

Mayville State University

SPED 396, Special Education Law

Summer 2025

3 Credit Hours

Course and Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Carly Theis

Contact Information:

Office: Education 116B

Email: carly.theis@mayvillestate.edu

Work phone: 701-788-4821

Hours of Availability:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 9 am -4pm

Tuesday and Thursday: 9am- 4pm

Also available for meetings on other days and times by appointment.

Office Hours Meeting Link: <https://mayvillestate.zoom.us/j/6441539225>

Instructional Mode: Online asynchronous

Course Dates: May 27th 2025- July 21st 2025

Time Zone: All times indicated throughout this syllabus reflect Central Time (CT).

Final Exam Time and Location: During Finals Week Online

Course Materials and Technologies

Required

[MSU Technology Requirements](#)

Yell, M. L. (2019). The law and special education (5th. ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.

Recommended

Supplemental materials will be available and provided during the course through websites and downloadable files.

Conceptual Framework

Teacher Education courses are based upon the Conceptual Framework: Reflective Experiential Teacher. See the document 'Conceptual Framework' provided in the course shell.

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Use of Artificial Intelligence in this Course

You may use AI programs e.g. ChatGPT to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity.

You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor).

Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with severely under relevant Mayville State University policies.

Course Description

In this course we will conduct an in-depth study of the laws and regulations that govern special education and related areas of education law. The course will focus on key concepts of special education law, emphasizing the relationship between legal and practical considerations. We will look at the formal statutes and regulations that govern special education, but most of our emphasis on how these laws are implemented in the real world, by looking at legal decisions, case studies and practical scenarios.

Pre-/Co-requisites: SPED 289: Foundations of Special Education and Admission to Teacher Education.

Course Objectives

To successfully complete this course, the learner will be expected to meet the following objectives, as aligned to Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards as adopted by [ND ESPB](#):

1. **Understand Key Concepts of Special Education Law (CEC 1, InTASC 4):** Students will gain a thorough understanding of the fundamental principles and key concepts that underpin special education law.
2. **Analyze Legal Frameworks (CEC 1, InTASC 4):** Students will study and interpret the formal statutes and regulations that govern special education, understanding their scope and application.
3. **Evaluate Legal Decisions and Case Studies (CEC 4, InTASC 4):** Students will critically analyze legal decisions and case studies to understand how special education laws are applied in real-world scenarios.
4. **Bridge Legal and Practical Considerations (CEC 5, InTASC 7):** Students will explore the relationship between legal requirements and practical implementation, identifying challenges and best practices.
5. **Apply Legal Knowledge to Practical Scenarios (CEC 5, InTASC 8):** Students will apply their understanding of special education law to practical scenarios, developing skills to navigate legal complexities in educational settings.
6. **Advocate for Compliance and Best Practices (CEC 7, InTASC 10):** Students will learn to advocate for compliance with special education laws and promote best practices in educational environments, ensuring the rights and opportunities of students with disabilities are upheld.

Standards Alignment (Council for Exceptional Children Standards-CEC):

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InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards:

- **Standard 4: Content Knowledge:** The Teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
- **Standard 7: Planning for Instruction.** The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.
- **Standard 8: Instructional Strategies:** The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.
- **Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration:** The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards:

- **Initial Preparation Standard 1: Engaging in Professional Learning and Practice within Ethical Guidelines:** Candidates practice within ethical and legal guidelines; advocate for improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families while considering their social, cultural, and linguistic diversity; and engage in ongoing self-reflection to design and implement professional learning activities.
- **Initial Preparation Standard 4: Using Assessment to Understand the Learner and the Learning Environment for Data-based Decision Making:** Candidates assess students' learning, behavior, and the classroom environment in order to evaluate and support classroom and school-based problem-solving systems of intervention and instruction. Candidates evaluate students to determine their strengths and needs, contribute to students' eligibility determination, communicate students' progress, inform short and long-term instructional planning, and make ongoing adjustments to instruction using technology as appropriate.
- **Initial Preparation Standard 5: Supporting Learning Using Effective Instruction:** Candidates use knowledge of individuals' development, learning needs, and assessment data to inform decisions about effective instruction. Candidates use explicit instructional strategies and employ strategies to promote active engagement and increased motivation to individualize instruction to support each individual. Candidates use whole group instruction, flexible grouping, small group instruction, and individual instruction. Candidates teach individuals to use meta-/cognitive strategies to support and self-regulate learning.
- **Initial Preparation Standard 7: Collaborating with Team Members:** Candidates apply team processes and communication strategies to collaborate in a culturally responsive manner with families, paraprofessionals, and other professionals within the school, other educational settings, and the community to plan programs and access services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

