University of St. Thomas
School of Education

EDUC 5345 - Spring 2015 (ECB)
Evidence Based Practices for Students with Mild Disabilities
March 10 – May 5, 2015
Tuesdays, 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

SYLLABUS

LOCATION: Houston Community College Northwest-Spring Branch Campus
1010 W. Sam Houston Parkway
Houston, TX 77043
Room 611

INSTRUCTOR: Valerie Morgan, Ph.D., LSSP
PHONE: 281-615-7707
E-MAIL: morganv@stthom.edu
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment via phone or email

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS


RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to develop an awareness of different theoretical approaches to the field of learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and related mild disabilities. Major ideas include:

- Special Education law/IDEA
- The IEP process
- Biological/ neurological factors related to etiology of learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities
- Underlying theories of learning
- Characteristics and needs of the populations
- Diagnostic procedures including informal assessment methods
- Instructional strategies
- Educational/psychosocial implications
- Types, levels, and implementation of assistive technologies
- Review of recent literature
- Transition practices
- Collaboration in schools

COURSE OBJECTIVES/STUDENT COMPETENCIES
By completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify characteristics of children with learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and other related mild disabilities.
2. Analyze approaches and programs as to their theoretical components.
3. Apply knowledge of basic terminology used in assessment and evaluation, the uses and limitations of various types of instruments and techniques.
5. Discuss implications of current research in the area of mild disabilities, including students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
6. Discriminate between various theoretical approaches used in the instruction of children with disabilities.
7. Design a program to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities using knowledge of models, theories and philosophies that provide a basis for special education practice.
8. Communicate with representatives from fields related to the education of children with disabilities (e.g., medicine, psychology).
9. Understand the use of informal tests, checklists, inventories with a student with mild disabilities.
STATE AND NATIONAL STANDARDS GUIDING THIS COURSE
This course is aligned to the Texas Administrative Code (TAC)/State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Educational Diagnostician Standards as well as the National Council for Exceptional Children Advanced Standards and Advanced Knowledge and Skills Sets for Special Education Diagnostic Specialists. Below are the links to those standards.

Link to Texas Educational Diagnostician Standards:
- 19 TAC §239.83

Link to National CEC Advanced Standards for Special Education Diagnostic Specialists:

SOCIAL JUSTICE TENETS
The School of Education at University of St. Thomas uses three (3) of the social justice teachings of the Catholic Church to drive instruction and decision making.
- **Subsidiarity**: Educational institutions should be organized and governed as much as possible by the community being served; education should only be controlled at higher levels of society when it cannot be done effectively locally.
- **Dignity and rights of children**: Children possess full human dignity and are bearers of rights which should be recognized and upheld in the educational process.
- **People have a right to an education**: All people have a responsibility, for the good of society, to contribute to and foster education.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS ( ) = Percent of Final Grade

*(15%) Attendance and Participation*
Students are expected to actively participate in a professional manner in in-class activities and in on-line activities to demonstrate that the student has completed assignments (readings, projects, class preparation).
Expected participation includes:
- Attending class weekly
- Actively participating in in-class activities and discussions
- Reading Blackboard Announcements and/or emails sent from instructor
- Reviewing readings of course documents and links posted on Blackboard at [http://www.stthom.edu](http://www.stthom.edu)
Completing assigned readings prior to class

Grading Guidelines for Attendance and Participation:
Attendance/In-Class Participation is worth approximately 2 points per class. The Attendance/Participation grade is based solely on actual attendance and participation in class. Absences (even for illness or school events, with rare exceptions), while understandable and sometimes unavoidable, are not ‘excused’ as far as earning attendance/participation credit goes. As a rule, a graduated scale for absence penalties will be applied as follows: 1 absence=1 point penalty; 2 absences=2 point penalty per absence (4 points total); 3 absences=3 point penalty per absence (9 points total), etc.

(20%) Research Paper (due in class April 21)
You will individually develop a paper of 4 – 7 pages (minimum 1000 words, excluding reference page) focusing on evidence-based educational interventions for students with mild disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism, etc.). Note that your paper needs to focus on evidence-based practices/interventions/strategies (e.g., computer assisted instruction in reading; direct instruction; video-modeling interventions, etc.) and not be program-specific. For example, a paper solely discussing the Wilson Reading System would not be appropriate; however, a paper on multisensory methods for teaching reading to students with reading disabilities would be appropriate. You may choose to discuss a single category of intervention (e.g., computer assisted instruction in reading) or multiple strategies within a specific topic (e.g., reading comprehension strategies for students with learning disabilities).

Requirements:
• The paper must be written in APA style and contain at least 6 references contain information drawn from at least 6 separate references (i.e., source materials).
• The references can include a mixture of internet resources, books, and journals.

Sample topics:
• Computer Assisted Instruction in Reading for Students with Learning Disabilities
• Social Skills Interventions for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities
• Reading Comprehension Strategies for Students with Learning Disabilities
• Math Instruction for Students with Intellectual Disabilities
• Video Modeling Interventions for Students with Autism

The Research Paper is worth a possible 20 points.

(30%) Discussion Boards and Online Assignments
Discussion Boards and/or Online Assignments on a variety of topics will be assigned most weeks. These activities will be completed online through UST Blackboard.

