



Department of Education

ED 470: The Exceptional Child

Instructor: Somer Matthews

Office: EP111

Hours: Every Other Thursday 5-6 or by
appointment

Email: matthewss@sou.edu

Weekly Zoom Link:

Course Description:

This course surveys the foundations of special education, including historical and philosophical perspectives, legal issues and current trends in instruction and programming. Students will explore the role of the teacher as related to the exceptional child. Emphasis will be placed on developing knowledge of various conditions of exceptionalities, available resources and educational alternatives. **The syllabus may change depending on the needs of the instructor and the class.**

Required Texts:

Morse, T. (2024). Guidebook for teaching students receiving special education services. University of West Florida. Open Access. <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/guidebook37/>

Course Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. Describe the steps in the referral process and explain what is involved in each step;
2. Give examples of the placement possibilities among the array of services offered to students, with emphasis in meeting the least restrictive environment;
3. Explain the services offered under Oregon's laws for services for individuals, as well as the impact of the "No Child Left Behind" legislation;
4. Understand the characteristics of the students recognized under PL 94-142, PL 101-476, 105-17 and 108-446;
5. Recognize the major barriers encountered by general and special educators in implementing inclusive classrooms, and ways inclusion can be successfully implemented;
6. Examine learning and the relationship to exceptionalities;
7. Understand differentiation of instruction, Response to Intervention (RTI) and implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).
8. Become familiar with the resources and services available for students and families.

InTASC Standards:

Standard #1: Learner Development: Understand how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard #2: Learning Differences: Create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Standard #3: Learning Environments: The teacher works with learners to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, encouraging positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Standard #8: Instructional Strategies: The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop a deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to access and appropriately apply information.

Standard #9: Reflection and Continuous Growth: The teacher is a reflective practitioner who uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, families, and other professionals in the learning community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Standard #10: Collaboration: The teacher collaborates with students, families, colleagues, other professionals, and community members to share responsibility for student growth and development, learning, and well-being.

Essential Questions:

1. What is involved in the special education process and how does that affect me?
2. Why bother with varied instructional strategies?
3. How does a teacher differentiate instruction for all students in their classroom?
4. How do I use formative assessments to drive instruction and what do I do if students don't meet the summative assessment standards?

Enduring Understandings:

1. All students have a right to learn in school through instruction that is effective for them
2. All students with disabilities have a **legal right to be educated in inclusive classrooms** with general education students barring extraordinary educational circumstances.
3. Teachers are advocates for best practices that allow students to capture, explore, master, and apply the content.
4. Teachers who design curriculum with the end in mind can more easily develop assessments and lessons that align with learning goals.
5. Teachers who design curriculum with differentiation in mind honor all of their students' needs.

Assignments:

- A. **Weekly Lecture Videos (50 points -due weekly):** Each week you can earn up to 5 points by viewing the weekly video lecture. To earn these points, you must watch the video lecture, find the five secret words hidden in the lecture, and submit these secret words to the assignment link. This is on the honor system, I have no way of tracking whether you've actually watched the video or not, but if you choose not to you will only be making the course more difficult for you as time goes on and assignments become much more involved.
- B. **Weekly Reflection Assignment (50 points):** Each week, for 5 points, you will reflect on the reading(s), conversations you had with classmates, and class lectures/PowerPoints. This reflection will be how I gauge your learning for the week, so it is important you think critically and deeply with approaching this assignment. The reflection should at least contain the following components and be no more than two pages double-spaced:
1. Synthesize the reading(s) – Explain how the reading(s) for the week relate to one another and the week's topic.
 2. Integrate with the module materials and activities – Connect the readings with the PowerPoint, lectures, and class activities. Consider how they relate to one another.
 3. Personalize the module – How did you grow this week? What did you learn that you hadn't even considered? Did any of the information challenge your thinking, and how do you feel about that? Are there any questions you still have?
- C. **Weekly Cohort Forum (50 points - due Sundays 11:59):** The importance of collaborating with your classmates in teacher preparation cannot be overstated. I am still personally and professionally connected to many teachers from my undergraduate days. To promote this in an asynchronous format, each week there will be a discussion board with a prompt based on a posted video, the reading, a classroom activity, etc. Students will answer the discussion question in a thoughtful post of at least two paragraphs, or if they choose to upload a video response, a length between 3-5 minutes. As well, students will need to respond to two other posts in that week's discussion board. Cheerleading posts such as "Great job!" or "That's exactly what I was thinking!" with no other content will be considered a zero response. All responses should lead to more discussion if others choose to respond. Posts are due by Friday evening at 11:59 pm and responses are due by Sunday at 11:59 pm. Each forum is worth 5 points, 3 of which come from your initial response and two of which come from responding to at least 2 of your classmates.
- D. **Online Learning Modules (50 points):** Throughout the course you will be assigned a total of 2 learning modules to complete, along with an accompanying note-taking document. Each module is worth 25 points on your final grade.
- E. **Assignment #1: Exceptionality Book Talk (100 points):** A book talk is a short presentation about a book with the goal of convincing other people to read it. It's not a formal book report or review. In a book talk, the goal is to engage the listeners and present a fun, exciting, and even suspenseful commercial for your book. Choose a children's book that provides children and families to learn about their own or others' exceptionality. Use your research findings to develop a variety of questions/activities to discuss the multiple dimensions (strengths and needs) of the exceptionality depicted. You will deliver a short presentation (no more than 10 minutes) in the form of a video posted to the cohort forum that includes the a) Title and Author, b) key ideas of the story, c) a passage that is meaningful to you and why (read the passage), d) why you chose this book and how you would use it in your classroom.

