I. Course Description
This course introduces students to the field of low-incidence disabilities. Students will explore foundational concepts including: definitions and etiology, family and professional partnerships, special education law, and standards based IEPs.

II. Rationale
This introductory course is designed to provide educational professionals with basic knowledge of the field of low-incidence disabilities.

III. State Adopted Proficiencies for Teachers
The state adopted proficiencies covered in this course include the following:
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
A. The Generic Special Education EC-12 Certification (Field 161) TExES program competencies covered in this course include the following:

DOMAIN I – UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND EVALUATING THEIR NEEDS

   Competency 002: The special education teacher understands formal and informal assessment and evaluation procedures and knows how to evaluate student competencies to make instructional decisions.
DOMAIN II – PROMOTING STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Competency 004: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of procedures for managing the teaching and learning environment, including procedures related to the use of assistive technology.

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 006: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of issues and procedures for teaching appropriate behavior and social skills.

DOMAIN IV – FOUNDATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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. Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes
Course Objectives
This course is designed to enable students to:
- Discuss different ways students learn (I, 001 iv)
- Discuss 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)
- Identify appropriate evaluation strategies for individual students with diverse characteristics and needs (I, 002, iii)
- Recognize the reciprocal nature of assessment and instruction; applies skills for developing individualized assessment strategies to evaluate the results of instruction; and knows how to use assessment and evaluation results to design, monitor, and modify instruction for individuals with disabilities. (I, 002, viii)
- Discuss the role of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in developing Individual Education Programs for students with disabilities, and applies skills for sequencing, implementing, and evaluation individual learning objectives. (II, 003, iii)
- Prepare, adapt, and organize materials to implement developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate lesson plans based on Individual Education Program objectives. (II, 003, v)
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to design, structure, and manage daily routines, including transition time, for students in a variety of educational settings, and applies procedures for monitoring behavior changes across activities and settings. (II, 004, iii)
- Identify ways in which technology can assist in managing the teaching and learning environment to meet the needs of individual students. (II, 004, v)
- Discuss how to serve as a resource person for families, general education teachers, administrators, and other personnel in recognizing the characteristics of and meeting the needs of individuals with learning differences in the general education classroom (II, 005, ii)
- Demonstrate instructional, compensatory, enrichment, and remedial methods, techniques, and curriculum materials, and applies strategies for modifying instruction based on the differing learning styles and needs of students. (II, 005, iv)
- Apply knowledge of techniques for motivating students, including the effects of high teacher expectations on student motivation. (II, 005, v)
- Demonstrate knowledge of life-skills and self-help curricula and strategies for providing students with life-skills instruction relevant to independent or assisted living and employment. (II, 005, vi)
- Develop and/or select social skills and behavioral curricula and strategies that promote socially appropriate behavior, and prepare individuals to live cooperatively and productively in society. (II, 006, v)
- Incorporate social skills instruction across settings and curricula and know how to design, implement, and evaluation instructional programs that enhance an individual’s social participation in family, school, and community activities. (II, 006, vi)
- Implement strategies for modifying learning environments to promote appropriate behaviors. (II, 006, viii)
- Recognize the impact of language on an individual’s behavior and learning and know how the communication skills of nonspeaking/nonverbal individuals affect their behavior. (II, 006, ix)
• Apply knowledge of developmental processes associated with communication systems, including emergent and preliteracy skills, and know how to provide a variety of opportunities for students with disabilities to learn communication skills. (III, 008, i)

Student Learning Outcomes
Students in this graduate program will:

• demonstrate knowledge of individuals with disabilities; (SPED 5315, SPED 5320, SPED 5340, and SPED 5397 are linked to this student learning outcome.)

• evaluate the needs of individuals with disabilities; (SPED 5340, 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 5340, SPED 5385, SPED 5386, SPED 5387, 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.)

VI. Course Topics
• Historical Overview
• Definitions and Etiologies
• Special Education Law
• Family and Professional Partnerships
• Issues of Culture and Language
• Components of Standards-based IEPs
• Standards-based Instructional Activities
• Communication
• Health and Medical Needs
• Personal Care Needs
• Sensory and Motor systems
• Assistive Technology
VII. Instructional Methods and Activities

- Traditional Experiences (i.e., lecture, discussion, guest speakers, multimedia presentations, web enhanced activities)
- Clinical Experiences (i.e., cooperative groups, student presentations, student demonstrations, value clarification, role play)

VIII. Evaluation and Grade Assignment

A total of 150 points can be earned in this course.

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<th>Score Range</th>
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<td>135 – 150</td>
<td>90 – 100%</td>
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<td>119 – 134</td>
<td>80 – 89%</td>
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59% or lower constitutes an F.

The major requirements of this course include the following assignments:

1. Two Quizzes, One Exam
2. Two Article Reviews
3. Reflection Questions
4. Book Review
5. Group Project
6. Professional Growth Journal

**Exam & Quizzes (40 pts.):** This class contains two quizzes (10 pts. each) and one exam (20pts).

**Two Article Reviews (30 pts.):** Students will review two journal articles (from a specific journal list) focused on evidence-based practices for students with severe disabilities. Each review must be written in the current APA style. Each article review is worth 15 pts. Reviews will be submitted on Bb.

**Reflection Questions (20 pts.):** The assigned text contains information that challenges traditional educational views of students with severe disabilities. To assist student interaction
with the material, students are assigned a reflection question to coincide with each chapter. Questions are due the same day the chapter reading is due. All work will be submitted on Bb.

**Book Review (15 pts.):** Our class will read *Carly’s Voice*, a story of a girl growing up with autism. The book is written by Carly and her father. Students will read the book and write a review of the book for both families and practitioners. Remember, all work must be written in people-first language.

**Group Project (20 pts):** Students will work together in small groups to develop and present a professional project to the class. The project must address a need for students with low-incidence disabilities. Project details will be developed and discussed in class.

**Professional Growth Journal (15 pts.):** Students will keep an online journal throughout the class. This journal is only read by the instructor and is a dialogue between student and instructor. Students will be asked to enter three journal entries – given prompts – throughout the semester.

**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 and put away.

Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval from the instructor. Late assignments, if accepted, must be received within one week of the assigned due date. Late assignments will incur an automatic point deduction of one letter grade.

During interactions (online and face to face), students are 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.

**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. You will need to log onto Bb as we will using the site to share work, ideas, and resources. 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.** 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.

**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 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](http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~students/JAffairs/ja_hndbk_academic_info.htm)

**Statement of Academic Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of e-mail and/or Blackboard. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (e.g., e-mails, Blackboard, websites) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. Students need to make certain that the course instructor has both a primary and secondary means of contacting each student.

**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 punishment.
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. Textbooks**

**Required:**


Additional online readings will be assigned.

**XII: Bibliography**

The knowledge base that supports course content and procedures includes, but is not limited to, the following:


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

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

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 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 for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
PROFESSOR: Dr. Karen McCaleb, FC 204A, Office Phone 361-825-2449,
Fax 361-825-6076
EMAIL: karen.mccaleb@tamucc.edu
OFFICE HOURS: M&T 1-3pm or by appointment
COURSE: SPED 5319.B01 Introduction to Low-Incidence Disabilities

This is a blended class.
Our course meets on Wednesday, 4:20-6:50.

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