EAST TEXAS A&M

SPED 524, 01W, Characteristics of Students with Mild Disabilities

COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Beth Jones
Office Location: Henderson 228
Office Hours: TR 2:30-5 by zoom
Office Phone: (903) 886-5940
Office Fax: (903) 886-5510
University Email Address: beth.jones@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: email
Communication Response Time:24 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required
American Psychological Association. (2009). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Gargiulo, R. M. (2020). Special education in contemporary society: An introduction to exceptionality (7th ed.). Washington, DC: Sage.
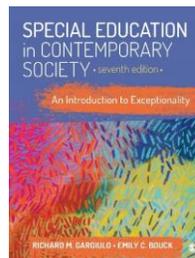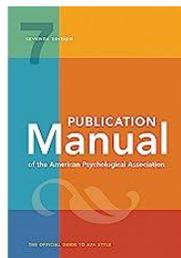
Course Description

Student Learning Outcomes (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs)

1. The student will describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between "typical" and "atypical" behaviors
2. The student will demonstrate an understanding of philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education
3. The student will develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of professionals, parents, students, and the community
4. The student will describe historical points of view and contributions of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education
5. The student will examine characteristics of students with exceptionalities and effects of exceptionalities on learning and development.
6. The student will be an active online communicator and collaborator about achievement of all students in each content area in a variety of settings.
7. The student will analyze research-based procedures about proactive development of student-centered learning environments emphasizing social, emotional, and academic achievement of all students.
8. The student will describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including technological advances
9. The student will discuss issues and trends in special education, including key legislation, litigation, and use of innovative technology

University Catalog Description
SPED 524 examines characteristics of students identified as having emotional/behavioral disorders, mild mental retardation (intellectual disabilities), and learning disabilities, with applications for other exceptionalities. The content includes state and federal rules and regulations, issues and trends, instructional strategies, school-home partnerships, and formal and informal assessment.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

This course is an online course accessed through D2L. Students will need to be able to use Microsoft Office, Zoom, Adobe Reader, and the library system.

Instructional Methods
• Student directed discussion and presentation of key concepts
• Independent library research
• Analysis and synthesis of course readings using APA format
   • Application of course concepts to case studies and practical scenarios
   • Analysis of course materials using a variety of mediums, including web-based resources, applicable professional organizations, and peer-reviewed journal articles

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

.**Special Education Department Email Guidelines**
In an attempt to provide a framework for professional communication, emails must contain the following:
• Subject Line: Course (e.g., SPED 595); additional information if desired (e.g., Statement of Research Interests)
• Address the reader
• Adhere to writing mechanics rules
• If asking for assistance with an issue, please list at least 3 things you have done to try and remediate the issue prior to contacting me (these should probably include looking at the syllabus/course rubrics/eCollege, contacting a colleague, and checking your text, etc.).
• Close with your name
• Please send emails from your University accounts. The instructor will not discuss grades over email. If you would like to discuss your grade, please make an appointment.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%
B = 80%-89%
C = 70%-79%
D = 60%-69%
F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades
A = 405- 450 Points
B = 360- 404.4 Points
C = 315- 359.4 Points
D = 270- 214.4 Points
F = 269.4 & > Points

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.
Assignments   68%
Discussions   32%
TOTAL   100%

Point Distribution:

Weekly Discussion Posts	145
Responses to Readings (5)	75
Case Study Analysis	25
Dyslexia Training	30
Disability Presentation	*50*
Special Education Critical Concepts Synthesis	*50*
Open Access Materials	*25*
Final Project	*50*
Total	***450***

Grading Scale A = 90-100% D = 60-69% B = 80-89% F = 59 and below C = 70-79%

Assessments

• Weekly Discussions: Students will respond to weekly discussion threads, pertinent to the topic for that week.
        Discussions include the Introduction, Parent Interview, Course Reflection & Others

1. **Personal Introduction and Statement of Interests (5 points-graded in Discussions)** Students will craft an introduction and statement of interests. Students will post their statements to the student lounge located within our course shell. Each statement will include information about your program, current employment/career goals, and areas of interest. Additional details and examples will be provided. Completion of the assignment will result in a score of 5 points.

2. **Course Reflection Requirements:** Students will complete a one-page reflection summarizing their experiences through the semester. Specifically, students will think about their perceptions regarding course content. Topics of interest might include disability awareness, special education policies, why there is a research to practice gap in your field, the importance of high-quality instruction and intervention, or any other areas of interest. Students should document their learning and growth as a result of participating in this course.

• **Responses to Readings:** Students will complete five recorded response s to the assigned readings using Flip and post the links to their videos in the D2L shell.

• **Dyslexia Training:** Students will submit verification of completion of a TEA training in the characteristics and intervention of dyslexia as well as their signature on a form posted in DocSharing verifying the student has accessed and reviewed all dyslexia resources shared by the instructor. **All forms must contain an original signature and be submitted to the DropBox.**

• **<u>Disability Presentation:</u>** Within the 13 federal disability categories, the student will investigate a **<u>sub-category</u>** of his/her choosing (e.g., Anxiety Disorder, Dyscalculia; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Retinitis Pigmentosa, Down Syndrome, Cri de Chat Syndrome, etc.).

