



Course Syllabus: Introduction to Individuals with Disabilities

Gordon T. & Ellen West College of Education
and Professional Studies
SPED 3523 Section X10
Fall 2025

Contact Information

Instructor: April Crutcher
Office: Bridwell 312
Office hours: Tues / Thurs 9:30 am – 11 am; Wed 1 – 3 pm; by appointment
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Instructor Response Policy

The best way to contact me is via email. I will check my email daily between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm Monday – Friday. Every effort will be made to respond within 24 hours; however, this does not apply to weekends or holidays. I will be available during the office hours listed above or we can set up another time to meet either in person or virtually.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Heward, W. L., Alber-Morgan, S. R., & Konrad, M. (2022). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education* (12th ed.). Pearson.

Course Description

A pre-service course and content experience that provides an overview of schooling and classrooms from the perspectives of P-12 special populations with an emphasis on factors that facilitate learning. Course may not be used for students seeking teacher certification.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Course Competencies

The student:

1. Understands the differences that parents of children with disabilities face, including the effects on the family, and interventions for parents.
2. Understands and applies principles and strategies for communicating effectively in varied teaching and learning contexts.
 - a. Communicates directions, explanations and procedures effectively and uses strategies for adjusting communication to enhance student understanding (e.g., by providing examples, simplifying complex ideas, using appropriate communication tools). (TExES Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-12 Domain 2, Competency 007C)
3. Understands and applies knowledge of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity and the significance of individual diversity for evaluation, planning and instruction.
 - a. Demonstrate knowledge of issues related to the identification of disabilities in individuals from ethnically, culturally, linguistically and/or socioeconomically diverse backgrounds.
 - b. Recognize how the ethnic, cultural and environmental background of students and their families, including linguistic and socioeconomic diversity, may affect evaluation, planning and instruction.
 - c. Demonstrate awareness of issues related to the representation in special education of populations that are culturally and linguistically diverse.
4. Engaging in Professional understanding of students' instructional and behavioral needs. (CEC Initial Preparation Standard 7.0, Component 7.1)
5. Supporting Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth (CEC Initial Preparation Standard 6.0)

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

I am available to meet by appointment. Email me with any questions you have or to set up a time to meet in person or virtually. Responses/answers will be provided via email, or a time can be set up for a phone call or appointment.

Methods of Instruction

This course will be presented in a manner that will allow you to learn independently, through interaction with instructor via discussions, discussion board, email, and postings. While you may work somewhat at your own pace, I have found that most students appreciate the structure of due dates. Please adhere to the due dates and adjust your study schedule accordingly. Internet

courses are a convenient and effective method of learning; however they require as much work and attention as traditional instruction. Please adhere to the following guidelines/suggestions to ensure success this semester: 1. Do not think you can do this course in your spare time. Plan, plan, and plan some more. Schedule time each week to dedicate to this course. 2. Please adhere to all deadlines and due dates. You may complete assignments early but do not turn them in late. 3. Please read and re-read assignments. Get clarification as soon as possible (do not wait until the night before the assignment is due). Post questions on the public discussion board or email me.

Student Handbook

Refer to: Student Handbook

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. Office of Student Conduct

Grading/Assessment

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignment	Points
Chapter Activities (11 at 25 pts each)	275
Chapter Quizzes (12 at 20 pts each)	220
Accommodated Lesson Plan	100
Accommodated Lesson Plan Check Points (3 at 25 pts each)	75
Discussions (1 at 10 pts each)	10
TEA Dyslexia Course	100
Total	780

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	702 - 780
B	624 - 701
C	546 - 623
D	468 - 545
F	467 and below

Chapter Activities

There will be a chapter/weekly activity each week. Most weeks the activity will be related to the chapter covered that week, but a few weeks will be related to

the Accommodated Lesson Plan assignment. The activities vary from papers (approximately 1- 1.5 pages in length), IRIS Modules with assessments at the end, and an assortment of other assignments to hopefully keep things interesting and to provide an opportunity to build on the information provided in each chapter. Some activities take longer than others, so be sure to look ahead and plan accordingly.

Quizzes

There will be a quiz over each chapters 1-12 in the text. The quizzes will be multiple choice and open book. The questions come from the book so with a little effort you should be able to do well on the quizzes.

