

SPED 520 Introduction to Exceptionalities Fall 2015 Online

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Office Hours: 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

INSTRUCTOR AND COURSE ACCESS

Contacting the Instructor

If you have a question that you feel others in the class would benefit from the answer to, please post your question in the virtual office. For all other inquiries, email is my preferred method of communication. Please give me 48 hours to respond to your emails before resending. In addition, please be aware that I will not respond to emails on Saturday or Sunday, and emails received on Friday could potentially be responded to the following Monday.

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 class.

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 online 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. ******If you have never utilized eCollege, you should take the eCollege tutorial accessed through a link on the "My Courses" page when you enter eCollege.******

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

Class Requirements/Assignments/Activities/Expectations and Grading:

Misunderstood Minds (20 points):

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.

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.

Written submission: 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 Misunderstood Minds Dropbox. GRADING: 25 points

Discussion/Reflection (70 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: 7 discussions @ 10 points each= TOTAL 60 points

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.
- APA 6th edition guidelines should be adhered to, when appropriate.

IRIS Modules (50 points):

- Students will complete a series of IRIS Modules on special education topics pertinent to class lectures and discussions. Students are expected to work through the entirety of all modules, complete the assessment questions at the end, and upload written submissions to the Dropbox with the Module name.

GRADING: 3 modules @ 15 points each

Exceptionalities Handbook/Study Sheets: One of the crucial elements of this course is for enrolled students to leave with mastery of basic information about each IDEA eligibility category, especially the category definition and eligibility criteria. Each student will create a handbook containing information from chapters 4-13 (separate pages for each of the 13 disability categories). Information should be presented as headings with bullets of information. There is a template posted in DocSharing that you may choose to use (or you can do it in another format, such as a power point, that best matches your learning preferences) to complete your handbook pages. There is an example posted in DocSharing as well.

Handbook pages are designed to help you pull out the essential information on each disability, and, when completed, they will help you prepare for the quizzes. Thus, it is advised that you complete each page as we discuss that topic (don't wait to do it as one big project when it is due).

You may only turn in two pages for each of the 13 disability categories. Also, note that when you submit your assignment, you are submitting all chapters together (chapters 4-13). Make sure to delete any blank pages. ALL PAGES SHOULD BE TURNED IN IN ONE FILE WITH YOUR NAME AS A HEADER.

Info to Include on Each Page:

1. IDEA Definition, including types as appropriate. Please include your study technique for remembering the definition, such as the example in DocSharing of the 5 components of the ED definition illustrated as fingers on a hand. (You can use this one for ED if you choose, but you will need to come up with the remainder on your own.)
2. Causes
3. Prevalence (provide percentages/numbers as much as possible)
4. Characteristics
5. Prevention
6. Teaching strategies/Accommodations

You will have ONE handbook page for each of the following topics:

Section 2 of Course	Speech or Language Impairments Learning Disabilities Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Intellectual Disabilities or Mental Retardation
Section 3 of Course	Orthopedic Impairments (Physical Disabilities) Other Health Impairments (Health Disabilities) Traumatic Brain Injury Deaf and Hard of Hearing Low Vision and Blindness Autistic Spectrum Disorders Deaf-Blind Multiple Disabilities

GRADING: 13 pages @ 10 points each

****Note:** The other disabilities that fall within these categories can be listed as part of the definition. For example, on the sheet for orthopedic impairments, cerebral palsy can be listed as part of the definition as types of disorders in this category.

Chapter Quizzes (130 points):

For each section, you will have a quiz that will cover all information on the chapters covered in that section. These quizzes are intended to test your knowledge of information from the chapters. Quizzes will be timed and will ONLY be available on the dates listed below in the tentative calendar. 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: 3 quizzes; Quiz 1 @ 30 points, Quizzes 2 and 3 @ 50 points each each=TOTAL 130 points

Course Evaluation & Grading:

Misunderstood Minds		25 points
Discussion/Reflections	7 @ 10 points each	70 points
IRIS Modules	3 @ 15 points each	45 points
Exceptionalities Handbook	13 pages @ 10 pts each	130 points
Quizzes	3; 1 @ 30 pts. 2 @ 50 pts	130 points
TOTAL		400 points

Grading Criteria:

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

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 Quizzes.** There will be NO make-up quizzes 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 31- September 18</p>	<p>Disabilities and Special Education: Making a Difference Individualized Special Education Programs Cultural and Linguistic Diversity</p>	<p>Read Chapters 1-3</p> <p>Getting to Know You Discussion Post-DUE 9/2/15</p> <p>Misunderstood Minds Response-DUE 9/13/15</p> <p>Chapter 3 (Cultural Perceptions) Discussion DUE 9/13/15</p> <p>IRIS Module 1 DUE 9/20/15</p> <p>Chapters 1-3 Quiz-AVAILABLE 9/18-9/20</p>
<p>Section 2 September 21- October 23</p>	<p>Speech or Language Impairments Learning Disabilities Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Intellectual Disabilities or Mental Retardation</p>	<p>Read Chapters 4-8</p> <p>IRIS Module 2 DUE 10/4/15</p> <p>Chapters 6-8 (ADHD, ID, and Discipline) Discussions DUE 10/11/15</p> <p>Chapters 4-8 Quiz-AVAILABLE 10/23-10/25</p>
<p>Section 3 October 26- December 4</p>	<p>Physical or Health Disabilities/Traumatic Brain Injury Deaf and Hard of Hearing Low Vision and Blindness Autistic Spectrum Disorders Very Low-Incidence Disabilities Giftedness and Talents</p>	<p>Read Chapters 9-14</p> <p>IRIS Module 3 DUE 11/22/15</p> <p>Exceptionalities Handbook DUE 11/29/15</p> <p>Chapter 11 and 14 (VI and Twice-Exceptional) Discussion DUE 12/6/15</p> <p>Chapters 9-14 Quiz-AVAILABLE 12/6-12/9</p>