Mayville State University Education Department SLO's:

- **SLO #1:** Students understand diversity in learning and developmental processes and create supportive and safe learning environments for students to thrive.
- **SLO #2:** Students understand subject matter deeply and flexibly so they can advance their students' learning, address misconceptions and apply ideas to everyday life.

Course Expectations

Instructor/Student Communication

- When I need to communicate with students as a whole group, I will post an announcement through Blackboard. To stay informed, I recommend checking the Announcements section at least daily.
- When I need to communicate with students individually, I will do so through an email. Students are accountable for all academic communications sent to their MSU email address.

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- I will check my email and Blackboard Monday-Friday. If an email is sent during working hours, I will usually respond within a few hours. If it is sent after working hours, I will respond by the following morning. I try to not respond to emails over weekends.

Assignments and Assessments

Course Lessons (360 points)

Due: Various Due Dates

You will be completing 12 lessons through this session which will include readings, assignments, case briefings, case studies, videos, comprehension checks, and reflective, academic writing. Detailed instructions are on Blackboard and in each *Lesson Instruction* sheet. Components of each lesson will be graded-these are noted at the bottom of each instruction sheet. Grades for lessons will be submitted as they come due (see course calendar).

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Special Education Philosophy Paper (100 points)

Due: July 13th

What is the purpose of special education? What are special education teachers supposed to do? What is the student's role in the process? How does a special educator remain current in their practice? It is important to be aware of your own philosophy of special education as it influences the decisions you make and the lessons you plan and implement. Through the writing of your own philosophy, you will see more clearly your own beliefs, values and goals about teaching students with exceptionalities. As topics around the Council for Exceptional Children Standards are addressed in class, you will evaluate and establish your philosophy on each. See detailed assignment sheet for specifics and grading. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided.

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Final Exam (100 points)

Due: July 14th-18th

One final examination will be held for the course covering the fundamental principles, laws and procedural requirements related to special education programs. The exam will be conducted online and made available July 10th-14th from 8am to Midnight. A detailed assignment sheet for the final exam will be provided.

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Assignment	Points	Due Date
Course Lessons	360	Check course outline for submission deadlines
Special Education Philosophy Paper	100	July 13 th at midnight
Final Exam	100	July 14 th - 18 th at midnight
Total	560	

Evaluation and Grading

Grading Policies

- Late work drops 1 point per day after the due date. The Blackboard Dropbox determines late work. The date assignments are submitted is highlighted on the dropbox, and is the method used to determine if an assignment is late. The dropboxes close 7 days after the due date, and the assignment is no longer accepted.
- Please do not email your work, dropbox your work on Blackboard. If you have difficulty submitting, please make me aware of this through email or phone.

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- Please plan ahead-don't wait until the last minute to hand in assignments. Each assignment is given sufficient time for completion. It is up to you to take advantage of this allotted time.
- Discussion Boards are not able to be made up if missed, review due dates, and make plans accordingly

