I. Course Description

This course provides an overview of the characteristics and needs of special student populations in a culturally diverse society. Emphasis will be placed on learning about special education, gifted and talented, culturally and linguistically diverse, and at-risk student populations. Instructional strategies, differentiated curriculum, and assessment will be examined in relation to these special populations.

The three variations of the Special Populations course (All Level = EDCI 4321, 4-8 = EDCI 4323 and EDCI 4322 = 8-12; 4324= EC-6) are based upon the three distinctive levels of teacher certification in the State of Texas. Each of these three courses requires field experiences and assignments in their respective levels of teacher certification. Every section of the Special Populations courses offered at TAMU-CC may include a mix of preservice teachers seeking any level of teacher certification. However, the field-based experiences/assignments of any given Special Populations class will be required at the appropriate EDCI 4321, EDCI 4322, EDCI 4323 or EDCI 4324 course level which matches the preservice teacher's level of All Level, 8-12, 4-8 or EC-6 teacher certification, respectively.

II. Rationale

The schools of today are becoming increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse. In addition, most schools actively promote an “inclusive” academic environment. Special student populations served in inclusive general education classrooms include students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and students at-risk for school failure. Thus it is important for all teachers to understand how to adapt instruction to meet the needs of all students, especially those with special learning needs. While most are seeking teaching careers in the “regular” classroom and others are considering careers working specifically in special education or bilingual education, these two career paths are, in fact, rapidly conjoining.

III. State Adopted Proficiencies:

1. Learner-Centered Knowledge: The teacher possesses and draws on a rich knowledge base of content and technology to provide relevant and meaningful learning experiences for all students.

2. Learner-Centered Instruction: The teacher collaboratively identifies needs and implements appropriate pedagogical and assessment strategies using technology and other resources.

3. Equity In Excellence For All Learners: The teacher respects, addresses, and validates the needs of diverse learners.

4. Learner-Centered Communication: The teacher demonstrates effective professional and interpersonal communication skills and serves as an advocate for all students.

5. Learner-Centered Professional Development: The teacher is a reflective practitioner and demonstrates a commitment to learn, to improve the profession, and to maintain professional ethics and personal integrity.

IV. TExES Competencies

The following TExES competencies will be developed in this class:
001. The teacher understands human development processes and applies this knowledge to plan instruction and ongoing assessment that motivate students and are responsive to their development characteristics and needs.

002. The teacher understands student diversity and knows how to plan learning experiences and design assessments that are responsive to differences among students and that promote all students’ learning.

004. The teacher understands learning processes and factors that impact student learning and demonstrates this knowledge by planning effective, engaging instruction and appropriate assessments.

005. The teacher knows how to establish a classroom climate that fosters learning, equity, and excellence and uses this knowledge to create a physical and emotional environment that is safe and productive.

006. The teacher understands strategies for creating an organized and productive learning environment and for managing student behavior.

011. The teacher understands the importance of family involvement in children’s education and knows how to interact and communicate effectively with families.

012. The teacher enhances professional knowledge and skills by effectively interacting with other members of the educational community and participating in various types of professional activities.

013. The teacher understands and adheres to legal and ethical requirements for educators and is knowledgeable of the structure of education in Texas.

V. **Course Objectives and learning Outcomes:**

This course is designed to demonstrate the competencies and proficiencies presented above. The student will:

1. Observe and engage in school-based experiences with special populations and culturally and linguistically diverse students. (TExES Competencies: 002, 004, 005, 006, 012) (State Proficiencies: 1, 2, 3) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations)

2. Observe and explore various types of intervention, modification and adaptive strategies utilized with special needs students and better understand when to use them, and when to seek outside assistance. (TExES Competencies: 002, 004, 005, 006, 012) (State Proficiencies: 1, 2, 3) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations; Differentiated Instruction)

3. Recognize symptoms which differentiate severe or serious problems of learning or behavior. (TExES Competencies: 002, 004, 005, 006, 012) (State Proficiencies: 1, 2, 3) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations)

4. Broaden knowledge base of teaching and working with special populations and culturally diverse students (i.e. characteristics, federal and state laws, placement and array of services, instructional planning and strategies, collaborative teaching efforts, assessment, and involvement of family and community). (TExES Competencies: 001, 002, 011, 012, 013) (State Proficiencies: 1, 3, 4, 5) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations; Parent Conferences/Communication)