- F. **Assignment #2: Exceptionality Research Handout (100 points):** Create a well-designed, 1 page front and back handout about a disability that affects students' educational performance. It will include:

Title each section with the following topics (A-J).

- a) Definition of the disability
- b) The criteria for qualification
- c) The characteristics
- d) Prevalence
- e) Etiology of the disability
- f) Appropriate educational approaches (tips for teachers, accommodations and/or modifications necessary for accessing the general education curriculum)
- g) Information about educational placement options
- h) A discussion of issues and trends
- i) A brief synopsis of any relevant court cases related to this disability
- j) List of references, in APA 7

- G. **Final Project - ED 470 Field Project (100 points):** This course includes a Field Project designed to connect course concepts with real-world special education practice. Students will choose one of several approved experience options and complete a brief written reflection. The project encourages observation, professional inquiry, and engagement with individuals and systems that support learners with disabilities. Students may select from:

- a. Special Education Teacher Interview
- b. Special Education Classroom Visitation
- c. Community Agency Visit & Interview
- d. Volunteer Experience with a Disability-Related Organization (instructor approval required for independent options)

After completing the chosen experience, students will submit a 3–4 page reflection paper addressing what they observed, key insights gained, and how the experience informs their understanding of disability and their future professional practice.

*Grading subject to change with additional assignments, syllabus will be updated with these changes.

Grading:		
Assignments:	Points:	
Weekly Lecture Video	50 points	A = 93% or Better (465-500)
Weekly Cohort Forum	50 points	A- = 90% - 92% (450-464)
Weekly Reflection Assignment	50 points	B+ = 87% - 89% (435-449)
IRIS Modules	50 points	B = 83% - 86% (415-434)
Exceptionality Booktalk	100 points	B- = 80% - 82% (400-414)
Exceptionality Research Handout	100 points	C+ = 77% - 79% (385-399)
Final Project	100 points	C = 73% - 76% (365-384)
Total:	500 points	C- = 70% - 72% (350-364)
		D = 60% - 69% (315-334)
		F = 50% and below (<250)

Academic Expectations and Integrity:

- **Class Participation:** Class Participation, Reading, and Work Expectations: Reading the assigned textbook chapters is integral to the successful completion of the course. They are foundational for class discussions, activities, projects, and reflections. Students are expected to complete work (inside & outside of class) that exhibits professional growth and Reflective Professionalism
 - Respects the opinions of others.
 - Considers other points of view (contemplative rather than confrontational or judgmental) and communicates messages effectively.
 - Builds on peers' ideas showing collegiality and collaboration
 - **If you have specific needs regarding the course, see the instructor immediately. If you need to request accommodations (e.g., extra time for assignment), you must contact the professor BEFORE DUE DATE.**
- **Late Work Policy:** Late assignments are accepted for 3 days after the due date. Points will be deducted. Communication prior to the due date is mandatory to submit late work for credit.
- **Written Assignments:** All work is expected to demonstrate college level writing quality in content and mechanics. All references must be in APA (7th edition, 2020).
 - Word/PDF/Google Document Link - 12 inch font, double spaced, Times New Roman, with one inch margins. All papers must have cited evidence unless otherwise stated. Papers needing editing will be returned when the errors impede the instructor from understanding the content. Assignments turned in via email (without prior consent of the instructor) will not receive credit. If you are having difficulty meeting assignment deadlines, please see the instructor.
- **Changes to syllabus and course structure – The instructor reserves the right to modify** the course content, timelines and course structure in order to better serve the needs of the class as a whole. Changes will be announced in class and students are responsible to adjust their course planning, accordingly.
- **Assignment submission** - Do not email instructor completed assignments. They will not be read or counted as turned in. ALL assignments are to be posted using the course MOODLE.

