

**Individual Differences - Secondary  
Course Syllabus  
Unique (09195)**

**Instructor:** Dr. Christina “Tina” Fragale, BCBA-D  
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*\*\*Email is the best way to contact me. I will respond within 24 hours or please send a follow up email. I will email you through Canvas also with updates.*

**Office:** SZB 440L  
**Office Hours:** Mondays 1:30-3pm, Thursdays 2:30-3:30pm, immediately after class, or by appointment

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Welcome to the world of disability and difference. Actually, you have always been living in this world, but for many of you, this may be your first formal introduction to the world of disabilities. One of my main goals for this class is to challenge your ideas of what “normal” looks like, encourage that “different” does not mean bad and that persons with disabilities can be jerks, too.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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This introductory course provides an overview of individual differences among people across age levels with an emphasis on students at the secondary level. Course content will include definitions, methodologies, legal aspects, trends, and issues related to individuals with speech and language disorders, learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and ADHD. All issues will be discussed in the context of family involvement, cultural and linguistic diversity, and a lifespan focus.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Describe basic concepts and issues related to diversity in schools, the workplace, and the community
- Articulate their individual comfort level toward persons with disabilities
- Describe the following concepts related to disabilities: legal and theoretical definitions, prevalence and etiologies, educational and social/emotional characteristics, family involvement and dynamics, life span issues, and assistive technology.
- Describe the socio-cultural and linguistic factors that influence perceptions of disability, quality of life, and services for persons with special needs.
- Discuss the legal mandates and controversial issues associated with addressing the needs of individuals who differ from those in the mainstream of society
- Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education
- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behavior



*This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with a variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one US cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.*

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### Academic Integrity

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code:

**“As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.”**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers/community.

### *Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty*

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Scholastic dishonesty is broadly defined by the University as including, but not limited to “cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two classes without the prior permission of the instructor), or the attempt to commit such an act”. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty are strictly enforced. At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- Avoid plagiarism (using the words and/or ideas of an author without citing the original source). Always acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts and cite your sources. If you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in a previous class), you must make that clear otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism.
- Complete your assignments ***independently*** unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them.
- Follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- Avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

I reserve the right to submit your work to **turnitin** or **safeassign**, plagiarism detection services, for an integrity assessment as needed. You are responsible for understanding UT’s Academic Honesty Policy, which can be found at the following web address:

[http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

### Academic Accommodations

The University of Texas is committed to a quality education for all students. Qualified students with

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disabilities who require accommodations should request them by obtaining a letter documenting the required accommodations from the Services for Students with Disabilities. This letter should be presented to the instructor at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time.

For more information, contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 voice or 512-471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing or visit the website: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>

### **Campus Safety**

Please note the following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

#### *Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)*

If you have any concerns regarding the attitude or actions of students, staff, or faculty, please call the Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

#### *Be Safe Campaign*

When moving about campus, especially during darkness, move with a friend and maintain awareness of your surroundings. Please be aware of these FREE resources:

- SURE Walk program – This program provides walking partners from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., seven days a week. (For help, call 512-232-9255.)
- If a student, staffer or faculty member needs a van ride on campus, they should call 512-441-4441 Option 9.
- Check the “Be Safe” website at <http://besafe.utexas.edu/> for the latest safety tips.

#### *Evacuation Information*

- An emergency that threatens the campus will be announced by several communications means. One of these will be the Outdoor Warning System (Siren). When someone outside hears the siren at a time **OTHER than 11:50 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month, they should immediately seek cover in the closest university building or facility.** Campus emergency personnel will use other communication means to provide information on the correct protective action to take place in the interior of buildings. Please remember to:
  - Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and stairwells of the building you may occupy. Do not use elevators. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
  - Students requiring assistance in evacuation should inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. This information must be provided to the Fire Prevention Services office.
  - In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
  - Review emergency instructions for “shelter-in-place” (seek immediate shelter indoors) and “lockdown” (protection against immediate threats by limiting access to buildings and rooms)

Further information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/preparedness/>

## CLASS CONSIDERATIONS

### Attendance Policy

My philosophy on attendance is simple: you must be present (both physically AND mentally) to learn. Attendance is stressed because you will have opportunities to (a) improve your knowledge base through discussions of class topics and issues, (b) practice skills needed to engage in professional dialogue/exchange with colleagues, (c) acquire information from lectures and presentations, (d) participate in in-class activities that have points attached to them, and (e) learn from guest speakers personal/professional perspectives.

