



Course Syllabus: Teaching Special Needs in an Inclusive Setting

Gordon T. & Ellen West College of Education
and Professional Studies
SPED 3623 Section X20
Spring 2026

Contact Information

Instructor: April Crutcher
Office: Bridwell 312
Office hours: Tues / Thurs 9:30 am – 11 am; Wed 1 pm – 3 pm; by appointment
Office phone: (940) 397-4816
E-mail: april.crutcher@msutexas.edu

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

Prerequisite(s): Admission to the Teacher Education Program. Description: A study of the etiology of and concepts relating to teaching students with special needs in inclusive settings.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Course Competencies

This course addresses all the requirements of HB 159

(a-1) Any training requirements for a certificate specified under Subsection (a) must require that the person demonstrates:

Basic knowledge of:

- (A) each disability category under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.) and how each category can affect student learning and development; and
- (B) conditions that may be considered a disability under *Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (29 U.S.C. § 794), and how a condition covered by that section can affect student learning and development;

Competence in the use of proactive instructional planning techniques that:

- (A) provide flexibility in the ways:
 - (i) information is presented;
 - (ii) students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills; and
 - (iii) students are engaged;
- (B) reduce barriers in instruction;
- (C) provide appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges; and
- (D) maintain high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students of limited English proficiency;

This class addresses the relevant section of:

Texas Education Code § 21.044 — Educator Preparation

(b) The minimum academic qualifications for a certificate specified under Subsection (a) must require that the person receive, as part of the training required to obtain that certificate, instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia.

(c) The instruction under Subsection (b) must:

(1) be developed by a panel of experts in the diagnosis and treatment of dyslexia who are:

- (A) employed by institutions of higher education; and
- (B) approved by the board; and

(2) include information on:

- (A) characteristics of dyslexia;
- (B) identification of dyslexia; and
- (C) effective, multisensory strategies for teaching students with dyslexia.

This course is an introduction course for all education majors. It is based on relevant standards from 19 TAC Chapter 235 for Texas Teachers

§235.21. Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Standards, Early Childhood: Prekindergarten-Grade 6. Early Childhood-Grade 6. (2025 Update)

Standards Referenced: https://www.tx.nesinc.com/Content/StudyGuide/TX_SG_obj_160.htm

Domain I - Designing Instruction and Assessment to Promote Student Learning
Competency 001- The teacher understands human developmental processes and applies this knowledge to plan instruction and ongoing assessment that motivate students and are responsive to the developmental characteristics and needs.
B. Recognizes the wide range of individual developmental differences that characterizes students in early childhood through grade 12 and the implications of this developmental variation for instructional planning.
C. Analyzes ways in which developmental characteristics of students in early childhood through grade 12 impact learning and performance and applies knowledge of students' developmental characteristics and needs to plan effective learning experiences and assessments.
G. Understands that development in any one domain (i.e., cognitive, social, physical, emotional) impacts development in other domains.
H. Recognizes signs of developmental delays or impairments in students in early childhood through grade 4.
Domain III – Implementing Effective, Responsive Instruction and Assessment
Competency 007- The teacher understands and applies principles and strategies for communicating effectively in varied teaching and learning contexts.
A. Demonstrates clear, accurate communication in the teaching and learning process and uses language that is appropriate to students' ages, interests and backgrounds.
D. Practices effective communication techniques and interpersonal skills (including both verbal and nonverbal skills and electronic communication) for meeting specified goals in various contexts.
Domain IV – Fulfilling Professional Roles and Responsibilities
Competency 013- The teacher understands and adheres to legal and ethical requirements for educators and is knowledgeable of the structure of education in Texas.
A. Knows legal requirements for educators (e.g., those related to special education, students' and families' rights, student discipline, equity, child abuse) and adheres to legal guidelines in education-related situations.
B. Knows and adheres to legal and ethical requirements regarding the use of educational resources and technologies (e.g., copyright, Fair Use, data security, privacy, acceptable use policies).
C. Applies knowledge of ethical guidelines for educators in Texas (e.g., those related to confidentiality, interactions with students and others in the school community), including policies and procedures described in the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.
D. Follows procedures and requirements for maintaining accurate student records.
E. Understands the importance of and adheres to required procedures for administering state- and district-mandated assessments.
F. Uses knowledge of the structure of the state education system, including relationships among campus, local and state components, to seek information and assistance.
G. Advocates for students and for the profession in various situations.

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 with lowest dropped)	250
Chapter Quizzes (12 at 20 pts each with lowest dropped)	220
Accommodated Lesson Plan	100
Discussions (1 at 10 pts each)	10
Total	580

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	522-580
B	464-521
C	406-463
D	348-405
F	347 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. A few weeks, there will be an additional assignment related to the Accommodated Lesson Plan. 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. The grades for the checkpoints will not go toward your final grade, but it is in your best interest to do them so that you will know whether you are on the right track to complete the accommodated lesson plan correctly at the end of the semester.

