

Introduction to Special Education Policy and Law

EDSE 192D

Fall 2025 Section 80 Fully Online 1 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 09/24/2025 Modified 08/20/2025

Contact Information

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Email for an appointment

Course Information

Course Format: Asynchronous

This course will adopt an asynchronous delivery format. Students will need access to a computer, tablet, or device with internet connectivity to access content. Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the first floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the second floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college.

Computers are also available for loan in the SJSU/Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide, and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens, and monitors.

Canvas Learning Management System

All course materials (announcements, syllabus, handouts, assignment instructions, lecture videos, etc.) will be available on Canvas. You are responsible for regularly checking both Canvas and your SJSU email (the one that ends with "sjsu.edu") to learn of any updates. For Canvas support, please review the Canvas Student Resources.

Course Description and Requisites

Introduces special education policy and laws, situating these policies in the historical context in which they developed while highlighting the rights of all students as outlined in federal policy.

Course may be repeated for up to 2 units.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

In this fully online, asynchronous course, teacher candidates are expected to actively engage in all learning activities and maintain professional communication at all times. Weekly modules and assignments must be completed by the specified deadlines outlined in the course syllabus, as timely participation is essential for mastering course content. All communication, whether in discussion boards, emails, or collaborative projects, should reflect professionalism, respect, and constructive collaboration. Candidates are encouraged to reach out to the instructor promptly with any questions or concerns to ensure a clear understanding of course expectations and requirements. Academic integrity is paramount, and all work submitted must be original and properly cited where applicable. Finally, candidates should regularly monitor the course platform for updates and feedback to stay on track throughout the semester.

Program Information

LCOE Department of Special Education Mission

We prepare candidates to be transformative leaders in the field, and lifelong learners who respond to racism, ableism, bigotry, and prejudice in their schools and communities. To this end, we center anti-racist and anti-ableist policies and practices in our teaching, research, and service to disrupt systemic racism that has historically prevented full inclusion and equity for students with disabilities including our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students, staff, and faculty. We engage culturally sustaining pedagogies and the principles of UDL in our coursework and fieldwork, partnering with our local districts to push for the success of students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

LCOE Department of Special Education Program Learning Outcomes

- **PLO 1** Assess and identify the educational needs and strengths of students with disabilities from diverse socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- **PLO 2** Critically evaluate pedagogy, curricula and instructional materials grounded in quality indicators of evidence-based practices for students with disabilities.
- **PLO 3** Plan, design, implement, and monitor linguistically and culturally appropriate instruction that meets the unique needs of students with disabilities.
- **PLO 4** Apply knowledge of the purpose, characteristics, and appropriate use of different types of assessments used for special education eligibility, placement, and service selection.

- **PLO 5** Utilize research-based knowledge and theoretical, conceptual and evidence-based practices related to individuals with disabilities to improve services and instruction in the field.

[Link to Education Specialist TPEs \(pps 13 – 42\).](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/educator-prep/standards/education-specialist-standards-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=729750b1_45) (https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/educator-prep/standards/education-specialist-standards-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=729750b1_45).

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO): California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) Standards

To support the acquisition of the PLOs, this course addresses the following course learning outcomes (CLOs), which align with the Council for Exceptional Children's High-Leverage Practices, and assists students to meet the following competencies specified in the CCTC Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs)

(<https://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/stds-prep-program/california-tpes>):
(<https%3A/www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/stds-prep-program/california-tpes>):

- Universal: 1.2(I), 2.3(I), 2.5(I), 4.5(I), 6.5(I), 6.6(I/P), 6.7(I/P/A)
- Mild/Moderate: 1.5(I), 2.3(I/P), 2.8(I), 5.3(I/P), 6.3(I/P/A), 6.6(I/P/A)
- Extensive Support Needs: 2.10(I), 3.3(I), 4.8(I), 5.2(I), 5.4(P), 6.3(P), 6.4(I), 6.5(P)
- Early Childhood Special Education: 4.5(I), 4.11(I), 5.8(I), 6.1(I), 6.2(I), 6.3(I), 6.4(I), 6.5(I), 6.6(I), 6.8(I)

- 1) Demonstrate ability to collaborate with professionals to support student success (HLP 1).
- 2) Demonstrate ability to organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families (HLP 2).
- 3) Demonstrate ability to collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services (HLP 3).
- 4) Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement educational programs (HLP 5).
- 5) Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals (HLP 11).
- 6) Articulate the role of the teacher as a mandated reporter, including how this role interfaces with other professional responsibilities.