Although attendance is not graded *per se* I will have a pretty good indication of whether you were in class or not. Note that I have to report to various UT entities from time-to-time on the attendance of students. There will be an attendance sheet to sign each class period. Please sign for **ONLY** yourself. Signing for others is considered scholastic dishonesty and will be treated as so. You are responsible for signing in (aka if you are late, it is your responsibility to find the sign-in sheet, etc.). In the case of borderline grades, I may use attendance as a way to help determine your grade.

### Holy Days

Policy for absences due to religious holy days is as set in the Texas Education Code. The code states that a student who misses an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day must be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time *after* the absence, provided he or she has properly notified each instructor. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that the student must notify each instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Please note, even excused and documented absences require timely submission of assignments.

### Classroom Behavior Expectations

#### *Preparing for class*

- Students are expected to come to class meetings **THOROUGHLY PREPARED**. “Thoroughly prepared” is defined as having sufficient knowledge of the assigned material to verbally and in writing (a) discuss definitions, concepts, issues, and procedures and (b) relate this information to content presented during previous class sessions or readings.
- I do not have access to your mind and know what you are thinking. Therefore, I expect that you take responsibility for your learning. This means that if you are having trouble or a concept is unclear, please come talk to me or ask a question in class. If I don’t hear from you, I will assume everything is a-okay and you are understanding the content material sufficiently.

#### *Behavior expectations DURING class*

- This class works best when you participate. I will do my best to make it as engaging as possible, but I am not an entertainer by trade nor can I do it alone. **You have to help.**
- As an introductory course in disabilities, my main goal is to reframe how we think about persons with disabilities (identified or not). That being said, it is important to recognize two things: 1) **we are all starting from different places** and 2) **we all have something to learn.**
- **Life happens.** Please let me know if things beyond this course are affecting your ability to

attend, participate in class or turn in assignments in a timely manner. I do not need to know all your business, but I promise am more willing to work with you if you open a line of communication with me. I promise I do not bite.

- Mobile devices should be powered off and put away during class time to avoid the temptation to use text, check email, surf the web, etc. If you are expecting an emergency call or text during class, please leave the classroom to take the call or text.
- *Computers, tablets/iPads, smart phones or other forms of technology should only be used for the purposes of the course such as accessing course material, note taking, following the lecture slides, etc.* The use of non- class related use such as social media, emailing, or other leisure websites or applications is not only distracting, but disrespectful to me and to your fellow classmates. In addition, the current research **repeatedly** concludes that use of technology to engage in unrelated class activities online is detrimental to learning and remembering lecture content (Paul, 2013). This even applies to peers who are not actually on a laptop specifically engaging in these activities, but in direct view of a multitasking peer (Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013)
- Given all the negative effects of using technology to multitask, please refrain from snapchatting, tweeting working on documents, shopping, etc. until our scheduled technology breaks. By doing so, you can avoid getting engagement points taken off (explained further in under “Assignments” below) AND I promise you will get more out of this class by being **fully** present.

#### References:

Paul, Annie Murphy. (2013, May 3). You'll never learn! Students can't resist multitasking, and it's impairing their memory. *Slate*, Retrieved from [http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/science/2013/05/multitasking\\_while\\_studying\\_divided\\_attention\\_and\\_technological\\_gadgets.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/05/multitasking_while_studying_divided_attention_and_technological_gadgets.html)

Sana, F. Weston, T., & Cepeda, N.J. (2013). Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers. *Computers & Education*, 62, 24-3

#### Miscellaneous

##### *Turning in assignments*

- All assignments are due by the start of class, unless otherwise specified. Canvas does timestamp submissions, which is what I will go by (so plan accordingly). Assignments turned in past the designated time will be considered late. A point will be deducted from the assignment grade for every 24 hours late.
- I will grant any extension as long as you let me know –via email – at least 7 days before the assignment is due. Maximum extension is 7 days.
- All work must be turned in by December 7<sup>th</sup> by 5pm to be counted.

##### *Incompletes*

The assignment of INCOMPLETE OR “I” GRADES is discouraged and will be used only in cases of **extreme** emergencies where satisfactory progress has been demonstrated and a passing grade may be earned.

## COURSE MATERIALS

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Daily access to Canvas is critical to success in this class. I will use the Announcement feature through Canvas to communicate with the whole class, so set your notifications accordingly. All required content is posted on Canvas under Files.

## ASSIGNMENTS

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*Important note.* Detailed guidelines and evaluation criteria for assignments will be provided in class. The following descriptions serve as an overview of the expectations for each assignment. All assignments may be turned in via hard copy or uploaded to Canvas by the beginning of class (12:30pm) on the due date. Assignments turned in using Pages will not be accepted.

### **Engagement (27 meetings x 2 pts each; 54 points)**

Due: weekly

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Your involvement in class will add to your learning and the learning of those around you. You are expected to attend class sessions and complete assigned readings/watch videos. That said, attendance alone is NOT engagement. You will receive full points through contributing to class activities, sharing insights, and being engaged.