TEA Dyslexia Course

The TEA Dyslexia Course is a requirement for this course. If have already completed the TEA Dyslexia Course as part of your application for the teacher certification program, then upload your certificate in the drop box in D2L and to TK20 (even if you have already uploaded it to TK20 before). If you have not completed the course, follow the link in D2L to complete the course and upload your certification to D2L and TK20. This is a requirement for this course and if this task is not completed you will receive an incomplete for the 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 2 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.

Instructor Use of Generative AI

I integrate generative AI into my teaching to enhance—not replace—human learning, creativity, and critical thinking. I use AI applications as collaborative partners for ideation, drafting, feedback, and the refinement of teaching materials, while maintaining full responsibility for content and accuracy. I do not use this technology to assess student work. I do not input other people’s work or personally identifiable information into AI tools. My approach emphasizes ethical, transparent use aligned with academic integrity, equity, and the development of transferable skills. I also aim to model responsible engagement with emerging technologies, emphasizing thoughtful boundaries rather than rigid prohibitions. I strive for transparency around AI use by adding AI disclosure statements and/or citations to all work generated for this course in collaboration with AI tools.

Student Use of Generative AI

The use of artificial intelligence applications, including but not limited to ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, DALL·E, Grammarly, or similar applications, may be used for planning activities such as brainstorming, outlining, and idea development. However, all final submissions should show evidence that students have developed and refined these ideas on their own without additional generative AI use. Students are expected to apply what they are learning in this course to produce work for this class, drawing on their developing knowledge, understanding, and skills. When using generative AI in permitted contexts as outlined in the syllabus or explicitly permitted by the instructor, you are responsible for ensuring that AI-generated content is properly cited, accurate, ethical, and free of misinformation or intellectual property violations. AI-generated content must never be submitted as your own work. Doing so may constitute a violation of academic integrity and may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Please contact me if you have questions regarding this course policy. Any generative AI use should be cited *AND* clearly disclosed according to the instructions in this syllabus. An example of an APA citation (7th ed. format) is seen here: OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (May 2024 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com>

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: February 2nd

Deadline to file for graduation: February 16th

Last Day to drop with a grade of “W:” April 29th at 4:00 PM

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](#)

Course Schedule:

Week	Topics for the Week	Weekly Activities - Due on Mondays at Midnight
Week 1 – Jan 19	Class Introduction and People First Language	Discussion and People First Language Activity – Due 1/26
Week 2 – Jan 26	Chapter 1 – The Purpose and Promise of Special Education	Chapter 1 Quiz and Activity – Due 2/2
Week 3 – Feb 2	Chapter 2 – Planning and Providing Special Education	Chapter 2 Quiz and Activity – Due 2/9
Week 4 – Feb 9	Chapter 3 – Collaborating with Families	Chapter 3 Quiz and Activity – Due 2/16
Week 5 – Feb 16	Chapter 4 – Intellectual Disabilities	Chapter 4 Quiz and Activity – Due 2/23 Accommodated Lesson Plan Checkpoint 1 – Due 2/23
Week 6 – Feb 23	Chapter 5 – Learning Disabilities	Chapter 5 Quiz and Activity – Due 3/2
Week 7 – Mar 2	Chapter 6 – Emotional or Behavioral Disorders	Chapter 6 Quiz and Activity – Due 3/9

Week	Topics for the Week	Weekly Activities - Due on Mondays at Midnight
Week 8 – Mar 9	Spring Break	Nothing due this week
Week 9 – Mar 16	Chapter 7 – Autism Spectrum Disorders	Chapter 7 Quiz and Activity – Due 3/23
Week 10 – Mar 23	Chapter 8 – Communication Disorders	Chapter 8 Quiz and Activity – Due 3/30 TEA Dyslexia Course – Due 3/30
Week 11 – Mar 30	Chapter 9 – Deafness and Hearing Loss	Chapter 9 Quiz and Activity – Due 4/6 Accommodated Lesson Plan Check Point 2 – Due 4/6
Week 12 – Apr 6	Chapter 10 – Blindness and Low Vision	Chapter 10 Quiz – Due 4/13
Week 13 – Apr 13	Chapter 11 – Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Health Impairments, and Physical Disabilities	Chapter 11 Quiz and Activity – Due 4/20 Accommodated Lesson Plan Check Point 3 – Due 4/20
Week 14 – Apr 20	Chapter 12 – Low-Incidence Disabilities: Multiple Disabilities, Deaf-Blindness, and Traumatic Brain Injury	Chapter 12 Quiz– Due 4/27
Week 15 – Apr 27	Work on Accommodated Lesson Plan	Accommodated Lesson Plan - Due 5/4
Week 16- May 4		Nothing due – all course work completed

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