

SPED 6906 - Understanding and Addressing the Characteristics and Behaviors of Learners with Exceptional Needs

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section A01, CRN 41679,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Courtney Cruz

Email: clcruz@ysu.edu

Public Instructor Information

Instructor Title: Dr. Courtney Cruz

Instructor Professional Qualifications:

Ph.D., Special Education, Kent State University, 2026

Master's, Early Childhood Education, Youngstown State University, 2014

Bachelor's, Early Childhood Education, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, 2004

Instructor Office Location:

Beeghly Hall # 2419

Department of Teacher Education

Beeghly College of Liberal Arts, Social Sciences, and Education (BCLASSE)

Youngstown State University

Instructor Office Phone: 330-941-3223

Course Description

6906. Understanding and Addressing the Characteristics and Behaviors of Learners with Exceptional Needs. This course is designed to provide the candidate with the knowledge and understanding of how individuals with exceptionalities grow and develop in an inclusive learning environment. Candidates will understand how multiple influences, including diversity, families, communities and individual differences shape an individual with an exceptionality's development and learning. The candidate will then use this knowledge to develop high-quality learning experiences based on strengths and needs. 3 s.h.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Exceptional lives: Practice, progress and dignity in today's schools.	Turnbull, A., Rutherford Turnbull, H., Wehmeyer, M., Shogren, K., and Burke, M.M.	

Turnbull, A., Rutherford Turnbull, H., Wehmeyer, M., Shogren, K., and Burke, M.M. (2024). *Exceptional lives: Practice, progress and dignity in today's schools*. (10th ed). Pearson.

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.



Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
10/19	CH 7 Exceptional Lives Text by Turnbull et al. Additional readings provided in BB	Specific Learning Disabilities	Discussion Board (DB) 1st post by Thursday Professional Instructional Response Quiz: Chapter 7
10/26	CH 9 Exceptional Lives Text by Turnbull et al. Additional readings provided in BB	Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	DB 1st post by Thursday Functional Behavior Analysis & Proactive Support Plan Quiz: Chapter 9
11/2	CH 12 Exceptional Lives Text by Turnbull et al. Autism Spectrum Disorder Additional readings provided in BB	Autism Spectrum Disorder	DB 1st post by Thursday Professional Instructional Presentation Quiz: Chapter 12
11/9	CH 11 Exceptional Lives Text by Turnbull et al. Additional readings provided in BB	Intellectual Disabilities	Instructional Adaptation Plan for a Learner with ID Quiz: Chapter 11
11/16	CH 8 & 13 Exceptional Lives Text by Turnbull et al. Additional readings provided in BB	Speech/Language, Traumatic Brain Injury, and MD	Work on Critical Task – Case Study Quiz: Chapter 8 & 13
11/23	CH 14 Exceptional Lives Text by Turnbull et al. Additional readings provided in BB	Other Health Impairment and Physical Disabilities	Canva slide contribution Critical Task: Case Study Quiz: Chapter 14
11/30	CH 15 & 16 Exceptional Lives Text by Turnbull et al. Additional readings provided in BB	Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment	Final Scholarly Reflection Quiz: Chapter 15 & 16 & final review

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.