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. Student 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; Child Development; Learning Theories)

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; Learning Theories)

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; Pedagogy/Instructional Strategies)

5. Investigate and broaden knowledge of disabilities associated with special education students. (TExES Competencies: 001, 002) (State Proficiencies: 1, 3) (Curricular Topic: Special Populations, TEKS Organization, Structure, & Skills; State Assessment of Students)
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; Differentiated Instruction, Instructional Technology; Parent Conferences/Communication)

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; Motivation; Pedagogy/Instructional Strategies; Classroom Management)

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; Curriculum Development & Lesson Planning)

VI. Course Topics:

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.
VIII. Assignments: Participation

1. **Class Attendance and Participation** - Class attendance and participation is a reflection of a student teacher’s commitment to their preparation and professionalism for teaching.

   The *Student Handbook and Code of Conduct 2011-2012* 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 4321/2/3/4 are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings on time unless they are on approved university business as described above. However, you will be allowed ONE absence each semester. After that, 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. It is the student’s responsibility to sign in every class meeting on the attendance sheet.

   **Notification of an absence by email, phone call, etc. does not constitute a class attendance waiver.**

2. **Required Reading Assignments and Discussion Board Responses**

   Students will be expected to stay on top of ALL READING MATERIAL AS ASSIGNED. BLACKBOARD will have a Discussion Board Response due which will require the student to respond to the professor’s prompt and THEN respond to 2 additional students’ responses by a given timeframe (Timeframe will be made available in class to students and on BLACKBOARD calendar). How prepared you are in class for discussion will help professor determine if reading has been kept up with.

   Your discussion board responses should be **at least 250 words** that demonstrate **serious thinking** about the reading and the question(s) posed. 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.

   Use the following format in responding to a peer’s initial response to the reading (at least 75 words each):

   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.

   **NOTE:** When submitting writing to Blackboard, please copy and paste text from your word processor to Blackboard. Using the word processor this way allows you to take advantage of spell-check, save, and other features that are not available in Blackboard.

   For a detailed list of due dates and times for “Discussion Board Responses” see the Course Calendar posted on Blackboard. **300 points possible**
Field Experiences:

A. Classroom observations:
   Two observations in a special education classroom 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. 55 points possible for each. 110 points possible.

B. Instructional Modification Interview:
   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 an identified special education student. Using the forms provided complete this instructional modification assignment for the student based on your interview with the teacher. 50 points possible.

C. Case Study Journal:
   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. 100 points possible.

3. Exams

A. Chapter Quizzes:
   4 quizzes will be given via Blackboard over the assigned reading material. The quiz will include a combination of objective items for a grade. The quiz will be online through Blackboard. No make-ups will be allowed for the quiz. There are no exceptions to this statement. Please refrain from emailing me about any exceptions. 35 points each, 140 points possible.

B. Mid-Course Exam
   The exam will include a combination of objective and short essay items. The exam will include questions regarding information from required readings and class lecture/discussion as determined in class. The exam will be online through Blackboard: 100 points possible.

C. Final Exam
   The exam will include a combination of objective and short essay items. The exam will include questions regarding information from required readings and class lecture/discussions. Completed on Blackboard. 100 points possible.

4. Other Assignments

A. Disability Research:
   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 10-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. A rubric will be provided for planning purposes. If a student misses this presentation with an excused absence, an independent research assignment will be assigned instead. 100 points possible.
Course Requirement / Assignment | Points
--- | ---
1. Participation: Discussion Board Responses | 300
   a. Initial/Peer Responses to Reading | 300

2. Field Experiences | 260
   a. Classroom Observations 2 @55 points each | 110
   b. Modifications Interview | 50
   c. Case Study Journal/Report | 100

3. Exams | 340
   a. Chapter Quizzes(4@ 35 pts.each) | 140
   b. Mid-Course Exam | 100
   c. Final Exam | 100

4. Other Assignments | 100
   a. Disability Research | 100

Total | 1000 points

IX. Course Schedule and Policies

Week 1 | Syllabus/Group formation/assignment overview/ intro activities
Week 2 | Holiday
Week 3 | Full inclusion, IDEA, Least Restrictive Environment
Week 4 | Pre-referral Interventions/ Response to Interventions
Week 5 | Identification, IEP Team, Types of Services

**Classroom Observation Due**

Week 6 | Students with Disabilities, Types of Special Needs, Modifications
Week 7 | Adapting Instruction/ Differentiated Instruction
Week 8 | Midterm Exam
Week 9 | Encouraging Positive Classroom Behavior/Behavior Contracting

**Instructional Modification Due**

Week 10 | Due Process: Guilty or Not Guilty Role Play
Week 11 | Teaching Gifted and Talented Students
Week 12 | Diversity and Multicultural Education Approach
Week 13 | Teaching English Learners/Sheltered Instruction
Week 14 | Assistive Technology, Section 504, Case Study Self-Reflection

**Case Study Due**

Week 15 | Students at risk for school failure/ STARR Accommodations
Week 16 | Final Exam –TBA on Blackboard

Even though I reserve the right to alter this syllabus, assignments, and due dates, I will provide you with ample notification of any changes. To see a list of assigned readings, other assignments, and due dates, please check Blackboard’s course calendar.
**Attendance:**

The Student Handbook and Code of Conduct 2011-2012 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 4321/2/3/4 are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings on time unless they are on approved university business as described above. However, you will be allowed one absence each semester. After that, **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. It is the student’s responsibility to sign in every class meeting on the attendance sheet.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS.** Late work will be accepted at the discretion of the site professor on a case-by-case basis. Assignments submitted up to one week past the due date would be accepted for a maximum of 50% credit. You should understand that I will **not accept** technology excuses. If your computer is not working or an Internet connection is unavailable, it is your responsibility to find an alternative method for submitting work. You may always use my personal email provided.

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS.** All written work in EDCI 3311 must be in 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.

**CELL PHONES:** To receive the full benefit from this course, the use of electronic devices for unrelated activities (i.e. text messaging, instant messaging, internet surfing, etc) is **prohibited.** If I suspect improper use of your electronic device, I will ask you to leave. If this problem persists, I will have you removed from the class.

**ONLINE CLASS CONDUCT:** The study of education in America allows us a dialogue and thus, an exchange of ideas and mores that may differ than the individual’s own. I provide and expect respect, courtesy, and open-mindedness among all of us. Students, therefore, should exhibit mature online behavior. Online classroom responses should not be considered “chat room” activities. A classroom level of formality should be maintained in all email and discussion board communication. Students should refrain from text messaging style of writing or “chat speak”. While the nature of the course requires the expression of divergent opinions, discrimination, abuse, harassment, or disorderly conduct in any form that inhibits or interferes with my educational responsibility to my students will not be tolerated in the classroom or online.
X. TEXTBOOK:


XII. 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 Rule 13.02.99.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.

XIII. 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

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.

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

CLASSROOM CONDUCT: Faculty 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

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