

Introduction to Special Education Policy and Law

EDSE 192D

Fall 2026 Section 81 Fully Online 1 Unit(s) 08/19/2026 to 09/23/2026 Modified 08/26/2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Monica Gonzalez

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Class Days/ Times: Fully Online Asynchronous

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.

Grading: Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

This course is technology intensive and run online only. Participants must have access to the internet, have mastered the use of CANVAS, and commit to using and checking their SJSU email regularly for updates. Participants who are unfamiliar with CANVAS and or unable to access their SJSU email are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to seek assistance from tech support in Clark Hall ASAP . C

Classroom Individual and Community Expectations Students will make efforts to...

1. Submit assignments on time and engage in weekly discussions online.

2. Turn in assignments on time. If you require an extension for an assignment, a written request must be submitted at least 48 hours (2 days) before the due date. Only exceptions include documented emergencies (e.g. illnesses, accidents, family emergencies).

3. Respect your professor and your peers!

Guidelines for Collaboration Participation (Adapted 2025)

- Contribute substantively to the collaboration prompt by addressing all parts of the question or task.
- Support your statements with examples, experiences, or references to readings and resources.
- Engage with your peers' contributions—acknowledge their insights, build on their ideas, and ask clarifying questions when appropriate.
- Use accessible and inclusive language (spell out acronyms, use person-first or identity-first language when appropriate, and avoid ableist or exclusionary terms).
- Demonstrate professional writing—clear, organized, and free of grammatical or structural errors.
- Remember that the goal of the collaboration is to learn from one another, not to grade one another's work. Evaluation and feedback are the responsibility of the instructor.
- Reflect the purpose of the collaboration: to develop collective understanding and professional skill through respectful exchange.

Course AI Use Policy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, or Bard can be powerful learning partners when used thoughtfully. They can help you brainstorm ideas, check clarity, and deepen your understanding of course topics. However, AI can't create your final submissions or replace the thinking and reflection you must do as you learn to make instructional decisions and grow into your professional voice.

You may use AI to: Summarize readings or lectures to support your studying. Brainstorm ideas or outline your thinking for assignments. Explore multiple perspectives or check the clarity of your writing. You may not use AI to: Write or revise assignments, lesson plans, IEP goals, or reflections for submission. Replace your own analysis, professional reasoning, or application of course concepts. Create or fabricate citations, data, or references. Inappropriate or unethical uses of AI include pasting your draft and asking AI to "make it better," submitting AI-generated rewrites without adapting them, or using AI to "fill in" reflective or analytical sections. In those cases, AI becomes the creator, not a coach, and the final work no longer reflects your learning or professional judgment.

Responsible and Transparent Use

If you use AI to support your learning, include a short note describing how it was used (for example: "AI was used to check clarity and suggest structure. All final analysis and applications are my own."). This transparency helps maintain academic integrity and builds awareness of how these tools shape our

thinking. AI should support—not substitute—your professional growth. Use it as a guide, not a shortcut, and remember that your unique reasoning, creativity, and commitment to student learning are what matter most.

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 development 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>):

- 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 role of 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.

Student Companion Resource Website (<https://edge.sagepub.com/gargiulo7e>).
(<https://edge.sagepub.com/gargiulo7e>)

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>

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>

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>

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>

University Resources Writing Support

Please make use of the writing support available through the university. Resources available on campus include:

1. [Lurie Tutoring and Academic Support \(https://www.sjsu.edu/luriessc/studentresources/tutoring.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/luriessc/studentresources/tutoring.php)
2. [SJSU Writing Center \(https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/)
3. [Peer Connections \(https://www.sjsu.edu/peerconnections/index.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/peerconnections/index.php)
4. [Lurie Student Success Center \(https://www.sjsu.edu/luriessc/\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/luriessc/)

Accessible Education Center

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) to establish a record of their disability.

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services

The SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Carlos in the new Student Wellness Center, Room 300B. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide confidential consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [The CAPS Website. \(https://www.sjsu.edu/wellness/access-services/counseling/index.php#pathways\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/wellness/access-services/counseling/index.php#pathways)

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://mandatedreporterca.com/training/school-personnel>) and submit your certificate of completion.

5) Final Quiz (10 points)

6) Final Reflection (10 points)

These culminating assignments for this course will test and have you reflecting on what you learned incorporating readings from the course.

✓ Grading Information

Assignment	Objectives	Points	Percent of Grade	TPEs / CLOs / PLOs
Reading Quiz 1	- 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 6.7 ECSE 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6 ESN 3.3, 6.4 MM 5.3, 6.3 PLO 4; CLO 1, 2

Assignment	Objectives	Points	Percent of Grade	TPEs / CLOs / PLOs
Reading Quiz 2	- 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, 6.7 ECSE 6.3, 6.4 MM 2.8, 5.3 ESN 6.4, 6.5 PLO 4; CLO 2

Reading Quiz 3	• Describe IEP requirements• Distinguish procedural vs substantive errors• Conduct parent-engaged meetings	10	8%	U 4.5, 6.5, 6.7EDSE4.11ECSE 6.1, 6.3MM 1.5, 5.3, 6.3ESN 6.5PLO 4; CLO 2, 3
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; PLO4
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	25	16%	U 1.2, 2.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7MM 2.3, 6.3, 6.6ESN 6.3, 6.5
Total	—	120	100%	—

Breakdown

Grade	Grade	Grade
A 112–120	A– 108–111	
B+ 104–107	B 100–103	B– 96–99
C+ 92–95	C 88–91	C– 84–87
D+ 81–83	D 76–80	D– 72–75

F 71 or below		
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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. 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

It is part of the ethos of the Department of Special Education to prepare students for the role of special education teacher. This role requires careful attention be paid to due dates (e.g., a late IEP meeting can - and has - lead to legal action). It is, therefore, important that you practice the skills necessary to manage your time as part of your coursework. Therefore, submission portals for assignments will close two weeks after the submission deadline. Students will need to request permission to submit an assignment more than two weeks late.

At the same time, it is important to practice grace. If you know that you will not be able to turn an assignment in on time, you will be given a reprieve if you contact the instructor 48 hours in advance, and commit to a new date. If you do not contact the instructor 48 hours in advance, grades will automatically have a 10% deduction on the points earned for each week the assignment is turned in late as follows:

Days Late	Late Deductions	Notes
1–6 days	10%	No need to contact instructor if turned in without advance notice — deduction will automatically be applied.
7–13 days	20%	No need to contact instructor if turned in without advance notice — deduction will automatically be applied.
14–20 days	30%	Must contact instructor.

21+ days	40%	Must contact instructor
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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 19 - 23	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 23 - 30	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 Aug 31 - Sep 6	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 Sep 7- 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 & Date	Topics	Readings, Videos, Online Modules	Assignments Due
Week 5 Sep 15 - 23	Course Wrap-Up• Pulling course concepts together• Final reflection and application	• Review prior materials and double check all assignments are in	• Final Quiz & Reflection