5. Investigate and broaden knowledge of disabilities associated with special education students. (TExES Competencies: 001, 002,) (State Proficiencies: 1, 3) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations)

6. Explore his/her awareness of personal beliefs about teaching special populations and culturally and linguistically diverse students through a case study and tutoring students of specials needs. (TExES Competencies: 001, 002, 004, 005, 012) (State Proficiencies: 1, 2, 3) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations; Code of Ethics & Standard Practices)

7. Promote and strengthen his/her interest in working with ALL students, including special populations. (TExES Competencies: 001, 002,) (State Proficiencies: 1, 3) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations)
8. Gain experience in modifying instruction to meet students’ special educational needs. (TExES Competencies: 002, 004, 005, 012) (State Proficiencies: 1, 2, 3) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations; Differentiated Instruction)

9. Recognize the nature and significance of cultural diversity in historical and contemporary contexts and demonstrate an awareness and appreciation for cultural diversity. (TExES Competencies: 002, 012, 013) (State Proficiencies: 1, 3) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations)

VI. Course Topics:
TAC §228.30(b): 17 Subject Matter Curricular Topics
- Reading Instruction
- Code of Ethics & Standard Practices
- Child Development
- Motivation
- Learning Theories
- TEKS Organization, Structure & Skills
- TEKS in the Content Areas
- State Assessment of Students
- Curriculum Development & Lesson Planning
- Classroom Assessment
- Classroom Management
- Special Populations
- Parent Conferences / Communication
- Instructional Technology
- Pedagogy / Instructional Strategies
- Differentiated Instruction
- Certification Test Preparation

VII. Instructional Methods and Activities

EDCI 4321/2/3/4 utilizes a variety of traditional instructional methods and activities, as well as field-based experiences.
A. Traditional Experiences (lecture/discussion, demonstrations, drill, guest speakers, video, student discussions/presentations)
B. Field Experiences will involve observation, reflection, planning and teaching of individuals/small groups at the appropriate course level that matches the preservice teacher’s desired level of teacher certification.

IV. Evaluation and Grade Assignment
Overview of Course Requirements:
1. Class attendance and participation;
2. Initial Responses to Assigned Readings (240 points/20%);
3. Response to Peers’ Responses to Assigned Readings (240 points/20%);
4. Article Review (50 points/4%);
5. Disability Research Presentation (100 points/8%);
6. Classroom Observations (100 points/8%);
7. Instructional Modifications Interview (100 points/8%);
8. Exam One (100 points/8%);
9. Case Study Journal and Report (100 points/8%);
10. 50 Strategies for Teaching ELL Presentation (50 points/4%);
11. Exam Two (100 points/8%)
Detailed Description of Course Requirements:

1. Class Attendance and Participation (one letter grade per unexcused absence or two tardies)

The Student Handbook and Code of Conduct 2010-2011 includes the following policy regarding class attendance:

Students are held accountable for class attendance and are advised that excessive absences may adversely affect their grades. Every instructor should clearly explain the policy on class attendance at the beginning of each course. If students are absent from class on approved university business (e.g., intercollegiate athletics competition/travel, field trips, student research conferences, Board of Regents meetings), faculty members should count the absence as an excused absence and should not penalize the student for it. Students absent from a scheduled class meeting because of approved university business should be allowed to make up any required course work in advance or after return to campus. Students are responsible for informing instructors about the approved university absence in advance, so instructors can plan accordingly. If students have any doubt as to whether the activity in question is considered official university business, students should contact the Provost’s Office for clarification.

Students in EDCI 4321 - 4324 are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings on time unless they are on approved university business as described above. Each unexcused absence from a scheduled class meeting will reduce your final course grade by one letter grade. Two, unexcused, late arrivals will reduce your final course grade by one letter grade. Two or more unexcused absences or four unexcused tardies will place you in jeopardy of failing this course.

2. Initial Responses to Assigned Readings (Twelve (12) initial responses at 20 points each for 240 total points).

We have two required texts for EDCI 4321 - 4324. We will have assigned readings in each text each week of class. Your written responses to the assigned readings will be posted to Blackboard the week before we discuss the topics in class.

This learning activity requires you to read the assigned readings and post an initial response to each reading by the scheduled due date and time. Your initial responses to the readings and your peers’ responses to your initial responses will form the basis for our face-to-face discussions about the topics/issues addressed by EDCI 4321 - 4324.

