

**SPED 520 Introduction to Exceptionalities
Fall 2014**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and by appointment. Please do not hesitate to contact me, preferably through e-mail, if an appointment is needed.

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 (7th 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 a discussion thread for week one.

GRADING: maximum 10 points

Sample Quiz: 15 points

Week #1 contains a short, simple, sample quiz over the information contained in this syllabus. This brief quiz is intended to give you an opportunity to “practice” taking an on-line quiz. There are 15 questions on this quiz. There is nothing to “study” and no chapters to read – however, read this syllabus before taking the quiz. Just “dive in”.

Grading: maximum 15 points

Sample Drop Box: 25 points

Week # 1 requires you to make an entry into the drop box. For this assignment, 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. 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: 25 points**

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 Sunday*. Reflections and 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 4).

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

**** 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. 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 300

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 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. Therefore, it is IMPORTANT to read the instructions for each quiz. 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. *The due date for most quizzes will be midnight Sunday.*

GRADING: Quizzes are worth 30 points each for 10 lessons = 300 total available points.

Analysis of Flim: 50 total points

This assignment will allow students to analyze how society experiences “disability” as it is portrayed in film. This is more than a film review and requires students to answer specific questions as they relate to their chosen film. Additional information on the requirements of this assignment and a list of approved films will be provided (in doc sharing feature of eCollege).

GRADING: 50 points

This assignment can be turned in before the due date

Response to Intervention Research Position Project: 50 points

This project consists of reading, research, and watching the videos on Response to Intervention. You will be required to locate journal articles that relate to the Response to Intervention Approach and the Discrepancy Approach for identifying learning disabilities and write a short position paper on your findings. Your paper is limited to a MAXIMUM of 3 pages and requires you to use citations in the paper in APA format, 6th edition. Additional details about this project

will be posted in doc sharing feature of eCollege along with examples. A drop box is available in Week 3 for you to turn in your paper.

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 assignments will be exempt from taking the final exam.

Course Evaluation & Grading:

“Getting to Know You” / “All About Me” Post 10

Sample Quiz 15

Sample Drop Box – Misunderstood Minds videos 25

Discussions 6 @ 25 points 150

Chapter Quizzes 10 @ 30 points 300

Analysis of Film 50

RTI Project 50

Total possible IF EXEMPT from final 600

Final Exam 100

Total possible WITH final exam 700

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. 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.

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 Sunday 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 evaluation at the end of the term when it is too late to implement your suggestions.*

SEE TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE ON THE NEXT PAGE

Tentative Course Schedule

Section and Weeks	Topics	Assignments and Due Date
<p>Section 1 August 26, September 2, 9, 16</p>	<p><u>Disabilities and Special Education:</u> <u>Making a Difference</u> <u>Individualized Special Education Programs</u> <u>Cultural and Linguistic Diversity</u></p>	<p>Read Chapters 1-3</p> <p>“Getting to Know You” / “All About Me” Post- DUE 8/30</p> <p>Sample Quiz- AVAILABLE 8/31-9/5</p> <p>Sample Drop Box – Misunderstood Minds videos-DUE 9/9</p> <p>Chapters 1-3 Quizzes- AVAILABLE 9/6-9/20</p> <p>Discussions 1 and 2- BOTH DUE 9/16</p>
<p>1 Section 2 September 23, 30 October 7, 14</p>	<p><u>Learning Disabilities</u> <u>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders</u> <u>Emotional or Behavioral Disorders</u> <u>Intellectual Disabilities or Mental Retardation</u></p>	<p>Read Chapters 5-8</p> <p>Chapters 5-8 Quizzes- AVAILABLE 9/24-10/18</p> <p>Discussions 3 and 4- BOTH DUE 10/14</p>
<p>Section 3 October 21, 28 November 4</p>	<p><u>Speech or Language Impairments</u> <u>Autistic Spectrum Disorders</u></p>	<p>Read Chapters 4 and 12</p> <p>Film Analysis-DUE 10/28</p> <p>RTI Project-DUE 11/9</p> <p>Chapters 4 and 12 Quizzes-AVAILABLE 10/22-11/8</p>
<p>Section 4</p>	<p><u>Physical or Health Disabilities/Traumatic Brain Injury</u></p>	<p>Read Chapters 9-14</p>

<p>November 11, 18, 25 December 2, 9</p>	<p><u>Deaf and Hard of Hearing</u> <u>Low Vision and Blindness</u> <u>Very Low-Incidence Disabilities</u> <u>Giftedness and Talents</u></p>	<p>Chapters 9, 10, 11, and 14 Quizzes-AVAILABLE 11/19-12/6</p> <p>Discussions 5 and 6- BOTH DUE BY 12/6</p> <p>FINAL if grade is lower than an A; AVAILABLE 12/7-12/10</p>
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