School of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>Randy Soffer, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPED 4320</td>
<td>713-942-5922 (office)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>832-928-6761 (mobile)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exceptionality in Today’s Schools</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sofferr@stthom.edu">sofferr@stthom.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Office Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Tuesday-Thursdays 10-11 &amp; 1-3 and by appointment (Malloy 124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Meetings</td>
<td>Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Malloy Hall 113</td>
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<tr>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
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<td><strong>Course Description</strong></td>
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This course will utilize Blackboard (BB) as a course delivery and management tool. Components of BB that will be used regularly include the Announcement Board, Course Documents, and Grade Center.

Major Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities.
2. Be familiar with the differences between formal and informal assessment procedures and how to evaluate student competencies to make instructional decisions.
3. Understand procedures for planning culturally responsive instruction for individuals with disabilities.
4. Understand procedures for managing the teaching and learning environment, including procedures related to the use of assistive technology and culturally responsive teaching.
5. Be familiar with strategies to promote students’ educational performance in all content areas by facilitating their achievement in a variety of settings and situations.
6. Understand issues & procedures for teaching appropriate student behavior & social skills.
7. Understand transition issues and procedures across the life span.
8. Understand the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education.
9. Be familiar with professional roles and responsibilities and adhere to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.
10. Know how to communicate and collaborate effectively in a variety of professional settings.
11. Use technology to improve learning and classroom management.

Social Justice Tenets Guiding this Course
The content and goals of this course are consistent with three tenets of Catholic social justice teaching that inform the School of Education programs.

- **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 educational processes.
- **People have a right to an education**: All people have a responsibility, for the good of society, to contribute to and foster education.
Exceptionality in Today’s Schools can help improve the effectiveness of teaching—and thus the lives—of all people, particularly those who are disadvantaged, traditionally underserved, and at-risk. The Catholic social justice tenet putting the needs of the poor and vulnerable first underscores the importance of personalizing instruction that better meets all students’ needs to promote the elimination of poverty and discrimination.

Major assignments, due dates, and percentages of course grade

I. Class Attendance/Participation (20 points)

Students are expected to attend all classes, to arrive on time and to respect timelines for breaks. For each unexcused absence, points will be deducted from the final course grade. Any absence for which the instructor has not given prior approval will automatically be considered unexcused. Allowances for absences that result from emergencies will be made at the discretion of the instructor. Five (5) absences excused or otherwise, will result in a failing grade for the course. Three (3) late arrivals of 10 minutes or more will result in a deduction of points from the final course grade. More than 5 late arrivals of 10 minutes or more will result in a failing grade for the course. Any late arrival of 45 minutes or more will be considered an unexcused absence.

Your participation in class is also very important. The more actively you participate, the more you will get out of this course. Listening to what is said and thinking about what is discussed are also key expectations for your participation.

You will earn just under a quarter of a point for your attendance and participation in each class (26 classes X .23 points= 6 points)

To help foster class discussions, all students will complete Pick 3 assignments.

Pick 3 Assignment: For each class reading assignment, you will do one of these assignments. Except for the first one that you will do as a group activity, you are expected to complete each reading assignment and Pick 3 assignment prior to the class for which the reading assignment is listed in the Course Schedule section of this syllabus.

- Pick 3 assignments will give you an opportunity to actively process and reflect on your reading assignments concisely and briefly. As you are reading, be thinking about the concepts, issues, ideas, and strategies/interventions that you find most interesting, troubling, helpful, surprising, exciting, or confusing.
- Please pick 3 concepts, issues, ideas or strategies/interventions from each reading assignment to include in your Pick 3 assignment. In one sentence please indicate your ‘reaction’ (e.g., surprise) to each of your three concepts, issues, ideas, or strategies/interventions. In one or more
sentences, please indicate why you had your reaction to each of your three concepts, issues, ideas, or strategies/interventions. Your selected categories of reaction can be the same or different in any one assignment. For example, your Pick 3 assignment could include only ideas that you found helpful or a combination of ideas that you found interesting, helpful, and troubling.

- An example of a Pick 3 item for the first reading assignment is—I was surprised that there are so many students identified with learning disabilities. I thought most students with disabilities were classified as having intellectual disabilities.
- Pick 3 assignments can be hand written or words processed and are due at the class on the date each chapter is discussed.
- Each Pick 3 assignment, including the group Pick 3, has a value of one (1) point. Thus, for the fourteen (14) Pick 3 assignments that you will be completing, the total points of this assignment for the course are 14 points.

