Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi  
College of Education  
SPED 6315 – Individuals with Exceptionalities  
Fall 2012 Course Syllabus 

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OFFICE HOURS: Mon., Tues., & Weds., 12:00-2:00pm or by appointment  
COURSE NUMBER: SPED 6315  
COURSE NAME: Individuals with Exceptionalities  
CREDIT: 3 Hours

This course meets:

I. Course Description  
Basic information and skills for working with exceptional individuals in a variety of settings; current trends, issues, and research pertaining to exceptional persons.

II. Rationale  
This course is designed to provide students with background information on characteristics and needs of individuals with disabilities.

III. State Adopted Proficiencies for Teachers  
The state adopted proficiencies covered in this course include the following:  
1. Learner-Centered Knowledge. The teacher possesses and draws a rich knowledge base of content, pedagogy, and technology to provide relevant and meaningful learning experiences for all students.  
2. Equity in Excellence for All Learners. The teacher responds appropriately to diverse groups of learners. The administrator promotes equity in excellence for all by acknowledging, respecting, and responding to diversity among students and staff while building on shared values and other similarities that bond all people.

IV. TExES Competencies and CEC National Standards  
TExES Competencies  
DOMAIN I – UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND EVALUATING THEIR NEEDS  

Competency 001: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities.

DOMAIN II – PROMOTING STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Competency 003: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of procedures for planning instruction for individuals with disabilities.

Competency 005: The special education teacher knows how to promote students’ educational performance in all content areas by facilitating their achievement in a variety of settings and situations.

Competency 007: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of transition issues and procedures across the life span.

DOMAIN III – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Competency 006: The educational diagnostician understands appropriate curricula and instructional strategies for students with disabilities.

DOMAIN IV – FOUNDATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Competency 010: The special education teacher understands the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education.

Competency 011: The special education teacher applies knowledge of professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.

The Special Education Field 153 Educational Diagnostician TExES program competencies covered in this course:

**CEC National Standards**

TAMUCC Special Education Program is aligned with the National Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards.

Council for Exceptional Children: Initial Level Content Standards
Beginning special educators demonstrate their mastery of the following standards:

Initial Content Standard 1: Foundations
Special educators understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on:

- philosophies and evidence-based principles and theories
- relevant laws and policies
- diverse and historical points of view
- human issues that influence the field and professional practice
- issues of human diversity that can impact families, cultures, and schools
- relationships of organizations of special education to the organizations and functions of schools, school systems, and other agencies

**Initial Content Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners**

**Special educators:**
- know and demonstrate respect for their students first as unique human beings
- understand the similarities and differences in human development
- understand how exceptional conditions can interact with the domains of human development
- use this knowledge to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individuals with exceptional learning needs

**Initial Content Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences**

**Special educators:**
- know and understand the effects that an exceptional condition can have on an individual’s learning in school and throughout life
- utilize active and resourceful means in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual’s exceptional condition
- understand learning differences provide the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction

**Initial Content Standard 4: Instructional Strategies**

**Special educators:**
- possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to individualize instruction for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- select, adapt, and use these instructional strategies to promote positive learning results in general and special curricula
- modify learning environments appropriately for individuals with exceptional learning needs
- enhance the learning of critical thinking, problem-solving, and performance skills of individuals with exceptional learning needs
- promote increased student’ self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem
- emphasize the development, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the life span.

**Initial Content Standard 5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions**

**Special educators actively:**
- create learning environments for individuals with exceptional learning needs
• foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement
• foster environments in which diversity is valued
• shape environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy
• help their general education colleagues integrate individuals with exceptional learning needs in general education environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions
• use direct motivational and instructional interventions
• teach students to respond effectively to current expectations
• intervene with individuals with exceptional learning needs in crisis
• coordinate all these efforts and provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.

Initial Content Standard 6: Language
Special educators:

• understand typical and atypical language development
• use individualized strategies to enhance language development and teach communication skills
• are familiar with augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies to support and enhance communication
• match communication methods to an individual’s language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences
• provide effective language models and use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with exceptional learning needs whose primary language is not English.