Students are expected to maintain academic integrity and honesty in completion of all work for this class. Examples of academic dishonesty include:

1. Receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on exams
2. Using unauthorized materials during an exam
3. Plagiarism (using materials from sources without citations)
4. Copying the work of someone else and submitting it as your own

The first instance of academic dishonesty will result (for all parties involved) in no credit for the assignment or exam. In addition, a student will be ineligible to complete any extra credit work for the class. Subsequent episodes will result in further disciplinary action, up to and including failure of the course. The examples above include the use of any generative artificial

intelligence tool such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot etc. that is inconsistent with the faculty's expressed expectations for the entire course or any assignment. Note that students are responsible for any inaccurate, biased, offensive, or otherwise unethical content they submit regardless of whether or not it makes use of AI in any way.

Course AI Policy: Use only with prior permission

Students are not allowed to use artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT as a source or tool, unless instructor permission and guidelines for citation and acknowledgement are obtained in advance. AI software like ChatGPT can be helpful for **editing or organizing your original text, or helping you to generate ideas**. It is **not to be used for generating any part of your assignments**. Although Turnitin may provide your instructor with an "artificial intelligence detection score" for your work along with an originality score, such analysis is highly unreliable and no AI detection software analysis will be used as evidence in relation to Academic Honesty and the Code of Student Conduct.

SOU Academic Support

If you are in need of academic support because of a documented disability (whether it is psychiatric, learning, mobility, health related, or sensory), you may be eligible for academic accommodations through disability services for students. Contact the Director, Disability Services for Students, at 552-6213, or schedule an appointment in person at the ACCESS Center, Stevenson Union, Lower Level. DSS services are available to all distance learning (online) students as well as on-campus students. Please see our DSS for Distance Learning page. <http://www.sou.edu/access/dss/>

Course Calendar

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Handouts	Assignments
1		Syllabus Overview and Week 1 Lecture Video Drunk History	Syllabus Textbook Chapter 1	Introduction Cohort Forum After watching the Lecture video and submitting the secret phrase, Watch the included episode of Drunk History for your forum and post your initial reflection. Respond to two peers by Sunday Read chapter 1 Submit weekly reflection
2		History of Special Education	Textbook Chapter 2	Read Chapter 2 Watch lecture video, submit secret phrase Weekly forum post and two responses Submit weekly reflection
3		What is Special Education, the referral process, and 13 eligibility Categories	Textbook Chapter 3	Read Chapter 3 Watch lecture video, submit secret phrase Weekly forum post and two responses Complete IRIS Module 1: RTI (Part 1): An Overview Make final project selection Work on Exceptionality Booktalk - Due next week

4		Critical Inclusion and Differentiation: One Big Task	Textbook Chapter 4	Read chapter 4 Watch lecture video, submit secret phrase Exceptionality Booktalk presentation due on weekly forum with two responses to classmates Weekly reflection
5		Strategies to support students with high and low incidence disabilities	Textbook Chapter 5	Read Chapter 5 Read the Learning Styles article Watch lecture video, submit secret phrase Weekly forum post and two responses Weekly reflection
6		Strategies to support AIG, ELL, and twice-exceptional students	Textbook Chapter 6	Read Chapter 6 Watch lecture video, submit secret phrase IRIS Module 2: Differentiated Instruction Weekly forum post and two responses Weekly reflection
7		Creating Interactive Learning Experiences	Textbook Chapter 7	Read Chapter 7 Watch lecture video, submit secret phrase Weekly forum post and two responses Exceptionality Handout due

				Weekly reflection
8		Finding Engaging Resources	Textbook Chapter 8	Read Chapter 8 Watch lecture video, submit secret phrase Weekly forum post (student grab-bag ideas) Weekly reflection
9		Nuts and Bolts: What is an IEP and what does that have to do with me?	Textbook Chapter 9	Read Chapter 9 Watch lecture video, submit secret phrase Weekly forum post and two responses Weekly reflection
10		Final Class session Student Grab Bag: What do you still want to know?	Textbook Chapter 10	Read chapter 10 Final forum post and two responses Final Project Due Final class reflection

Syllabus Statements

Raider Reminder

All students must abide by the Code of Student Conduct and Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy. Make sure that any contact with others is wanted, that any recording is done with informed consent of any other party, and that it involves no illegal downloads or activity.

