



**SPED 580: Current Topics in Special Education**  
**Wednesdays 7:20PM - 10:00PM**  
**Henderson 206**  
**Course Syllabus Fall 2014**

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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 4:00PM-7:00PM; by appointment  
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**COURSE INFORMATION**

***Recommended Textbooks and Resources***

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Lane, K.L. & Beebe-Frankenberger, M. (2004). *School-based interventions: The tools you need to succeed*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon Publishers.

\* Required readings will be selected by students with support, and approval, of the instructor

**Course Description**

Current Topics in Special Education aids students in developing an understanding of the role of convergent research evidence in addressing issues in special education. Students evaluate current research employing quasi-experimental, single subject, and qualitative designs that can be used for defining special education practice and policy.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

***Upon completion of this course students will be able to:***

- identify current issues in special education.
- explain the historical, educational, and philosophical roots of current issues in special education.
- explain multiple perspectives about current topics in special education.
- propose implications for special education policy and practice.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

***Learning activities include the following:***

- Lecture, discussion, and guest speakers
- Analysis and synthesis of course readings
- Application of course content to research projects
- Online discussions
- Application activities

## **Overview of Assignments**

- **Current Topics Proposal (10 points)**

The purpose of the Current Topics Project Proposal is to outline a plan for completion of the course assignments and to obtain feedback and suggestions from the instructor. Over the course of the semester, students will self-select a current topic in special education, complete a mini-synthesis, and a practitioner presentation. Students will then individually, or in teams of two, draft a synthesis paper. Ideas for current topics include:

- Eligibility & Labeling (e.g., LD Identification- RTI, Discrepancy Model)
- Free and Appropriate Education (e.g., Exclusionary Discipline- school safety vs. student rights)
- Individualized Education Plans (e.g., TeXas standards vs. Individual Education)
- Assessment (e.g., Student Evaluation- Curriculum Based Measurement vs. high-stakes testing)
- Access to General Curriculum (e.g., Student Services- full inclusion vs. continuum of services)
- Accountability for Student Learning (e.g., Teacher Effectiveness- student performance vs. growth model)

A Current Topics Proposal template is available in the eCollege DocShare file. Additional details for each component of the course assignments are provided below.

- **Mini Research Synthesis (10 points)**

The purpose of the mini-synthesis is to provide the opportunity to practice synthesizing research. Students will select three, peer-reviewed research articles related to their topic of interest and complete a two-page synthesis of the articles. The mini-synthesis may address the self-selected current topic. Examples and a rubric are available in the eCollege DocShare file.

- **Current Topics Paper (30 points)**

The purpose of the Current Topics Paper is to provide an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of a current topic of student interest. Students will, individually or teams of two, draft a 12-15 page paper, excluding references, tables, and figures, synthesizing the approved current topic of interest. The paper will include a minimum of ten reputable citations. A rubric and sample papers are available through eCollege DocShare file.

- **Current Topics Presentation (30 points)**

The purpose of the Current Topics Presentation is to provide an opportunity for the student to translate research to practice. Three weeks prior to the scheduled presentation, the student will email the professor two research articles and two practitioner articles or resources. The professor will approve the four articles/resources and they will serve as course readings for the presentation night. Students will prepare an hour, interactive practitioner presentation on the approved current topic. Examples and a rubric will be provided through eCollege DocShare.

- **Current Topics Reflections (4 points x 5 sessions; 20 points)**

Students are asked to attend all classes on time, be prepared, and actively participate and support the members of the class learning community. This includes being prepared for and actively participating in student lead discussions. Following each class session, students will draft a current topic reflection. The reflection will include a synthesis of select course readings, impact of the presentation, and applications to current practice. While there is no required page count, one to two pages are typically appropriate. A

rubric is available in the eCollege DocShare.