If you have difficulty organizing your thinking about an assigned reading you might want to keep the following questions in mind as you read, and use the questions to help you construct a response:

1. What parts of the reading were new ideas, concepts, or information for you? Based on your previous knowledge and understandings of teaching and schools, what questions or concerns do you have about the new ideas, concepts, or information you read in the text?

2. What parts of the reading did you agree or disagree with? Why did you agree or disagree with those parts?

3. As you read, did you get a sense that any of your previous concepts of or beliefs about teaching or schools were changing? Which ones and how were they changing?

4. What parts of the reading were most or least interesting to you? Why were they interesting or not interesting?

5. What is the most important concept in this reading for a classroom teacher to remember? Explain why you think this concept is the most important to be remembered.

You are not required to use any of these questions to help organize your response, or you may use all of these questions to drive your response to the reading.
Do not summarize the reading. We have all read the text and do not need a summary. The written reflections you share with the class are open ended conversations not summaries of the readings or formal essays. The thinking you share with colleagues does not have to have a clear beginning, middle, and end. It does not have to read like a coherent formal essay (though it may, if you so choose). However, it ought to represent your serious thinking about the reading.

Your initial response to the reading should be 300-400 words that demonstrate serious thinking about the reading. Responses that demonstrate serious thinking about the reading will receive full credit. Responses that demonstrate anything less than serious thinking will receive less than full credit. If you need help with determining the nature of serious thinking, please ask for help before posting the response to Blackboard.

For a detailed list of due dates and times for “Initial Responses to Assigned Readings” see the Course Schedule in this syllabus.

3. Response to Peers
(Twenty-four (24) responses at 10 points each for 240 total points)

You are required to post a written response to at least two (2) of your peer’s “Initial Responses to Assigned Readings” for each assigned reading.

While you are in not required to use the following questions to guide your response to a peer’s initial response to the assigned readings, you may find the following questions helpful:

1. With what did you agree/disagree as you read your colleague’s initial response to the reading? Why did you agree or disagree?

2. What is your experience relative to your colleague’s response? How does your experience inform, expand, or counter your colleague’s response?

3. What thoughts about the topic did your colleague’s response evoke?

4. How did your reading of the text differ from that of the peer to whom you are responding?

5. How did your understanding of the reading or your feeling about it change as you read your colleague’s thinking and feelings about the text?

Use the following format in responding to a peer’s initial response to the reading:

1. Identify the peer to whom you are responding;
2. Provide a summary of the main points of the initial response to which you are responding; and,
3. Write your personal response to your colleague’s initial response.

Follow the above format for two (2) different peers for each assigned reading.

To receive full credit, your response to a peer must identify the peer to whom you are responding, summarize the main points of the response to which you are responding, and demonstrate thoughtful reflection. Responses to a peer’s initial response to the reading that do not identify the peer to whom you are responding, does not offer a brief summary of the main points of the initial response, and/or does not demonstrate thoughtful reflection on the peer’s initial response will not receive full credit.

For a detailed list of due dates and times for “Response to Peers” see the Course Schedule in this syllabus.

Since 20 points will be given for each initial response and 10 points for two peer responses for each reading assignment, a total of 40 points will be reflected in the BlackBoard grade book for each reading assignment that meets the above criteria.

4. Journal Article Reviews (50 points possible):
This assignment is due with your presentation. Educational journals are important tools for the on-going professional development of teachers. Using the form provided, complete a review of one article found either in the Bell Library or online through a reputable online journal and/or association/organization. The article must:

#1: discuss your specifically assigned disability; and
#2: must be different from your assigned partner’s article.

5. **Disability Research (100 points possible: 40 pts. brochure; 40 pts. presentation; 20 pts peer evaluation):**

You and a partner will research a specific disability in four major areas: Definition, Symptoms/Characteristics; Teaching Strategies that address the Disability; and (5) Informative Websites. A 20-minute presentation will be given by you and your partner informing the class of the disability along with creatively designed pamphlet discussing the disability in the four major areas.

6. **Classroom Observations (50 points each, 100 points possible):**

Two observations in special education classrooms are required at the site of your field-based teaching assignment or in grade(s) that match your appropriate level of certification. Observation forms will be provided.

7. **Instructional Modifications Interview (50 points each, 100 points possible):**

Students with special learning needs will, to varying degrees, require modifications or adaptations of instruction within the regular classroom. Interview a regular general education teacher, in grade(s) that match your appropriate level of certification, who modifies instruction for (2) identified special education students. Using the forms provided complete this instructional modification assignment for these two different students based on your interview with the teacher.