Course Materials

Gargiulo, R.M., & Bouck, E.C. (2020). Special Education in Contemporary Society. 7th Edition. SAGE.

Other Readings (Links can be found on Canvas)

Bicehouse, V., & Faieta, J. (2017). IDEA at age forty: Weathering Common Core standards and data driven decision making. Contemporary Issues in Education Research, 10, 33-44. Retrieved from:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1126838.pdf> (<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1126838.pdf>)

Lo, L. (2012). Demystifying the IEP process for diverse parents of children with disabilities. Teaching Exceptional Children, 44(3), 14-20. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F004005991204400302>

<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F004005991204400302>

Villegas A.M., Ciotoli F., Lucas T. (2017). A framework for preparing teachers for classrooms that are inclusive of all students. In L. Florian & N. Pantić (Eds.) Teacher Education for the Changing Demographics of Schooling. Inclusive Learning and Educational Equity, Volume 2. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Mid-Atlantic ADA Center. (n.d.). A comparison of ADA, IDEA, and Section 504. Retrieved from

<http://www.adainfo.org/sites/default/files/A%20COMPARISON%20of%20ADA-IDEA-504.pdf>
(<http://www.adainfo.org/sites/default/files/A%20COMPARISON%20of%20ADA-IDEA-504.pdf>)

Sullivan, A. L., & Osher, D. (2019) IDEA's double bind: A synthesis of disproportionality policy interpretations. Exceptional Children, 85, 395-412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402918818047>

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402918818047>

Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

1) Reading Quizzes (4 @10 points each=40 points)

It is essential that you develop a foundational understanding of special education policy and law, including developing an understanding of the context in which these policies emerged and current issues influencing the field. For each module, you will be asked to complete an online reading quiz.

2) Weekly Reading Discussions (3 @10 points each=30 points)

Students will be assigned weekly discussion prompts from the readings and activities. Students are required to respond to the prompt and comment on the postings of two classmates.

3) IRIS Module: IEPs (20 Points)

This IRIS Module provides a comprehensive overview of individualized education programs (IEPs). After you complete the module, you will answer the assessment questions at the end of the module, submitting your responses on Canvas.

4) Mandated Reporter Training (15 pts)

All school personnel are considered “mandated reporters.” This means that anyone who works in a school must report cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect to protective services. This is both an ethical and a legal obligation for school personnel, and it is important to understand what it means to be a mandated reporter. In this assignment, you will complete the California Mandated Reporter Training for School Personnel (<https://mandatedreporter.ca.com/training/school-personnel>) and submit your certificate of completion. If you have recently completed a mandated reporting course (last 12 months) for your job you may upload the certificate of completion for the course.

5) Capstone Final Quiz (10 points)

6) Final Reflection (10 points)

✓ Grading Information

Assignment	Objectives	Points	Percent of Grade	TPEs / CLOs / PLOs
Reading Quiz 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define exceptional children, disability, handicapped, developmentally delayed, at risk, and special education Identify 13 disability categories recognized by IDEA Describe historical evolution of services List related services for students with disabilities Outline multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary team models Describe common cooperative teaching models Identify key UDL dimensions Describe services for infants through adults with disabilities 	10	8%	U 1.2, U 4.5, U 6.7ECSE 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6ESN 3.3, 6.4MM 5.3, 6.3PLO 4; CLO 1, 2
Reading Quiz 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify court cases leading to PL 94–142 Summarize IDEA (1975–2004) Describe Section 504 & ADA Distinguish inter-/intra-individual differences Outline referral process Define mainstreaming, LRE, REI, full inclusion List IEP/IFSP components Identify purpose & elements of high-quality IEP 	10	8%	U 4.5, 6.5, 6.7ECSE 6.3, 6.4MM 2.8, 5.3ESN 6.4, 6.5PLO 4; CLO 2
Reading Quiz 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe IEP requirements Distinguish procedural vs substantive errors Conduct parent-engaged meetings 	10	8%	U 4.5, 6.5, 6.7EDSE 4.11ECSE 6.1, 6.3MM 1.5, 5.3, 6.3ESN 6.5PLO 4; CLO 2, 3