Initial Content Standard 7: Instructional Planning
Individualized decision-making and instruction is at the center of special education practice. Special educators:

• develop long-range individualized instructional plans anchored in both general and special education curricula
• systematically translate these individualized plans into carefully selected shorter-range goals and objectives taking into consideration an individual’s abilities and needs, the learning environment, and a myriad of cultural and linguistic factors
• emphasize explicit modeling and efficient guided practice to assure acquisition and fluency through maintenance and generalization.
• modify instructional plans based on ongoing analysis of the individual’s learning progress
• facilitate instructional planning in a collaborative context
• develop a variety of individualized transition plans from preschool to a variety of postsecondary work and learning contexts
• use appropriate technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction

Initial Content Standard 8: Assessment
Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of special educators and special educators use multiple types of assessment information for a variety of educational decisions. Special educators use the results of assessments:

• to help identify exceptional learning needs and to develop and implement individualized instructional programs
• to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress

Special educators understand:
• legal policies and ethical principles of measurement
• measurement theory and practices
• appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments

Special educators collaborate with families and other colleagues to:
• assure nonbiased, meaningful assessments and decision-making
• conduct formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement and environments
• identify supports and adaptations required for individuals
• regularly monitor the progress of individuals
• use appropriate technologies to support their assessments.

Initial Content Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice
Special educators are guided by the profession’s ethical and professional practice standards to:
• to practice ongoing attention to legal matters along with serious professional and ethical considerations

Special educators view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice to reflect current evidence-based best practices.
Initial Content Standard 10: Collaboration
Special educators routinely and effectively collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways and promote and advocate the learning and well-being of individuals with exceptional learning needs across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences.

V. Student Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives

Student Learning Outcomes
Students in this graduate program will:

- demonstrate knowledge of individuals with disabilities; (SPED 5315, SPED 5320, and SPED 5397 are linked to this student learning outcome.)
- evaluate the needs of individuals with disabilities; (SPED 5386 and SPED 5387 are linked to this student learning outcome.)
- demonstrate knowledge of fostering learning and development for individuals with disabilities; (SPED 5320, SPED 5385, SPED 5386, SPED 5387, and SPED 5397 are linked to this student learning outcome.)
- demonstrate knowledge of foundations of special education and professional roles and responsibilities of the special education educator; (SPED 5385, SPED 5386, SPED 5387, SPED 5388, and SPED 5397 are linked to this student learning outcome.)
- develop a behavior intervention/change plan. (SPED 5380 is linked to this student learning outcome.)

Course Objectives
This course is designed to enable students to:

This course is designed to enable students to:

- Recognizes the historical foundations of special education, major contributors to the literature, major legislation relevant to knowledge and practice in the education of individuals with disabilities, and current issues and trends in special education (IV 010 i)
- Recognizes various perspectives regarding definitions and etiologies of disabilities (IV 010 iv)
- Applies knowledge of ethical concerns related to assessment and evaluation, including legal provisions, regulations, and guidelines regarding unbiased evaluation and the use of psychometric instruments and instructional assessment measures with individuals with disabilities (I 002 i)
- Applies current educational terminology and definitions regarding individuals with disabilities, including professionally accepted classification systems and current incidence and prevalence figures (IV 010 iii)
• Analyzes issues relating to definition and identification procedures for individuals with disabilities, including individuals from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (IV 010 iv)
• Applies knowledge of the continuum of placement and services for individuals with disabilities (IV 010 viii)
• Recognizes the effects of cultural and environmental influences on the child and family (I 001 v)
• Analyzes cultural factors and perspectives that affect relationships among students, parents/guardians, schools, and communities with regard to providing instruction for individuals with disabilities (II 005 i)
• Identifies factors that influence the overrepresentation of culturally and/or linguistically diverse students in programs for individuals with disabilities (IV 010 v)
• Recognizes the collaborative roles of students, parents/guardians, teachers and other school and community personnel in planning and implementing an individualized program, and applies effective strategies for working collaboratively in various contexts (IV 012 i)
• Applies knowledge of factors that promote effective communication and collaboration with students, parents/guardians, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school and community personnel (IV 012 ii)
• Identifies ways to foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and professionals in the school and community (IV 012 iii)
• Identifies typical concerns of families of individuals with disabilities and appropriate strategies to support families in dealing with these concerns (IV 012 iv)
• Applies knowledge of strategies for encouraging and assisting parents/guardians in their role as active participants in their children's education, and identifies procedures for planning and conducting collaborative conferences with parents/guardians (IV 012 v)
• Recognizes characteristics of individuals with different types of disabilities, including individuals with different levels of severity and multiple disabilities across eligibility categories, and analyzes the impact of various disabilities on learning and experience (I 001 i)
• Identifies the different ways that students with and without disabilities learn (I 001 iv)
• Identifies ways in which technology can assist in managing the teaching and learning environment to meet the needs of individual students (II 004 v)
• Recognizes normal, delayed, and disordered communication patterns, including nonsymbolic communication, and the impact of language development on the academic and social skills of individuals with disabilities (I 001 vii)
• Identifies ways in which technology can assist in managing the teaching and learning environment to meet the needs of individual students (II 004 v)
• Identifies ways in which physical and health impairments relate to development and behavior, and knows the etiologies and effects of sensory disabilities and other conditions affecting individuals with disabilities (I 001 ix)
• Recognizes the etiologies and effects of sensory disabilities affecting individuals with disabilities (I 001 ix, partial)
VI. Course Topics
- Overview of Special Education
- Inclusion and Accessing General Education
- Multicultural, Bilingual and Diverse Schools
- Partnerships with Families
- High Incidence Disabilities
- Low Incidence Disabilities
- Gifted/Talented Education

VII. Instructional Methods and Activities
- Traditional Experiences (i.e., lecture, discussion, multimedia presentations)
- Clinical Experiences (i.e., cooperative groups, student presentations, value clarification)

VIII. Evaluation and Grade Assignment
A total of 100 points can be earned in this course.

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59% or lower constitutes an F.

The major requirements of this course include the following assignments:

1. Research Project
2. Two Case Scenarios
3. Two Exams
4. Course Participation

Research Projects (20 pts.)
This is an individual assignment. Each student will choose a disability-related topic to explore. The topics may range from the IDEA disability categories (such as Other Health Impairments), specific disabilities (such as Rett’s Syndrome), legal issue, or other pertinent topics. All topics must receive instructor approval. Papers are to be approximately 8-10 pages in length (not including references), should follow the most recent APA guidelines, and should have no less than six journal references. Except for seminal work, journal references should be within the last five years. I suggest choosing a topic that expands your current research interests.
Case Scenarios (20 pts.)
In addition to the Turnbull et al. text, you are required to read Legal Aspects of Special Education (Hulett, 2009). You will be assigned two case scenarios to complete. Each assignment must be addressed thoroughly and professionally. Do not rely on your background or experience to address the applications. You must substantiate your opinions based on law (cite the text or law). Each scenario is worth 10pts.

Exam (50 pts.)
There are two scheduled exams. Each exam is worth 25 points. Your Reading Guides will serve as your study guide.

Course Participation (10 pts.)
Each student is expected to participate in course discussions and activities and to complete all assignments as directed. Students are expected to be respectful and refrain from private conversations. Refer to Course Policies for additional information.

Each student is expected to come to class prepared. All readings/assignments are to be completed and cell phones are to be silenced. No reading or composing texts. No laptops. If you need to use a laptop for notetaking, please see the instructor.

Due to the abbreviated nature of our class, NO late assignments will be accepted – unless under extraordinary circumstances.

During class sessions, students will be expected to use language consistent with IDEA (emphasizing “person-first” language). Person first language is also to be used in all assignments for this course. Not using the correct terminology will affect your participation/assignment grade.