Each tardy (arriving later than 12:40pm) or leaving class early (before 1:45pm), regardless of reason, will result in the loss of one engagement point. Off-task technology use, sleeping, etc., will also lead to the loss of engagement points. I will only warn you once before beginning to take off points. You are welcome to check in with me at any point in the semester the current status of your engagement points.

### **Content Responses (11 x 2 pts each; 22 pts total)**

Due: see schedule

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The class is designed to move quickly in order to cover all the content. In order for you to be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that you access all the content necessary prior to class. Content Response assignments not only have information about *how* to access the materials, but completion of the assignments are designed to ensure you have accessed the content. There are 12 Content Responses, so you may drop one for no penalty. However, by completing all 12, you may receive 2 extra points toward your grade.

### **What I May Want to Be When I Grow Up – Teacher or Non-teacher Edition (15 pts)**

Due: September 11

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This assignment requires you to think about where you are in terms of your career plans. Why do you want (or not want) to be a teacher? Have you ever considered working with people in disabilities/teaching special education? Why or why not? Write a brief paper (double-spaced, 2-3 pages) about what you may want to be when you grow up (in regard to teaching and people with disabilities), your experiences with people with disabilities, and the learning needs you currently have. A rubric is provided on Canvas and will be discussed in class. You may choose to complete this assignment orally; email me to set up a time to do this.

### **Examinations (2 exams x 15 pts each; 30 pts total)**

Due: October 11, December 6

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As you may have noted from the syllabus thus far, a lot of this class is about your attitudes, beliefs, etc. That said, there is some concrete knowledge I want you to have about special education and/or disabilities. Most of what will be tested will be from the powerpoints and classroom discussion. You will have two open-notes exams, to be done at home during our regular class period. Although you can only take it once, they will not be cumulative, and they are not timed. They will be made available 4pm the day before it is due.

**Exceptionality Matrix (10 pts)**

**Due:** December 4

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You will complete a matrix for most exceptionality types after accessing the content and during class lectures, activities, etc. This resource will cover accommodations teachers can make to help students with this exceptionality succeed in school, implications across the lifespan, and things people should know about this exceptionality. This work can be done during class if it doesn't interfere with your learning. It will be graded on overall completeness. Please make a scan/take a picture and upload it on Canvas.

**AIT Lab Orientation (10 pts)**

**Due:** December 6

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A site visit to the *Assistive and Instructional Technology Lab* in SZB 518e will acquaint you with the use of assistive technology (AT) across a number of settings with individuals with special needs. You will need to sign up for the orientations online; specific information is posted on Canvas under the Files tab (including screenshots to assist you). the sign-up period begins **September 5, 2018**. See AIT lab orientation document uploaded to Canvas which has the information in the document regarding sign up procedures and other details. The actual orientations begin on **September 12, 2018** and end on **November 16, 2018**. I strongly advise that you sign up as soon as you can – this class is not the only class doing these visits so spots fill quickly. Work directly with the AIT lab supervisor (Ashley Bagwell at [afbagwell@utexas.edu](mailto:afbagwell@utexas.edu)) if you encounter problems in signing up.

After completing the orientation, you will turn in the **AIT Lab Orientation Site Visit Form** (on Canvas) and upload a screen shot indicating you finished the online survey. You may choose to turn in the form electronically or by turning in a hard copy. You may (and are encouraged) to turn this assignment in as soon as you complete it. A rubric is provided on Canvas.

**Field Work Activity (36 pts)**

**Due:** Plan: September 13; Field Trip Reflection Forms: week after field trips; Verification Log – December 6

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Special education is an incredibly diverse field. No amount of reading or lecture can make the field of special education come “alive.” Therefore, you need to spend some time knee-deep in the field. You must spend **15** hours in the field; we will do 3 hours together as a class. You are responsible for scheduling and fulfilling the remaining 12 hours.

You can meet the fieldwork requirement in a variety of ways, including:

- Volunteering with a variety of organizations (see list on Canvas)

- Observing relevant school settings or community settings (e.g., special education classrooms, job sites, group homes)
- Shadowing/interviewing an individual in a position of interest to you (e.g., audiologist, counselor/social worker, physical therapist, speech and language pathologist, job coach, special education teacher)

You will indicate your plan for completing your remaining 12 hours of field work by submitting the **Field Work Plan** form (worth 5 points.)

After each of our “field trips,” please complete the appropriate **Field Trip Reflection Form** (worth 8 points each).

You will complete a **Field Work Verification Log** (worth 15 points) to indicate when and where you completed your field work (the remaining 12 hours).