### Grading

Below are the basic weights of the various kinds of work required for the course. Assignments should be submitted to eCollege DropBox. Assignments are due at 7:20 p.m. on the dates indicated in the course schedule section of this syllabus. All written assignments should be typed and adhere to the American Psychological Association, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition manual, whenever appropriate. **In addition, all written assignments must contain a header with the name of the person submitting the assignment in the actual document itself (not just the file name when it is uploaded).** In fairness to students who make the effort to submit work on time, 5% of the total assignment points will be deducted each day from your grade for late assignments. All assignments should reflect university level spelling, syntax, and grammar.

In order to maximize your learning and success in this course, the instructor is available to review drafts of any assignments prior to the due date for submission. The goal in doing this is to provide guidance in terms of the content of the assignment, not to edit writing mechanics. Drafts must be sent via email at least 3 days prior to the assignment due date to allow sufficient time to provide constructive feedback in a timely manner.

Assignment	Points
Current Topics Proposal	10
Mini Research Synthesis	10
Current Topics Paper	30
Current Topics Presentation	30
Current Topics Reflections	20
Total	100/100%

***It is recommended that students retain electronic and hard copies of ALL course products. Products from this class can become part of one's individual professional portfolio.***

### Grading Scale

A = 90-100%      D = 60-69%  
B = 80-89%      F = 59 and below  
C = 70-79%

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

In addition to face-to-face meetings, materials and online assignments will be posted to eCollege. eCollege works best within a Microsoft Windows environment, and requires a high speed internet connection (dial-up connections will be problematic). Students should use a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft 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 support 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 in to eCollege click on "myCourses" tab, and then select "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 login please contact Technology Services at (903) 468-6000.

### ***Contacting eCollege***

The following options are available 24 hours/7 days per week:

1. Help: Click on the help button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (e.g., “How do I submit to dropbox?”, “How do I post to the discussion board?”)
2. Chat Support: Click on “Live Support” button on the toolbar within your course to chat with an eCollege representative
3. Phone: 1-800-656-5511 (toll free) to speak with an eCollege Technical Support Representative
4. Email: [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) to indicate a support request with an eCollege

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

Current Topics in Special Education is a web-enhanced course. The instructor will lecture for the first two class sessions and students will determine course readings and presentations for all subsequent courses. The instructor will assist with facilitating class discussions and provide reflection feedback. The instructor will add materials as we move through the course that align with student and class interests; however, all rubrics and core materials are available for immediate review. The instructor will review the course shell and essential access and navigation tools on the first night of class.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

In addition to traditional face-to-face office hours, the instructor is available virtually by Skype, MeBeam, and email during posted hours. If you would like to schedule an appointment, the best way is to email. We can then set up a time to meet that is convenient for you. On Wednesdays between 4:00pm and 7:00pm, the instructor will return emails upon receipt. Outside of these times, please allow 24 hours to receive a response. If you have a question that you think others in the class might have, please post the question in the virtual office section of eCollege, so that everyone may benefit.

### ***Email Guidelines***

In an attempt to provide a framework for professional communication, emails must contain the following:

- Subject Line: Course (e.g., SPED 580); additional information if desired (e.g., Statement of Research Interests)
- Address the reader: Open with Dr. Hott
- Adhere to writing mechanics rules; use correct punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar
- If asking for assistance with an issue, please list **at least 3 things** you have done to try and remediate the issue prior to contacting me (these should probably include looking at the syllabus/course rubrics/eCollege, contacting a friend and checking your text, etc.).
- Close with your name
- Please send emails from your University accounts. The instructor will not discuss grades over email. If you would like to discuss your grade, please make an appointment during office hours.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### ***Course Attendance***

Students are expected to attend all face-to-face course sessions, arrive on time, and stay for the duration of the class session. Additionally, students must actively participate in online sessions. Three or more absences will result in an “F” for the course. If a student is unable to attend a

class session, it is his/her responsibility to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student. Students who are absent are held accountable for material covered, assignments provided, and assignments due.

### ***Academic Integrity***

By accepting this syllabus, the student pledges to uphold the principles of Academic Integrity expressed by the Texas A&M University- Commerce community and the Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education Department. The student agrees to observe these principles and to defend them against abuse by others.