1. Students will create an interactive presentation that includes research-based citations regarding identification, the social, academic, medical, and emotional implications across the lifespan (birth through adulthood), and evidence-based resources for school personnel. Some presentation options include narrated Power Point®, Prezi®, or Youtube video.

2. Students will then utilize technology to allow your classmates to comment on your presentation. You will do this by including a link using a free application. See announcement in the D2L shell for more directions. The goal is to think about other ways you could use this technology in your classroom (i.e. bell ringers, discussions, exit tickets, enhance engagement).

• **<u>EBD Case Study Analysis:</u>** The instructor will provide several case studies requiring the student to apply their knowledge of special education to real world scenarios. Students will choose one case studies related to EBD and the FBA/BIP process and answer corresponding questions. A rubric will be provided.

• **<u>Special Education Critical Concepts:</u>** Students will use an instructor provided template OR choose a differing preferred method for presentation (i.e... Google Slides, Padlet, etc.) to complete a detailed outline of key concepts related to each of the federal high incidence disability categories. These outlines will provide a synthesis of key course concepts and assist with preparation for the special education department <u>comprehensive exam</u> (see Special Education Graduate Handbook for additional information about the Comprehensive Exam). **The idea is to make them comprehensive and shareable with parents. Be creative on formatting/methodology for presentation. Submissions must be typed.**

<u>Info to Include in each Critical Concept page:</u>

1. IDEA Definition, including types as appropriate. In preparation for comps, you may choose to include your study technique for remembering the definition, such as the example in DocSharing of the 5 components of the ED definition illustrated as fingers on a hand. (You can use this one for ED if you choose, but you will need to come up with the remainder on your own.)
2. Causes
3. Prevalence (provide percentages/numbers as much as possible)
4. Prevention
5. Characteristics
6. Teaching strategies/Accommodations
7. Assistive Technology
8. Resources

You will have ONE page for each of the following topics:

Learning Disabilities
OHI-ADHD
Speech and Language Impairments
Autism Spectrum Disorders
Emotional Disturbance

GRADING: 5 pages @ 10 points each = 50 points total
**Note: The other disabilities that fall within these categories can be listed as part of the definition.

*Open Access Materials: Students will complete an assignment related to the TEA approved materials and their accessibility/implications for use with students with disabilities.

*Final Project: Students will submit written responses to a case study prompt. **Submissions should be made to the DropBox under Activities-Assignments.**

Assignments should be submitted to the D2L DropBox with the corresponding name (under Activities-Assignments). All written assignments should be typed and adhere to the American Psychological Association manual, whenever appropriate. In addition, all written assignments must contain a header with the name of the person submitting the assignment in the actual document itself (not just the file name when it is uploaded). Late assignments and examinations will not be accepted. All assignments should reflect university level spelling, syntax, and grammar.

It is recommended that students retain electronic and hard copies of ALL course products. Products from this class can become part of one's individual professional portfolio.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:
https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements

LMS Browser Support:
https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a East Texas A&M University campus open computer lab, etc.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

The instructor is available virtually by Zoom and email. If you would like to schedule an appointment outside of office hours, the best way is to email. We can then set up a time to chat when it is convenient for you.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Course Participation
Students are expected to actively participate in the course, complete readings, and submit assignments no later than the due dates indicated on the course schedule.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at https://www.tamuc.edu/student-code-of-conduct/.

 If you believe someone has engaged in behaviors that do not align with the Code of Student Conduct or you have other concerns, please visit the File a Report page at https://www.tamuc.edu/office-of-student-rights-and-responsibilities/concerns-incident-reporting/

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate student academic dishonesty policy
Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

Undergraduate student academic dishonesty policy
Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

Graduate student academic dishonesty policy:
https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesproceduresstandardsstatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf

Graduate student academic dishonesty form:
https://inside.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf

By accepting this syllabus, the student pledges to uphold the principles of Academic Integrity expressed by the East Texas A&M University community and the Psychology

and Special Education Department. The student agrees to observe these principles and to defend them against abuse by others.

• Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant. You must take great care to give credit to an author when you borrow either exact words or ideas. Generally, if you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper citation. The instructor reserves the right to submit your work to Turnitin®, SafeAssign®, or similar plagiarism detection services, for an integrity assessment as needed.

• Copyright rules also apply. Use of graphics or data must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to journal articles, books, popular press articles, e-mail (don't cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, and information from websites. Even if you give credit, you must get permission from the original source to use any data, graphic, or material that you did not create.

• Any attempt to circumvent the integrity of the testing process or otherwise evade the fullest demands of class assignments in an unethical manner constitutes cheating. This can mean looking on another student's exam, consulting notes or books during an exam unless specifically permitted by the instructor, stealing an exam and circulating it among other students. Any offense wholly or partially touching the above definition constitutes cheating for the purposes of this class.

• Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any act of academic dishonesty may result in earning a "0" in the course. All acts of academic dishonesty will be reported to the applicable program coordinator and department chair. APA Style and Formatting All work should be submitted using APA style. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.) or to access one of the internet sites that provides a summary of this information. All work produced outside of class must be typed unless otherwise noted. http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm is offered as a companion to the APA style manual. However, it should not be considered a substitute for directly consulting the APA manual, 7th edition for standard of procedures for applying APA style.

East Texas A&M University Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage.

Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, Chatbots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or

suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors 'guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

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 have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Services
Velma K. Waters Library- Room 162
Phone (903) 886-5930
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
Website: http://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/campusServices/StudentDisabilityServices/default.aspx

Mental Health and Well-Being
The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

East Texas A&M University Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit **www.tamuc.edu/counsel**

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M University Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:
http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

Texas Special Education Standards EC-G and 6-12:	Texas Diagnostician

1. **Standard B. Legal and Ethical Guidelines.** The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher demonstrates knowledge of all applicable state and federal laws, including Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008; Texas Education Code specific to students with disabilities; Texas Administrative Code specific to students with disabilities; and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must:

   3) demonstrate knowledge of IDEA 2004 eligibility categories;

   EC-6 (19) and 6-12 (24) demonstrate understanding that students served through special education may also have other special populations identifiers (i.e., gifted and talented, English learner, highly mobile and at risk, and dyslexia);

2. **Standard C. Understanding and Addressing Each Individual's Developmental and Learning Needs.** The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must:

   EC-6 (3) demonstrate knowledge of how exceptionalities can interact with development and learning;

   6-12 (3) understand the impact of exceptionalities on developmental milestones,

2. **Standard V.** The educational diagnostician knows eligibility criteria and procedures for identifying students with disabilities and determining the presence of an educational need.

   (1) The educational diagnostician knows and understands:

   (A) characteristics of individuals with disabilities, including those with different levels of severity and with multiple disabilities;

   (B) educational implications of various disabilities; and

   (C) the variation in ability exhibited by individuals with particular types of disabilities.

executive functioning, and social skills; (9) demonstrate knowledge of how developmental academic, social, and functional characteristics of individuals with high support needs impact levels of support needs;	

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Section	Topics	Readmgs	Due Dates
1 January 29- February 13	Introduction: People, Concepts, and Perspectives Policies, Practices, Programs Duties Related to Child Find Cultural and Linguistic Diversity	* Gargiulio Ch. 1: Special Education in Context * Gargiulio Ch. 2: Policies, Practices, and Programs * Guidelines for Writing About Persons with Disabilities * Snow (2004) * Gargiulio Ch. 3: Cultural and Linguistic Diversity and Exceptionality	Introduction **DUE 1/31/26** IRIS Perceptions of Disability Module and Types of ARDs Discussions **DUE 2/8/26** Person First Language Activity **DUE 2/8/26** Child Find Discussion **DUE 2/15/26**
2 February 16-20	Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities Co-teaching, Cooperative Learning, and UDL Parents and Families; Engaging Families in the IEP Process	*Gargiulio Ch. 4: Parents and Families	Cooperative Learning Discussion **DUE 2/22/26** Parent Interview **DUE 2/22/26**
3 February 23-27	Mild Intellectual Disabilities Legislation on Assessment for ID	*Gargiulio Ch. 6: ID	Open Access Materials Assignment **DUE 3/1/26**

			Response to Readings Discussion **DUE 3/1/26**
4 March 2-6	Learning Disabilities and Dyslexia	* Gargiulio Ch. 7: LD	*Response to Readings Discussion* AND Dyslexia Training Activity Verification **DUE 3/8/26**
5 March 16-20	Other Health Impairments/ADHD Physical Disabilities	*Gargiulio Ch. 8 * Gargiulio 14	*Response to Readings Discussion* **DUE 3/22/26**
6 March 23-27	Emotional and Behavioral Disorders – FBA/BIP	* Gargiulio 9: EBD	EBD Case Study **DUE 3/29/26**
7 March 30-April 3	Autism Spectrum Disorders	*Gargiulio 10: ASD	*Response to Readings Discussion* **DUE 4/5/26**
8 April 6-Aoril 10	Speech and Language Impairments	* Gargiulio 11: SLI	Critical Concepts Outlines **DUE 4/12/26**
9 April 13-17	Gifted and Talented	* Gargiulio 15: GT	GT Discussion **DUE 4/19/26**
10 April 20-24	Evidence Based Practices	* Evidenced-Based Practice Modules	Disability Presentation **DUE 4/26/26** EBP Modules Discussions **DUE 4/26/26**
11 April 27-May 1	Academic Characteristics and Interventions; Informal Assessment (reading, math, writing)	Lectures and Content in Shell	Responses to at least two peer presentations **DUE 5/3/26** *Response to Readings Discussion* **DUE 5/3/26**
12 May 4-8	Assistive Technology and Transition Wrap-up	*Gargiulio Ch. 5: Assistive Technology	Transition Discussion **DUE 5/5/25**

			Final Project **DUE 5/6/26** Course Reflection **DUE 5/6/26**

Responses to Readings=Blue/Italics
Discussion=Green/Underined