**Discussion Board:** You will read and respond to the postings on the Blackboard Discussion Board. For each assigned topic/thread, you will post an original response, then respond to at least two peers’ posts. Discussion Boards are intended to be a true online discussion of class-related topics. To this end, original posts and responses should reflect your active participation in the discussion, as well as demonstrate reflective thought and understanding of the material. Posts should be as long as necessary to achieve these goals—typically a minimum of 10 lines for the original post and a minimum of 4 lines for each response to peers. To receive full credit, your posts and responses must be submitted within the stated timelines (Timelines: Original posts, must be posted Wednesday – Saturday; Responses to peers, must be posted Sunday – Tuesday at 5:00 p.m.).

Note that a minimum of 2 responses to peers should be posted during the Sunday – Tuesday window; this is to ensure that all class members have a chance to post their original posts before classmates complete their responses to peers. However, additional responses to peers may be posted at any time. Students are, in fact, encouraged to respond as many times and whenever they like to any of the posts, just as a true discussion would occur. Just be sure at least two of your responses occur during the Sunday – Tuesday timeframe.

Each Discussion Board assignment is worth a total of 3 points (1 point for each required post and response). Grading penalties for posting outside the timelines are discussed in the “Evaluation Process” section of this Syllabus.

**Online Assignments:** Directions for Online Assignments will be posted on Blackboard. You must submit your completed assignment on Blackboard through the appropriate link. Online Assignments will be posted on Mondays (by 6:00 p.m.) and are due the following Monday (no later than 11:00 p.m.). Each Online Assignment is worth 5 points. Grading for Online Assignments will be based on the following criteria:

1) **Content:** Content should address all concepts and/or questions presented in the directions. Each point should include a description of the factual/logical basis for your statement or position.

2) **References:** Your assignment should include at least 3 citations/references to the course readings by page number (e.g., Lerner & Johns, p. 84).

3) **Length:** Online Assignments should be of sufficient length to reflect clear, relevant, and thoughtful responses. (Approximately 300 – 500 words)

*(15%) Midterm Exam (Online: Week 4)*
The midterm exam will include content from the course readings, lecture, and class discussion from the first half of the class. The midterm exam will consist of items presented in a variety of formats (e.g., multiple-choice, matching) and will be administered online through Blackboard during Week 4 of the class (specific date/time will be announced by the instructor). The midterm exam will be worth a possible 15 points.

**Final Exam (Online: May 5)**
The final exam will be comprehensive and include content from the course readings, lecture, and class discussion. The final exam will be administered online through Blackboard at the date/time announced by the instructor. The final exam will be worth a possible 20 points.

**EVALUATION PROCESS**
Students will be evaluated by means of punctual class attendance and professional participation in-class and online, Discussion Boards and Online Assignments, Research Paper, Midterm Exam, and Final Exam.

Due dates for assignments are firm and work is expected to be turned in on time. It is the student’s responsibility to be sure that he or she understands all deadlines and other course requirements/policies (see “STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES” section below).

In the event that a deadline is not met, the following late work penalties will be applied:
- Discussion Board: A ½ point deduction will automatically be made for each post made out of the timeline window. (Note: The deduction applies to both early and late submissions.)
- Online Assignments submitted after the stated deadline will receive an automatic deduction of 1 point.
- Research Paper: At the discretion of the instructor, late assignments may not necessarily be accepted. A minimum of 5 points will be deducted from any Research Paper submitted after the indicated due date.

**Point Values for Course Assignments:**
- Attendance/Participation = 15 points
- Research Paper = 20 points
- 5 Discussion Boards (3 points each) = 15 points
- 3 Online Assignments (5 points each) = 15 points
- Midterm Exam = 15 points
- Final Exam = 20 points

**Final Grade = Total Points Earned/100**
GRADING SCALE (Based on 100 point scale)

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<td>59 or lower</td>
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STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for reading, understanding, and adhering to all requirements and policies listed in the course Syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to proactively keep the course instructor informed of any events or circumstances that may impact the student’s ability to adhere to course requirements and policies, and to remain in close contact with the instructor about those circumstances until they are resolved.

Students are also responsible for checking email (University of St. Thomas, stthom.edu, account) on a daily basis to ensure that they are up to date on the most recent information for the course. Emails sent by the instructor via the stthom.edu account are part of the official communication system of the course. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that his or her email account is in good working order and that emails from the course instructor’s email address are being received without incident. The instructor expects that students will continue to check email on a daily basis until all course requirements are fulfilled (i.e., the student has officially completed the course).

If the student is unclear about any aspect of the Syllabus, or any other information provided by the instructor, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the course instructor immediately in order to ask needed questions and gain clarity.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND ACADEMIC ETHICAL STANDARDS

Per UST procedure, a student may be administratively withdrawn from a class if he/she misses three consecutive classes. In a condensed course, one class meeting is equivalent to three classes during a regular semester. Also it is the student’s responsibility to know what constitutes academic dishonesty and plagiarism and apply academic integrity in all assignments. (See UST catalogue for further information.) Each student is expected to read and sign the “Academic Integrity and Honor Code Agreement” provided by the instructor at the beginning of the course.

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who have special conditions, as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act, who need any test or course materials accommodations, should contact the instructor to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to request assistance through UST Counseling.
Services/Disabilities Services at (713) 525-6953. Please let me know if you have made such a request.