8. **Exam One (100 points possible)**

The exam will include multiple choice questions and short answer questions taken from the course texts.

9. **Case Study Journal (100 points possible):**

Select a student with special learning needs in your class to observe closely over the course of the semester. Guidelines for Case Study and Report will be provided. The case study documentation will occur as discussed in class.

10. **50 Strategies for Teaching ELL (50 points possible):**

Presentations of a strategy will be presented to the class. Presentations must include visuals describing the strategy and an activity for the class to participate in/with that applies the strategy.

11. **Exam Two (100 points possible)**

The exam will include multiple choice questions and short answer questions taken from the course texts

### IX. Class Policies

- **Written Work in EDCI 4321 - 4324**

  All written work in EDCI 4321 - 4324 must be in 10- or 12-point font, double spaced, with absolute minimum surface errors (spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.) and must follow accepted styles and rules of standard written English. If you want/need help with your academic writing, please contact the TAMCC writing center.

  All written work submitted in hard-copy form must be stapled (if more than one page) and paginated.

- **Submission of Late Work**

  Assignments submitted 24 hours after the due date will be accepted for a maximum of 50% credit. Any assignment submitted beyond 24 hours from the date it was due will not be accepted. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

- **Class Attendance and Participation**

  The degree to which you attend and participate in all of the learning activities in EDCI 4321 - 4324 is a direct indicator of your commitment to the teaching profession and as such is noted by the instructor. The
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi Student Handbook and Code of Conduct 2010-2011 includes the following policy regarding class attendance:

Students are held accountable for class attendance and are advised that excessive absences may adversely affect their grades. Every instructor should clearly explain the policy on class attendance at the beginning of each course. If students are absent from class on approved university business (e.g., intercollegiate athletics competition/travel, field trips, student research conferences, Board of Regents meetings), faculty members should count [the absence] as an excused absence and should not penalize the student for it. Students [absent from a scheduled class meeting because of approved university business] should be allowed to make up any required course work in advance or after return to campus. Students are responsible for informing instructors about the [approved university absence] in advance, so instructors can plan accordingly. If [students] have any doubt as to whether the activity in question is considered official university business, [students] should contact the Provost’s Office [for clarification].

Students in EDCI 4321 - 4324 are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings on time unless they are on approved university business as described above. Each unexcused absence from a scheduled class meeting will reduce your final course grade by one letter grade. Two, unexcused, late arrivals will reduce your final course grade by one letter grade. Two or more unexcused absences or four unexcused tardies will place you in jeopardy of failing this course.

- **Academic Honesty**
  University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to a penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one's own work.) [http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~students/JAffairs/ja_hndbk_academic_info.htm](http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~students/JAffairs/ja_hndbk_academic_info.htm)

- **Classroom Conduct**
  Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Faculty has the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. Disruptive students in the academic setting hinder the educational process. Disruption, as applied to the academic setting, means behavior that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with normal academic functions. Examples include, but are not limited to, persistently speaking without being recognized or interrupting other speakers, behavior which distracts the class from the subject matter or discussion, or in extreme cases, physical threats, harassing behavior or personal insults, or refusal to comply with faculty direction. Students are expected to refrain from disruptive behavior at all times. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to disciplinary action. [http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~students/JAffairs/ja_hndbk_rules_n_regulations.htm](http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~students/JAffairs/ja_hndbk_rules_n_regulations.htm)

- **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 believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in Driftwood 101.” [http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu](http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu)

The Texas A & M University – Corpus Christi’s College of Education does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the recruitment and admission of students, the recruitment and employment of faculty and staff, and the operation of any of its programs and activities, as specified by federal laws and regulations. The student has the responsibility of informing the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications to avoid discrimination.

If you are a returning veteran and experience cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
• **Statement of Civility**  
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of gender, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, age, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.  
http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~students/JAffairs/ja_hndbk_academic_info.htm

• **Grade Appeals**  
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

X. **Textbook(s)**  
The following textbooks are required for EDCI 4321 – 4324:

Custom Library Request for Teaching Special Students.  
ISBN: 0-558-96529-6

ISBN: 1-929229-48-8. **This text will be a part of the Final Exam.**

Additional Readings for EDCI 4321 - 4324
Other readings may be assigned by the instructor.