Virtual Office to see if someone else has asked this question, post a question for your peers in the Virtual Office, or contact other members of your discussion group, etc.

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 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@tamu-commerce.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 to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative

Other Important Notes:

- 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@tamu-commerce.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.***
 - **Please note:** Late postings to the discussion board will not be graded, regardless of the circumstance. The purpose of discussion items is to stimulate thought and discussion, which is compromised if postings are not timely.
 - **A note about timeliness:** The timelines for this course are not negotiable. I realize that on occasion "life happens" – children get sick, cars break down, and thunderstorms occur. For these reasons and many more, it is highly advised that you DO NOT wait until the deadline for turning in an assignment. If you wait until 11:00 pm on Monday to turn in an assignment due at midnight and the electricity goes out, you have missed the deadline and will NOT get credit for the assignment.
- 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 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 course evaluation at the end of the term when it is too late to implement your suggestions.*