### **Final Reflection Paper** (12 pts)

**Due:** Dec 6

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This assignment will have you apply two practices that I believe great teachers (and students and people, in general) do consistently: a) reflect and b) identify what they still need to learn. For your final assignment in this class, write a short paper identifying at least two “big ideas” that you have learned from this course regarding teaching and/or working with students and/or adults with disabilities and any gaps in your knowledge that remain. A rubric is available on Canvas and will be discussed in class. You may choose to complete this assignment orally; email me to set up a time to do this.

### **EVALUATION**

Below are the values of the various kinds of work required for the course, but students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily a judgment about your performance on a particular assignment. *Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.*

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Engagement	54	Weekly
Content Responses	22	Weekly
What I May Want to Be When I Grow Up Paper	15	September 11
Field Work Plan*	5	September 13
Examinations (2 x 15 points each)	30	Oct 11; Dec 6
Field Trip Reflection Form* (2 x 8 points each)	16	Oct 18; Nov 27
Exceptionality Matrix	10	Dec 4
AIT Lab Orientation*	10	Dec 6
Field Work Verification Log*	15	Dec 6
Final Reflection Paper	12	Dec 6
Total	189	

\*Students are encouraged to complete and submit these assignments early.



All work must be turned in by 5:00 pm on December 6th.

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A	94–100%	C+	77–79%
A–	90–93%	C	73–76%
B+	87–89%	C–	70–72%
B	83–86%	F	< 70%
B–	80–82%		

Borderline grades will be reviewed. The next highest grade may be awarded at the discretion of the instructor **based on the student's overall effort, attendance, and participation in the class.**

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

\*\*This schedule is an outline for the course this semester and is subject to change as needed. Common sense and instructor discretion will be the governing forces in dealing with any circumstances that may arise that are not explicitly addressed in this syllabus.

Module/ Date		Topics	Content to be Accessed Before Class	Assignments Due
1	August 30	Welcome Course Overview Semantics		
2	September 4	History of Treatment of People with Disabilities	Cohen- first reading or Front of the Class (YouTube video)	<b>Content Response #1</b>
	September 6			
3	September 11	What is Special Education? Who is in Special Education?		<b>What I May Want to Be When I Grow Up</b>
	September 13			<b>Field Work Plan*</b>
4	September 18	SPED identification	Hampton	<b>Content Response #2</b>
5	September 20	Teaching Students with Disabilities		
	September 25			

	<b>September 27</b>	Speech and Language Impairments	Accommodations IRIS modules	<b>Content Response #3</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>October 2</b>	Learning Disabilities	Embracing Dyslexia video	<b>Content Response #4</b>
	<b>October 4</b>			
<b>7</b>	<b>October 9</b>	Intellectual disabilities, multiple/severe disabilities	Teaching with UDL (YouTube video); Simon	<b>Content Response #5</b>
	<b>October 11</b>	Exam #1		
<b>8</b>	<b>October 16</b>	Field Trip – no class; meet at Mary Lee Foundation		
	<b>October 18</b>	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	Schwarz; ADHD (YouTube video)	<b>Content Response #6</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>October 23</b>	Physical disabilities and other Health impairments	YouTube video; Mullins (TED talk)	<b>Content Response #7; Field Trip Reflection Form I*</b>
	<b>October 25</b>			
<b>10</b>	<b>October 30</b>	Autism Spectrum Disorder	Haddon	<b>Content Response #8</b>

	<b>November 1</b>	Autism Spectrum Disorder		
<b>11</b>	<b>November 6</b>	Autism Spectrum Disorder	Padawar	<b>Content Response #9</b>
	<b>November 8</b>	Profoundly gifted		
<b>12</b>	<b>November 13</b>	Emotional Disturbance	Cogan OR Ford	<b>Content Response #10</b>
	<b>November 15</b>			
<b>13</b>	<b>November 20</b>	Field Trip	Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors IRIS Modules	<b>Content Response #11</b>
	<b>November 22</b>	No class – have a safe and happy Thanksgiving!		
<b>14</b>	<b>November 27</b>	Deafness or Hard of Hearing		<b>Field Trip Reflection Form II*</b>
	<b>November 29</b>	Blind or Low Vision	Downey (TED talk)	
<b>15</b>	<b>December 4</b>	Burning Questions Course Evaluations Closing Comments	Cohen - teaching	<b>Content Response #12 Exceptionality Matrix</b>

	<b>December 6</b>	Exam #2		<b><i>Field Work Verification Log for remaining 12 hours*; AIT Lab Orientation*; Final Reflection Paper</i></b>
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Note: \*Students are encouraged to complete and submit these assignments early.