Optional Assignment: Three Reading Guides
The text contains a great deal of critical information. To assist you in engaging in this information, you can elect to complete questions on each chapter. The text consists of 16 chapters. Fifteen (15) of those chapters (1-15) are divided into three Reading Guides (RG). I STRONGLY encourage you to complete these reading guides as you read each chapter – this will support your learning of the material and aid in learning retention. You may choose to work together to complete these guides. RGs will only be reviewed on the scheduled date. You MUST have your responses (in writing) in order to participate in the group review. On your reading guide, I strongly suggest you write down the page number of the correct answer for each item. These reading guides ARE your study guides for your two exams.

Our course is divided into four Reading Guides (RG):
- RG 1 Foundational Aspects of Special Education Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4
- RG 2 High-Incidence Disabilities Ch. 5, 6, 7, 8
- RG 3 Severe and Multiple Disabilities Ch. 9, 10, 11, 12
- RG 4 Sensory Disabilities Ch. 13, 14, 15
IX. Course Schedule and Policies

Tentative Course Schedule  See attached.

Attendance Policy
Attendance is expected. Due to the nature of this course, participation is critical. Please arrive to class on time and be prepared to stay until the class is dismissed. **Arriving late or leaving early twice during our course (any combination), will count as an absence. Missing a class may affect your final grade.** If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to check in with a classmate for notes, materials and other information you have missed. Please note: There are no extra credit opportunities in this class.

Excused absences are limited to participation in a TAMUCC sanctioned event or participation in a religious holy day as outlined in the University catalog. Any assignment, quiz, or test missed due to a TAMUCC sanctioned event must be completed prior to the absence.

Student Conduct
Professional behavior is expected of all students. Inappropriate class conduct (cursing, disruption, sidebar conversations, etc.) may result in a reduced final grade or failure of the course. All cell phones will be turned off or to the inaudible mode during class. Do not answer a call during class. Do not read or compose texts during class. Do not leave the classroom to answer a call, unless you anticipate an emergency call and warn me prior to class.

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 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.)

Disciplinary action for academic misconduct is the responsibility of the faculty member assigned to the course. The faculty member is charged with assessing the gravity of any case of academic dishonesty, and with giving sanction to any student involved. Penalties that may be applied to individual cases of academic dishonesty include one or more of the following:

1. Written reprimand;
2. Requirement to re-do work in question;
3. Requirement to submit additional work;
4. Lowering of grade on work in question;
5. Assigning grade of “F” to work in question;
6. Assigning grade of “F” for course;
7. Recommendation for more severe consequences.

If the faculty member determines that assigning a grade of “F” to the course is the appropriate penalty and this disciplinary action occurs prior to the deadline for dropping courses, the student forfeits his/her right to drop the course in question.
The faculty member may file a record of cases of academic dishonesty, including a description of the disciplinary action taken, along with any materials involved, with his or her college dean and the Office of Student Affairs. The office of the academic dean of the college in which the offense took place will maintain records of all cases of academic dishonesty reported for a period of not more than two years.

X. Textbook
Required:


A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process (March 2010) available on Texas Education Agency website. (download free)

XI: Bibliography
The knowledge base that support course content and procedures include, but is not limited to, the following:


The following professional organizations and their respective publications are important resources for specialists in the disability field:

Council for Exceptional Children:
- Division for Physical and Health Disabilities
- Council of Administrators of Special Education
- Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
- Division on Developmental Disabilities
- Division for Communicative Disabilities and Deafness
- Division for Learning Disabilities
- Division on Visual Impairments
- The Association for the Gifted

Teacher Education Division
- Division for Early Childhood
- Council for Educational Diagnostic Services
- Technology and Media Division
- Division on Career Development and Transition
- Division for Research
- Division for Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners

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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 Accommodations
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 disability. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in CCH 117.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office at (361) 825-5816 in CCH 117.
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COURSE:  SPED 6315 Individuals with Exceptionalities

This course meets:  .

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