

Online/Blended Course Syllabus

Course Information

<i>Course Number/Section</i>	ED 4301.0W1
<i>Course Title</i>	Special Topics in Education: Exceptional Populations
<i>Term</i>	SPRING 2026

Professor Contact Information

<i>Professor</i>	Dr. Carrie Simpson
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<i>Office Location</i>	virtual
<i>Online Office Hours</i>	Fridays all day and Sundays 5pm, by appointment (meeting times and days are flexible)

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

This course is offered as part of the teacher certification program. It is advised that students have completed BIS4306 prior to enrolling in this course. There are no firm pre-requisites for enrollment.

Course Description

This course is a comprehensive look at exceptional populations. The first segment of the class is dedicated to learners with special needs. We will look at the history, assessment, instruction for this subpopulation. Then we will look at gifted learners, exploring the development of gifted education, instructional practices and support. Finally, we will examine the twice exceptional student and what this student means in the classroom, as well as ways to best needs this students' needs.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Standard 1.3 Teachers design lessons to meet the needs of diverse learners, adapting methods when appropriate.

- Teachers differentiate instruction, aligning methods and techniques to diverse student needs.
- Teachers plan student groupings, including pairings and individualized and small-group instruction, to facilitate student learning.
- Teachers integrate the use of oral, written, graphic, kinesthetic, and/or tactile methods to teach key concepts.

Standard 1.6 Teachers consistently check for understanding, give immediate feedback, and make lesson adjustments as necessary.

- Teachers monitor and assess student progress to ensure that their lessons meet students' needs.
- Teachers provide immediate feedback to students in order to reinforce their learning and ensure they understand key concepts.
- Teachers adjust content delivery in response to student progress through the use of developmentally appropriate strategies that maximize student engagement.

Standard 2.1 Teachers demonstrate the belief that all students have the potential to achieve at high levels and support all learners in their pursuit of academic and social-emotional success.

- Teachers purposefully utilize learners' individual strengths as a basis for academic and social-emotional growth.
- Teachers create a community of learners in an inclusive environment that views differences in learning and background as educational assets.
- Teachers accept responsibility for the growth of all of their students, persisting in their efforts to ensure high levels of growth on the part of each learner.

Standard 2.2 Teachers acquire, analyze, and use background information (familial, cultural, educational, linguistic, and developmental characteristics) to engage students in learning.

- Teachers connect learning, content, and expectations to students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in meaningful contexts.
- Teachers understand the unique qualities of students with exceptional needs, including disabilities and giftedness, and know how to effectively address these needs through instructional strategies and resources.
- Teachers understand the role of language and culture in learning and know how to modify their practices to support language acquisition such that language is comprehensible and instruction is fully accessible.

Standard 2.3 Teachers facilitate each student's learning by employing evidence-based practices and concepts related to learning and social-emotional development.

- Teachers understand how learning occurs and how learners develop, construct meaning and acquire knowledge and skills.
- Teachers identify readiness for learning and understand how development in one area may affect students' performance in other areas.
- Teachers apply evidence-based strategies to address individual student learning needs and differences, adjust their instruction, and support the learning needs of each student.

Standard 3.3 Teachers demonstrate content specific pedagogy that meets the needs of diverse learners, utilizing engaging instructional materials to connect prior content knowledge to new learning.

- Teachers teach both the key content knowledge and the key skills of the discipline.
- Teachers make appropriate and authentic connections across disciplines, subjects, and students' real-world experiences.

Standard 4.1 Teachers create a mutually respectful, collaborative, and safe community of learners by using knowledge of students' development and backgrounds.

- Teachers embrace students' backgrounds and experiences as an asset in their learning environment.
- Teachers maintain and facilitate respectful, supportive, positive and productive interactions with and among students.
- Teachers establish and sustain learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and respond to students' needs, strengths, and personal experiences.

Standard 5.1 Teachers implement both formal and informal methods of measuring student progress.

- Teachers gauge student progress and ensure student mastery of content knowledge and skills by providing assessments aligned to instructional objectives and outcomes that are accurate measures of student learning.
- Teachers vary methods of assessing learning to accommodate students' learning needs, linguistic differences, and/or varying levels of background knowledge.

Standard 5.3 Teachers regularly collect, review, and analyze data to monitor student progress.