II. Fieldwork Journal & Synthesis of Journal Entries (20 points)

For this course you will be expected to participate in a minimum of 5 hours of special education related fieldwork. You are also expected to maintain a journal of your fieldwork experiences. Fieldwork experiences may be of several types. First, they can involve working with one or more students with disabilities. This ‘work’ should involve school related activities. Besides working with specific students, you can also observe and assist, as much as possible, in an ‘inclusion class’ or in a special education setting. If you need help locating a suitable school to observe/assist in, please let your instructor know and he will help you.

You should make a journal entry for each time you engage in fieldwork within a particular school/classroom on a particular date. In this journal you should record your activities in general, how what you experienced relates to course readings, any questions or concerns that you have about what you experienced, and, most importantly, any insights you gained from your fieldwork experience.

If observing/assisting in an inclusion setting or special education school/class, you are required to observe in at least two different schools—at least one or both school experiences should involve an inclusion situation.

If you just focus on one or a few students in your fieldwork, your journal will be more in the form of a case study. In this situation, you will describe the student’s strengths, interests, and challenges/needs relative to his/her school performance. You will also describe your work with this individual—what you did, what didn’t work in your efforts with the student and what did work with this individual, and any insights that you gained from this experience.

Whether your fieldwork focuses on the class or individual student level, at the end of the semester, you should reflect on your entire fieldwork experience and synthesize your thoughts regarding your fieldwork for this course. This process should result in a written list of the most significant things you learned from your field experience.
Your list should address five to ten separate issues.

**By Thursday, December 1st**, you should turn in your journal and written list synthesizing what you learned to the course instructor. Your journal and synthesis of journal entries will be returned to you at the start of the next semester.

Grading for this assignment will be based on getting your journal and synthesis in on time, the richness, clarity and organization of what you submit, and depth of thought reflected in your response to this assignment.

Please note, for your fieldwork in this course, you will only need to complete the top portion of Fieldwork Documentation forms that includes the date, time, and location of your fieldwork and a signature verifying the completion of your fieldwork. For the sections of the form that ask you to describe and reflect on your fieldwork experience, you can just write ‘See Journal’. Please also note, to save paper and time, that you can combine multiple field experiences in the same location on the same form.

### III. Menu Assignment (20 points)

You will need to choose one (1) of the following two (2) menu assignments. Your menu assignment will be due at the start of class on October 6th. Of course, you can turn your menu assignment in early.

1. **Conducting a First Person Life History**: For this assignment, you will interview a school age child or adolescent with a disability who is receiving special education services. All information included in your life history should be from the student’s perspective. The goal of this assignment is for you to understand the student’s point of view—to put yourself in his or her shoes. As the listener, your role is to abandon any assumptions that you have and to work at comprehending the subjective reality of your student’s life.

   Your write-up of your interview, in 3 to 5 double-spaced pages, should address the following points:

   - Background information from student’s perspective—what is your difficulty in school relative to your learning or behavior? What is your earliest memory of your learning/behavior problem and how did you know there was a problem? What were your initial thoughts/feelings at this time and what were the reactions of others? (4 points)

     Background information on student’s school history, again, from student’s perspective—since first identified, what past efforts were made to help and what were the results of these efforts. (3 points)

   - Participant’s view of his/her current educational program- what he/she now receives in the way of interventions, accommodations, supports, or services and what the teachers do that helps the student the most to deal with his/her learning/behavioral difficulties (3 points)

     What advise the student would give to other younger students with similar
difficulties as he or she is experiencing. What advise the student would give to teachers with regard to working with students with difficulties similar to those he or she is experiencing. (3 points)

- What student sees as his/her current strengths and weaknesses and what goals they have, if any, after graduating from high school as far as further schooling or career goals. (3 points)

- What new insights did you gain about your interviewee or students with disabilities in general as a result of your interview? How might these insights impact your teaching? Was there anything that surprised or concerned you from your interview? (4 points)

Grading will be based on the extent to which each above point is covered (50%) and how clear, organized and thoughtful a manner the information is presented (50%). A grading rubric for this assignment can be found in the Syllabus section of BB.

2. Conducting a Parent Interview: For this assignment you will interview a parent to obtain information regarding the parent's perspective on his/her child's disability. If you do a first person life history, you may interview the parent of the child you interview. If this is done, please interview the child/youth and parent separately. You are responsible for turning in a summary of your interview experience that includes the following: a) your original interview questions and notes and the parent’s responses to your questions (these may be handwritten) and b) a 2-3 page double-spaced word processed synopsis of the interview findings and a reflection on the information obtained including what you learned from the experience. Each section of the assignment should be clearly labeled and identified. This assignment will be graded based on the depth and clarity of thought and how completely the assignment criteria are addressed. A grading rubric for this assignment can be found in the Syllabus section of BB.