Attendance/Participation Policies

- **Read the syllabus in its entirety.** Knowing what is planned ahead is helpful for time management and allows you time to ask questions if you need any clarification.
- **Be prepared and complete assignments.** To successfully complete this course, all students are required to read and view all videos and complete assignments pertaining to each of the weekly modules. All lessons are made available at the beginning of the semester, which means students have access too all of the content. The responsibility for your learning is shared by both student and instructor. Knowing what is planned and being ready with assignments and discussion topics allows you time to ask questions and complete your best work. Check for assignment due dates and other scheduled learning experiences so you can plan accordingly. Assignments are to be submitted electronically using Blackboard since the assignments route directly to the Gradebook. Always follow the submission guidelines. If assignments are not submitted by due dates and the instructor is not notified, a Starfish flag will be raised to alert you of your missing assignment.
- **Participate.** To be successful in this online course, your participation is required. Participation in an online learning environment includes taking part in class discussions as well as turning assignments in on time. Participation will result in stronger connections to theory and practice, adding to the quality of your learning experience. Check your MSU email and Blackboard for assignments and announcements.
- **Be flexible, take risks, and ask questions!** In teaching, flexibility is the name of the game. While teachers need to be over-prepared in terms of instruction and assessment, they also need to be flexible and responsive to students' needs. The same is expected of you in this course. Be flexible, take risks, and ask questions! You are responsible for your own learning.
- **Adhere to the code of student conduct** found in the MSU Student Handbook: <http://www.mayvillestate.edu/about-msu/more-info/reports-policies/>. Each student is responsible for reading the handbook and following expectations set forth by the University.
- **Disability Support Services.** Students with disabilities who believe they may need an accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services (788-4675) as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Grading Scale

A= 94 – 100%, B= 87 – 93%, C= 80 – 86%, D= 70-79%, F= < 70%.

Breakdown of Grades

A= 94 – 100%	→	525– 560 points
B= 87 – 93%	→	488 – 524 points
C= 80 – 86%	→	450 – 487 points
D= 70 – 79%	→	390 – 449 points
F= < 70%	→	0 – 389 points

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Enrollment Verification

Online Course Statement

The U.S. Department of Education requires instructors of online courses to provide an activity which will validate student enrollment in this course. The only way to verify that a student has been in this course is if he, she, or they perform an action in the LMS, such as completing an assignment or taking a quiz. Logging into the LMS is **NOT** considered active course participation. Please complete the designated enrollment verification activity by the date indicated. If it is not complete your enrollment in this course will be at risk.

Proctor Notification

No proctors are required for this course.

Important Student Information

In the Announcements section of the Blackboard Institution Page, you can view and download the Important Student Information document for the current academic year. It includes information about:

- ✓ Land Acknowledgement Statement
- ✓ Academic Grievance Concerns and Instructor English Proficiency
- ✓ NetTutor - Online Tutoring Program
- ✓ Starfish - Student Success System
- ✓ Students with Documented Disabilities
- ✓ Student Learning Outcomes / Essential Learning Outcomes
- ✓ Academic Honesty
- ✓ Emergency Notification
- ✓ Continuity of Academic Instruction for a Pandemic or Emergency
- ✓ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
- ✓ Diversity Statement (Title IX)

Instructional Strategies

- Critical Analysis
- Modeling
- Guided Practice
- Discussions
- Social Learning
- Problem Solving
- Skill Building
- Professional Decision Making

Course Timeline/Schedule

Course Timeline and Schedule are subject to change as deemed necessary by the instructor.

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Assignments are due on Sunday at midnight. ie. Week 1 is due at midnight on June 1st, or as otherwise noted in the What to Expect portion of each Week's lesson.

Week 1: The American Legal System, Legal Research & History of the Law

Week 2: IDEA & Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Week 3: The American with Disabilities Act & The Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Week 4: Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) & Identification, Assessment, and Evaluation

Week 5: The Individualized Education Program & Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Week 6: Procedural Safeguards, Discipline, & Additional Issues

Week 7: Philosophy of Special Education Paper

Week 8: Final Exam

References / Bibliography

Council of Chief State School Officers. (2013). Interstate teacher assessment and support consortium InTASC: *Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0: A Resource for Ongoing Teacher Development*. Washington, DC: Author.

Alexander, K. & Alexander, M.D. (2011). *American public school law* (8th ed.). Covington, KY: Wadsworth Publishing.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), P.L. 91-230, codified as amended at 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.

Murdick, N.L., Gartin, B.C., & Fowler, G.A. (2014). *Special education law* (3rd Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2001), majority codified in Chapter 70 of Title 20, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.

Turnbull, E., Huerta, N., & Stowe, M. (2006). *The individuals with disabilities education act as amended in 2004*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Wright, P.W.D., & Wright, P.D. (2007). *Special education law* (2nd ed.). Hartfield, VA: Harbor House Law Press, Inc.