- "All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)
- Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information that can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful, to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism.
- Copyright rules also apply to users of the Internet who cite from Internet sources. Information and graphics accessed electronically must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to e-mail (don't cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, information from Web sites, including graphics. Even if you give credit, you must get permission from the original source to put any graphic that you did not create on your web page. Shareware graphics are not free. Freeware clipart is available for you to freely use. If the material does not say "free," assume it is not. Putting someone else's Internet material on your web page is stealing intellectual property. Making links to a site is, at this time, okay, but getting permission is strongly advised, since many Web sites have their own requirements for linking to their material.
- Any attempt to circumvent the integrity of the testing process or otherwise evade the fullest demands of class assignments in an unethical manner constitutes cheating. This can mean looking on another student's exam, consulting notes or books during an exam unless specifically permitted by the instructor, stealing an exam and circulating it among other students, text messaging in class during an exam, or lying to an instructor about such activities all constitute forms of academic dishonesty that amount to cheating. Any offense wholly or partially touching the above definition constitutes cheating for the purposes of this class.
- Plagiarism and/or cheating will **not** be tolerated. The first offense of either activity will result in a "0" on the assignment, and the second offense will result in a "0" for the entire course. All acts of plagiarism will be reported to the department chair.

### ***APA Style and Formatting***

**All work should be submitted using APA style.** If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.) or to access one of the internet sites that provides a summary of this information. All work produced outside of class must be typed unless otherwise noted.

<http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm> is offered as a companion to the APA style manual. However, it should not be considered a substitute for directly consulting the APA manual, 6<sup>th</sup> edition for standard of procedures for applying APA style.

**University Specific Procedures:**

**ADA Requirements**

**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@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)

**Student Conduct**

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*).

**COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Please note that this syllabus serves as a guideline for the course and is subject to change as necessary. It is the student's responsibility to check eCollege and email for updates regularly. Dates that are noted with a \* are online course sessions. Course readings should be completed on or before the readings date indicated.***

**PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
Week 1 08/27/14	Introductions Syllabus Review Course Expectations		
*Week 2 09/03/14	Historical Perspectives Future Directions	Dunn Lilly Kauffman Mastropieri & Scruggs	Current Topics Proposal Readings 1&2
Week 3 09/10/14	Sample Current Topics Presentation Sample, Analysis of Readings, Discussion	Hott, Walker, & Brigham Sheffield & Waller Uberti & Mastropieri Menziez	

*Week 4 09/17/14	Student selected readings Review 1&2		Mini-Synthesis Readings 3&4
Week 5 09/24/14	Presentation 1: Presentation 2:	Instructor approved student selected readings	
*Week 7 10/01/14	Student selected topics 3&4	Instructor approved student selected readings	Reflection 1 Readings 5&6
Week 8 10/08/14	Presentation 3: Presentation 4:	Instructor approved student selected readings	
*Week 9 10/15/15	Student selected topics 5&6	Instructor approved student selected readings	Reflection 2 Readings 7&8
Week10 10/22/14	Presentation 5: Presentation 6: Student selected topics 7&8	Instructor approved student selected readings	
Week 11 10/29/14	Presentation 7: Presentation 8:	Instructor approved student selected readings	Reflection 3
*Week12 11/05/14	Introduction to Multiple Perspectives	Instructor provided readings	Readings 9&10
*Week 13 11/12/14	Student selected topics 9&10	Instructor approved student selected readings	Reflection 4
Week 14 11/19/14	Presentation 9: Presentation 10:	Instructor approved student selected readings	Current Topics Paper
*Week 15 11/26/14	Evidenced-Based Practice	Freeman & Sugai Regan	
Week 16 12/03/14	Multiple Perspectives Evidence-Based Practice in Special Education: Resources for Practitioners	Bennett & Roberts Cook	Reflection 5
Week 17 10/10/14	Course Reflection and Discussion		