IV. Disability Presentation (20 points)

Presentations can be done individually. Possible ‘disability/exceptional’ topics are the following:

1. Orthopedic Impairments, Traumatic Brain Injury, Other Heath Impairments/Physical and Health Impairments (can do one or more of the sub-categories here)
2. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
3. Learning Disabilities
4. Intellectual Disabilities
5. Autism Spectrum Disorder
6. Visual Impairments
7. Emotional/Behavioral Disorders
8. Speech and Language Disorders
9. Hearing Impairments
Once a topic is selected, it will no longer be available to you. So, please select your disability category soon to ensure that you get your preferred topic. You should have a topic selected no later than Week #2 of this course.

Your presentation will either be when your disability category is discussed in class or the week before or after your topic is addressed in class.

Your presentations should address key aspects of your disability category. More specifically, your presentation should address/include the following:

1. Provide background Information on your disability category. In this overview, you should include historical background information on your category, its definition and eligibility criteria, the common student needs/characteristics associated with your category, and interventions and accommodations frequently used for students who have been labeled with your category of disability.

2. Share at least one 3 to 10 minute video that you think will be both engaging and helpful to your classmates with regard to their work with students who are in your category of disability.

3. Share at least two website(s)/app(s) that you think are really helpful for working with students in your disability category and clearly and specifically explain why you think your website(s)/app(s) is/are so helpful. Specifically, please show your classmates on your selected website(s)/app(s) what you found most helpful.

4. Please conclude your presentation with a ten item quiz for your classmates addressing what you believe to be the key concepts or ideas related to your presentation topic. Please conduct your quiz using Kahoot or a similar online tool involving classmates’ smart phones/tablets.

The idea here is to make your presentation as engaging and as helpful as possible yet focused on what you want your classmates to be learning. You can even invite a guest speaker to class—please just coordinate this initiative with your course instructor.

Presentations should be from 40 to 50 minutes in length. Grading will be based on adhering to the required timeframe (3 points), addressing the above issues/requests (6 points), the accuracy, richness, and clarity of information presented (6 points), and the degree to which the presentation was engaging and helpful (5 points).

V. Final Examination (20 points)

The final exam will serve as a cognitive organizer for your course experience. It will
require critical and higher order thinking skills. The exam will draw on what you have learned from your course related readings/videos, your completion of the menu assignment(s), and your active and thoughtful participation in course related activities in and out of class. Exams will consist primarily of short essay questions and primarily address course essential understandings.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Numeric Range Set by Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>95-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>90-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>64-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>59 or lower</td>
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**Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Module (LM) Number &amp; Topic</th>
<th>Topic Dates</th>
<th>Information on Assignments &amp; Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Course Requirements &amp; Learning Module (LM) #1- Understanding Special Education</td>
<td>August 23 &amp; 25</td>
<td>Read your textbook chapter on Understanding Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM#2- The Personnel and Procedures of Special Education</td>
<td>August 30 &amp; September 1</td>
<td>Read your textbook chapter on The Personnel and Procedures of Special Education LM-2 Pick 3 Due First Date Deadline for Selection of Your Disability Presentation Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM#3- Multicultural and Bilingual Perspectives</td>
<td>September 6 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Read your textbook chapter on Multicultural and Bilingual Perspectives LM-3 Pick 3 Due First Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM#4- Collaboration in Special Education</td>
<td>September 13 &amp; 15</td>
<td>Read your textbook chapter on Collaboration in Special Education LM-4 Pick 3 Due First Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM#5- Students with Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>September 20 &amp; 22</td>
<td>Read your textbook chapter on Students with Learning Disabilities LM-5 Pick 3 Due First Date Disability Presentation</td>
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</table>
| LM#6- Students with Speech and Language Disorders | September 27 & 29 | Read your textbook chapter on Students with Speech and Language Disorders
**LM-6 Pick 3 Due**
**Disability Presentation** |
| LM#7- Students with Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder | October 4 & 6 | Read your textbook chapter on Students with Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder
**LM-7 Pick 3 Due**
**Disability Presentation**
**Menu Assignment Due Oct 6**
**NOTE- NEXT TUESDAY NO CLASS (Fall Break)** |
| LM#8- Students with Orthopedic Impairments, Traumatic Brain Injury, Other Heath Impairments/Physical and Health Disabilities | October 13 & 18 | Read your textbook chapter on Students with Orthopedic Impairments, Traumatic Brain Injury, Other Heath Impairments/Physical and Health Disabilities
**LM-8 Pick 3 Due**
**Disability Presentation** |
| LM#9- Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders | October 20 & 25 | Read your textbook chapter on Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
**LM-9 Pick 3 Due**
**Disability Presentation** |
| LM#10- Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities | October 27 & November 1 | Read your textbook chapter on Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
**LM-10 Pick 3 Due**
**Disability Presentation** |
| LM#11- Students with Deafness, Hearing Loss, & Visual Impairments | November 3 & 8 | Read your textbook chapters on Students with Deafness and Hearing Loss -Read only from Understanding Deafness and Hearing Loss to Academic Characteristics thru Written Expression (pgs. 330-342 in 3rd edition of text) and How Learners Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Receive their Education thru Inclusive Practices (pgs. 346-351 in 3rd edition of text) and Trends and Issues Effecting the Field of Deaf Education (pgs. 359-363 in 3rd edition of text) & Visual Impairments-Read only Understanding Visual Impairments thru Print Literacy Skills (pgs. 367-378 in 3rd edition of text) and Assessment thru Inclusive Practices (pgs. 382-387) and Recommended Educational Practices for Students with Visual...
Impairments (pgs. 389-391 in 3rd edition of text)
LM-11 Two Picks for HI due Nov 3 and two Picks for VI due Nov 8
Disability Presentation(s)