In addition, we remain committed to the [University's mission and values](#). We provide a healthy, safe and civil campus; respectful, inclusive, and equitable interactions in all of our learning spaces including physical and virtual classrooms; and no tolerance for racist, sexist, or other forms of hurtful discourse.

SOU Cares and Equity Grievance Reporting

SOU has a wide range of resources to help you succeed. Our faculty, staff, and administration are dedicated to providing you with the best possible support. The SOU Cares System allows us to connect you with staff members who can assist with concerns and connect you to further available resources. This includes concerns regarding finances, food security, health, housing, mental health, wellbeing, legal concerns, family concerns, study skills, time management, etc. You are also welcome to use the SOU Cares System to share concerns about yourself, a friend, or a classmate. Go to www.sou.edu/cares to submit a note of concern.

The Dean of Students' Office and the Office of Equity Grievance provide recourse for students through the Student Code of Conduct, Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, and other applicable policies, regulations, and laws. SOU's Equity Grievance Program addresses concerns about sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, intimate partner violence, bias and discrimination for students, staff and faculty. Reports related to sexual misconduct, assault, harassment, or bias may be made anonymously or confidentially by completing [this form](#).

Academic Honesty Statement and Code of Student Conduct

Students are expected to maintain academic integrity and honesty in completion of all work for this class. According to SOU's Student Code of Conduct: "Acts of academic misconduct involve the use or attempted use of any method that enables a student to misrepresent the quality or integrity of his or her academic work and are prohibited."

Such acts include, but are not limited to: copying from the work of another person or source, and/or allowing another student to copy from one's own work; unauthorized use of materials during exams; intentional or unintentional failure to acknowledge the ideas or words of another individual or source that have been taken from any published or unpublished source; placing one's name on papers, reports, or other documents that are the work of another individual or source; submission of work resulting from inappropriate collaboration or assistance; submission of the same paper or project for separate courses without prior authorization by faculty members; and/or knowingly aiding in or inciting the academic dishonesty of another.

The examples above include the use of any generative artificial intelligence tool such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot etc. that is inconsistent with the faculty's expressed expectations for the entire course or any assignment. AI detection software is highly unreliable so no AI detection software analysis will be used as evidence in relation to Academic Honesty and the Code of Student Conduct. However, note that students are responsible for any inaccurate, biased, offensive, or otherwise unethical content they submit regardless of whether or not it makes use of AI in any way. All incidents of academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action(s) as outlined in SOU's [Code of Student Conduct](#). In case

of loss, theft, destruction, or dispute over authorship, always retain a copy of any work you produce and submit for grades. Retain all work that has been graded and returned to you.

Turnitin Originality Checker

Per SOU's [Code of Student Conduct](#), each student's education is the product of their own intellectual effort and engagement. Breaches of academic integrity compromise the overall quality of scholarship and detract from the value of the SOU degree. In order to provide opportunities for the instructor and students to review their work for originality, instructors may require students to submit all or some of their work to Turnitin. In order to meet this requirement, students must agree to the Turnitin End User License Agreement (EULA). Any work submitted to Turnitin without a EULA in place may not be accepted by the instructor for credit. Any student who does not wish to accept the EULA in a course where Turnitin is required should withdraw from the course. [Learn more about Turnitin](#) and review the terms and conditions.

Emergency Notifications

SOU is committed to a safe community. Student, faculty and staff emails are automatically enrolled in SOU Alert, the campus emergency communication system. In the event of emergency, closure, or other significant disruption to campus operations, such as inclement weather, messages are delivered via SOU Alert. To ensure timely notification, students, faculty, and staff are **strongly** encouraged to visit Inside SOU to register their cell phone numbers and/or add family members to the system. Campus Public Safety is available 24 hours/day by dialing 541-552-6911. CPS responds to safety concerns, incidents, and emergencies and can provide safety escorts to on-campus locations. CPS works in collaboration with Ashland Police and Fire.