Accommodated Lesson Plan

This assignment will provide an opportunity to apply your knowledge of disabilities and classroom accommodations. This activity will be completed towards the end of the semester but should be reviewed in advance so that as you learn about each disability, you can think about classroom accommodations that would be beneficial. This assignment is required for course credit. There will be 3 check points during the semester so that I can gauge your understanding of the assignment before it is time to complete the full lesson plan.

TEA Dyslexia Course

The TEA Dyslexia Course is an online module you will complete as part of this course.

Discussions

There is 1 discussion in the course. It is an introduction of yourself to me and the rest of the class.

Mid-Term Exam

There will not be a mid-term exam for this course.

Final Exam

There will not be a final exam for this course.

Extra Credit

Extra credit assignments will not be provided in this course.

Late Work

All assignments are expected to be submitted by the day they are due. You will be penalized five points for every day an assignment is late. Please contact me if extenuating circumstances arise that result in your inability to submit an assignment on time.

Make Up Work/Tests

Make up work will only be accepted in extreme circumstances (death in the family, illness, etc.). I must be contacted prior to the due date and appropriate documentation must be provided.

AI / Chat GPT

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

You may type a question into ChatGPT, however, you may not exactly copy and paste its response, and turn it in as your own. If you use ChatGPT, you must disclose this somewhere in your assignment. If you use ChatGPT or any AI, please use it in ways that are ethical, accurate, and useful.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: August 28th

Deadline to file for graduation: September 22nd

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 24th

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to

have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Inclement Weather

In the case of campus closure due to inclement weather, this course will continue as scheduled. However, if assignment deadlines coincide with the closure dates, the deadline will be delayed until after the campus reopens.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the [Schedule of Classes](#) each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational

programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#) or email disabilityservices@msutexas.edu.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU TEXAS. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more

information, visit [Safety / Emergency Procedures](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "*Run. Hide. Fight.*" which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: "*Run. Hide. Fight.*"

Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick
Title IX Coordinator
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse
940-397-4213
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at [Online Reporting Form](#)

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit [Title IX Website](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Week	Topics for the Week	Weekly Activities - Due on Mondays at Midnight
Week 1 – Aug 25	Class Introduction and People First Language	Discussion and People First Language Activity – Due 9/1
Week 2 – Sept 1	Chapter 1 – The Purpose and Promise of Special Education	Chapter 1 Quiz and Activity – Due 9/8
Week 3 – Sept 8	Chapter 2 – Planning and Providing Special Education	Chapter 2 Quiz and Activity – Due 9/15
Week 4 – Sept 15	Chapter 3 – Collaborating with Families	Chapter 3 Quiz and Activity – Due 9/22
Week 5 – Sept 22	Chapter 4 – Intellectual Disabilities	Chapter 4 Quiz and Activity – Due 9/29
Week 6 – Sept 29	Chapter 5 – Learning Disabilities	Chapter 5 Quiz and Activity – Due 10/6
Week 7 – Oct 6	Chapter 6 – Emotional or Behavioral Disorders	Chapter 6 Quiz and Activity; Accommodated Lesson Plan Check Point 1 – Due 10/13
Week 8 – Oct 13	Chapter 7 – Autism Spectrum Disorders	Chapter 7 Quiz and Activity – Due 10/20
Week 9 – Oct 20	Chapter 8 – Communication Disorders	Chapter 8 Quiz and Activity – Due 10/27
Week 10 – Oct 27	Accommodated Lesson Plan Check-Point 2	Accommodated Lesson Plan Check Point 2 – Due 11/3
Week 11 – Nov 3	Chapter 9 – Deafness and Hearing Loss	Chapter 9 Quiz and Activity – Due 11/10
Week 12 – Nov 10	Chapter 10 – Blindness and Low Vision	Chapter 10 Quiz; TEA Dyslexia Course; Accommodated Lesson Plan Check Point 3 – Due 11/17

Week	Topics for the Week	Weekly Activities - Due on Mondays at Midnight
Week 13 – Nov 17	Chapter 11 – Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Health Impairments, and Physical Disabilities	Chapter 11 Quiz and Activity – Due 11/24
Week 14 – Nov 24	Chapter 12 – Low-Incidence Disabilities: Multiple Disabilities, Deaf- Blindness, and Traumatic Brain Injury	Chapter 12 Quiz– Due 12/1
Week 15- Dec 1	Wrapping up – Accommodated Lesson Plan	Accommodated Lesson Plan -Due 12/5