| LM#12- Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities | November 10 & 15 | Read your textbook chapter on Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities
| LM-12 Pick 3 Due Disability Presentation |
| LM#13- Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders | November 17 & 22 | Read your textbook chapter on Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
| LM-13 Pick 3 Due Disability Presentation |
| Gifted & Talented Course Wrap-Up | Nov 29 & Dec 1 | Disability/Exceptionality Presentation(s)
| Dec 1- Due Date for Fieldwork Journal and Synthesis of Journal Entries |
| Final Exam | TBA |

**Student Accommodations**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the instructor will make all possible and reasonable adjustments in policies, practices, services, and facilities to ensure equal and optimal educational programs and activities. Whenever a special accommodation is necessary to ensure access to full participation by students with disabilities, the student must inform the instructor of any disability or needed accommodations.

The University Office for ADA Compliance may ask to seek proof of disability and specify accommodations as requested by students. Students with special needs should inform the instructor within the first two weeks of class. Students must also contact the Office of Counseling and Disability Services (2nd floor of Crooker Center) by calling Dr. Rose Signorello at 713-525-3162 or Ms. Debbie Jones at 713-525-6953; the Office is open 8-5 Monday through Friday.

The accommodations will become official when the instructor receives official, written notification from the officer in charge of ADA compliance. Students should contact the instructor immediately if new needs arise. Students can see the instructor before or after class or request another time to discuss any matters. All information will be confidential.

**Professional Standards of Behavior for Students and Faculty**

**Academic integrity**
Undergraduate students in the School of Education demonstrate integrity in all of
their activities, both personal and professional. Any unprofessional behavior or failure to adhere to the honor system is a serious violation of integrity and may result in failure of the course.

**Plagiarism** involves taking credit for another person’s work. You must cite sources in APA style any time source material (e.g., books, journal articles, internet material, etc.) has been used, paraphrased, or quoted. Quoted material must be placed in quotation marks and referenced appropriately. Please note that copying information directly from a source without giving credit, using friends’ work, buying papers online, re-using one’s own work from previous classes, etc., all constitute plagiarism.

Any instance of plagiarism will result in failure of the course and may result in dismissal from UST. Ignorance is no excuse; if you remain uncertain about the guidelines for using and citing source material after these issues are addressed in class, you should seek input from the instructor.

**Other Issues**

In all written work, grammar, sentence structure, organization, and spelling will be of such quality as to be an outstanding model for other educators. All work should be original and prepared solely for the designated assignment.

It is the instructor’s policy that late assignments will not be accepted. Exceptions to this policy are only allowed due to individual extenuating circumstances. It will be at the discretion of the instructor to accept or not to accept late assignments and to make appropriate point deductions for lateness.

All email correspondence will be through
the my.stthom email system. Please check your email through your my.stthom account daily for correspondence and announcements.

September 6 - last date to drop without academic penalty (Drop). November 4 - last date to withdraw with a grade ‘W’.

Syllabus adapted from Dr. Borreca’s Syllabus.