- Teachers analyze and review data in a timely, thorough, accurate, and appropriate manner, both individually and with colleagues, to monitor student learning.
- Teachers combine results from different measures to develop a holistic picture of students' strengths and learning needs.

Standard 5.4 Teachers utilize the data they collect and analyze to inform their instructional strategies and adjust short- and long-term plans accordingly.

- Teachers design instruction, change strategies, and differentiate their teaching practices to improve student learning based on assessment outcomes.
- Teachers regularly compare their curriculum scope and sequence with student data to ensure they are on track and making adjustments as needed.

Required Textbooks and Materials

There are no books required for this course. Materials will be embedded in the learning modules.

Suggested Course Materials

Suggested Readings/Texts

Additional readings and videos will be embedded within the course and provided through the course.

Textbooks and some other bookstore materials can be ordered online through Off-Campus Books <http://www.offcampusbooks.com> or the UT Dallas Bookstore <http://www.bkstr.com/texasatdallasstore/home>. They are also available in stock at both bookstores.

Technical Requirements

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/getting-started.html#techreqs> on the Getting Started with eLearning webpage <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/getting-started.html>.

Course Access and Navigation

The course can be accessed using the UT Dallas NetID account at: <https://elearning.utdallas.edu>. Please see the course access and navigation <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/getting-started.html#courseaccessandnav> section of the site for more information.

To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the Student eLearning Tutorials <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/eLearningTutorialsStudents.html>.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day/7 days a week. The eLearning Support Center <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearninghelp> services include a toll free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service.

Communication

This course utilizes online tools for interaction and communication. Some external communication tools such as regular email and a web conferencing tool may also be used during the semester. For more details, please visit the eLearning Tutorials webpage <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/eLearningTutorialsStudents.html> for video demonstrations on eLearning tools.

Student emails and discussion board messages will be answered within 3 working days under normal circumstances.

Distance Learning Student Resources

Online students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, Academic Advising, The Office of Student AccessAbility, and many others. Please see the eLearning Current Students page <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/cstudents.htm> for details.

Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online eLearning Help Desk <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearninghelp>. The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Grading Scale

Letter Equivalents
A+ (97% - 100%)
A (93% - 96%)
A- (90% - 92%)
B+ (87% - 89%)
B (83% - 86%)
B- (80% - 82%)
C+ (77% - 79%)
C (73% - 76%)
C- (70% - 72%)
D+ (67% - 69%)
D (63% - 66%)
D- (60% - 62%)
F (59% and below)

Grading Policy

I will not accept late work *without communication* beyond a two-day window. I expect participation on journals, discussions, assignment, quizzes, exams and the final project.

Assignments

The assignments for this course revolve largely around class discussions and research papers.

Assignment submission instructions

Locate the assignment in your eLearning course. You will submit your assignments in the required file format with a simple file name and a file extension. To submit your assignment, click the assignment name link and follow the on-screen instructions to upload and submit your file(s). For additional information on how to submit assignments, view the [Submitting An Assignment video tutorial](#).

Please Note: Each assignment link will be deactivated after the assignment due time. After your submission is graded, you may go to My Grades on the course menu and click the score link to check the results and feedback.

Participation/Discussions

I am looking for thoughtful, original responses to your colleagues and in response to the prompt given. I want to see you thinking carefully and completely on these topics and then interacting in an elevated academic way with your peers. We do not get to see each other in a classroom, so these discussions are your opportunity to show what you know and to receive other ideas from people who present different viewpoints on our content. This is our community and it is a critical part of our online learning environment. Be appropriate. Be insightful. Be prompt and all will go well. ☺

Accessing Grades

Students can check their grades by clicking “My Grades” on the course menu after the grade for each assessment task is released.

Course Policies

Extra Credit

I do not offer or accept extra credit as part of the course.

Late Work

I will accept late work up to two days late with penalty and then will likely not accept it. I do reserve the right to make determinations on a case-by-case basis should extenuating circumstances arise. I will not accept late work without direct communication via email from the student.

Special Assignments

The course will end with a final project demonstration of learning done in the class.

Class Participation

Students must participate with consistency, productivity and professionalism at all times.

Classroom Citizenship

Students will be respectful of each other and the instructor in this course. Treat all communication as though you are having face to face conversations. Write with manners and patience and be thoughtful about your tone and voice as a writer.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.