Statement on Title IX and Mandatory Reporting

Federal law requires that employees of institutions of higher learning (faculty, staff and administrators) report to a Title IX officer any time they become aware that a student is a victim or perpetrator of gender-based bias, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking. Further, Oregon law requires a mandatory report to law enforcement of any physical or emotional abuse of a child or other protected person, including elders and people with disabilities, or when a child or other protected person is perceived to be in danger of physical or emotional abuse. If you are the victim of sexual or physical abuse and wish to make a confidential disclosure please contact the La Clinica Student Health and Wellness Center to speak to a confidential resource. All other reports can be made to SOU's online [Reporting Form](#) for instances of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. Please note that reports through this form can be submitted with names or anonymously.

SOU Academic Support/Disability Resources

To support students with disabilities in acquiring accessible books and materials, and in planning their study and time management strategies, SOU requires all professors to include information regarding Academic Support and Disability Resources on course syllabi. It is the policy of Southern Oregon University that no otherwise qualified person shall, solely by reason of disability, be denied access to, participation in, or benefits of any service, program, or activity operated by the University. Qualified persons shall receive reasonable accommodation/ modification needed to ensure equal access to employment, educational opportunities, programs, and activities in the most appropriate, integrated setting, except when such accommodation creates undue hardship on the part of the provider. These policies comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, the Americans with Disabilities Act of

1990, and other applicable federal and state regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.

If you are in need of support because of a documented disability (whether it be learning, mobility, mental health, health-related, or sensory) you may be eligible for academic or other accommodations through Disability Resources. See the [Disability Resources webpage](#) for more information or to schedule an appointment. If you are already working with Disability Resources, make sure to request your accommodations for this course as quickly as possible to ensure that you have the best possible access **since these services are not retroactive.**

All students may benefit from the ability to convert files posted in Moodle to alternate formats including audio, ebook and Braille. [Learn more about file conversion.](#)

La Clinica Student Health & Wellness Center (SHWC)

[The La Clinica Student Health and Wellness Center](#) is an integrative health center that provides both medical and mental health services to students. SHWC is open Monday - Friday 8am-5pm. Students can call 541-494-4875 or 541-618-1300 to schedule an appointment or go to their health portal at <https://health.sou.edu/> to schedule an appointment online. Students can be seen the same day if they have an urgent need. They can call or walk-in to be seen that day. SHWC also offers 24/7 free, confidential mental health and well-being support through the TELUS program. Students can go to [the TELUS home page](#) to talk or chat with a provider.

Statement on Military and Other Forms of Active Service Duty

Pursuant to Oregon law, any student enrolled at a public university who is a member of the military, state National Guard, or other federal or state service protected by ORS 352.293 who is ordered to active duty for more than 30 consecutive days has the right to request accommodation for such service, subject to the conditions and requirements of applicable Oregon law or regulation. Such accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the right to withdraw from a course without penalty, a grade of Incomplete and option to complete at a later date once service has concluded, and/or the right to credit for any tuition and fees already paid, depending on the student's status.

Any student enrolled at a public university who is a member of the military, state National Guard, or other federal or state service protected by ORS 352.293 who is ordered to active duty for fewer than 30 consecutive days and misses a course session, assignment, examination or other coursework due to serving on active duty or is receiving medical treatment for an injury sustained on active duty has the right to request accommodation for their service or medical treatment, subject to the conditions and requirements of applicable Oregon law or regulation. Such accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the right to submit any missed examination, assignment or other course requirement upon completion of service or treatment; and/or the right to have a course grade assigned without submitting missed assignment or examinations, should the instructor determine that sufficient work has been assessed for the determination of a grade. Any student who expects to be called for active duty should contact instructors as soon as possible to discuss accommodations.

Attendance and Financial Aid

Students who receive federal financial aid are required to attend and participate in all of the courses for which they register, starting with the first week of class. For face-to-face courses, in-person attendance is necessary. The US Department of Education (USDE) describes the following activities as indicators of attendance and active participation (see the [formal rules](#) at the USDE website):

- Attending a synchronous class, lecture, recitation, or field or laboratory activity where there is an opportunity for interaction between the instructor and students;
- Submitting an assignment;
- Taking an assessment or an exam;
- Participating in an interactive tutorial or webinar;
- Participating in an assigned study group, group project or an online discussion; or
- Interacting with an instructor about academic matters.

The following activities are not considered by the USDE to be indicators of first-week engagement:

- Living in campus housing or using an institutional meal plan,
- Logging into an online class or tutorial without any further participation, or
- Participating in academic counseling or advising.

Instructors will report students who are absent during the first week of an in-person course or those who do not participate in an online course as described above. Any students who are reported as no-shows will have their financial aid status reviewed and their award may be adjusted as a result.