Assignment	Objectives	Points	Percent of Grade	TPEs / CLOs / PLOs
Reading Quiz 4	• Describe parent-professional partnerships• Explain family systems model• List emotional responses of families• Summarize disability impact on families• Explain influence of culture/linguistics	10	8%	U 1.2ECSE 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.8MM 6.3ESN 4.8
Special Books by Special Kids Discussion	• Describe strengths/desires of individuals with disabilities• Connect stories to education policy• Debate service delivery models• Describe short-/long-term IEP goals based on individual desires	10	8%	U 2.3, 2.5, 5.2ECSE 4.5MM 2.8, 6.6ESN 4.8, 6.4, 5.2CLO 3, 5
Mediation & Due Process Discussion	• Define mediation & due process in IDEA• Compare mediation vs due process• Reflect on impact on school-family relationships• Develop collaboration strategies to reduce disputes	10	8%	U 4.5, 6.5, 6.7ECSE 6.1, 6.3, 6.6MM 5.3, 6.3ESN 6.3, 6.5CLO 1, 2, 3; PLO 4
IRIS IEP Module	• Recognize IEP errors• Describe high-quality IEP design• Identify strong PLAAFPs & goals• Document progress & parent reporting	20	16%	U 1.2, 2.5, 6.7ECSE 4.11, 5.8, 6.1, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6MM 1.5, 5.3, 6.3ESN 3.3, 4.8, 5.4, 6.5CLO 1, 2, 4, 5; PLO 4
Mandated Reporter Training	• Explain legal requirements• Spot abuse indicators• Consider child conversations• Make and follow through on reports• Discuss reporting issues in schools	15	12%	U 6.6CLO 6
Final Quiz & Reflection	• Analyze and summarize course concepts• Reflect on professional practices• Apply strategies for collaboration and inclusive learning• Identify growth goals for future IEP participation	20	16%	U 1.2, 2.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7MM 2.3, 6.3, 6.6ESN 6.3, 6.5
Total	—	125	100%	

Breakdown

Grade	Points Range (out of 125)	Percent Range
A+	125 – 122	98–100%
A	121 – 117	94–97%
A-	116 – 112	90–93%
B+	111 – 109	88–89%

Grade	Points Range (out of 125)	Percent Range
B	108 – 106	85–87%
B-	105 – 101	81–84%
C+	100 – 97	78–80%
C	96 – 93	75–77%
C-	92 – 87	70–74%
D	86 – 84	68–69%
F	83 or below	≤67%

Criteria

Determination of Grades

In order to qualify for a credential, candidates must maintain an average GPA of 3.0 or above. Earning a B- or below will result in a warning letter from the department and the course will have to be retaken. Students with multiple B- (or lower) grades will be submitted for review by the Student Review Committee to develop an Improvement Plan to ensure their preparation is satisfactory for the remainder of the program.

Late Policy

This is a 5-week course. Assignments can not be accepted after the last day of class, so please plan your time accordingly. All assignments must be completed within the 5 weeks.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Week & Date	Topics	Readings, Videos, Online Modules	Assignments Due
Week 1 (Aug. 20–24)	Context for Special Education • Course introduction• History of special education in the U.S.: People, contexts, and perspectives• Dis/Ability rights• Teachers for all students: Characteristics of inclusive teachers• Special Books by Special Kids – listening to student/family voices	• Gargiulo & Bouck (2017), Ch. 1• Special Books by Special Kids (student choice video)	• Reading Quiz 1 • Special Books by Special Kids Discussion
Week 2 (Aug. 25–31)	IDEA, Section 504, & ADA • History of special education policy, up to and including IDEA (2004)• Six major principles of IDEA• Section 504, IDEA, and ADA: Policies impacting students with disabilities in today's schools	• Gargiulo & Bouck (2017), Ch. 2• Mid-Atlantic ADA Center (n.d.)• Wrightslaw website	• Reading Quiz 2 • Due Process & Mediation: Online Discussion
Week 3 (Sept. 1–7)	The Individualized Education Program (IEP) • Working with the multi-disciplinary team (MDT), including the student, their family, and other professionals• Individualizing education based on student strengths and needs• Accommodations and modifications: important distinctions• Review of final project	• IRIS Module: IEPs• Lo (2012)	• Reading Quiz 3 • IRIS Assessment Questions
Week 4 (Sept. 8–14)	Working with Families & Professional Responsibilities • The rights of parents• Understanding family systems and working with families to support their child's learning• Mandated reporter training: legal responsibilities of educators	• Gargiulo & Bouck (2017), Ch. 4• Bicehouse & Faieta (2017)	• Reading Quiz 4 • Mandated Reporter Training
Week 5 (Sept. 15–24)	Course Wrap-Up • Pulling course concepts together• Final reflection and application	• Review prior materials	• Final Quiz & Reflection