INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

Course Syllabus

Fall 2007
Tue/Thur: 12:30pm-1:45pm
Flipse 201
Instructor: Kristin Lindahl, Ph.D.
Office: Flipse Building 331
Phone: 284-5222, x3
Email: klindahl@miami.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Lab: PSY671RX; Th 2-4pm
Lab Supervisor: Saneya Tawfik, Ph.D.
Lab Instructors: Annie Inge, Caley Schwartz, Whitney Ward
See separate syllabus for lab description, schedule and requirements.

Course Objectives

This course begins the process of developing competence in psychological assessment. This is an introductory course that builds a foundation for future assessment courses, practica and supervised work experiences. The course covers principles of psychological measurement, including reliability, validity, norms, and standard scores; assessment issues with culturally diverse populations; overview of contemporary theories of the structure of intelligence and the origins of intellectual assessment; controversies regarding the use and misuse of testing; interviewing techniques; behavioral observations and case formulation; and integrative report writing. In addition, students are introduced to the Wechsler scales of intelligence and measures of achievement and are given the opportunity to gain experience administering, scoring, and writing reports using the Wechsler and achievement tests. Woven throughout the course are clinical cases and perspectives on ethical and cultural issues. Although this course introduces students to selected measures of psychosocial, emotional, and personality functioning, this content is covered in greater detail in subsequent assessment courses (PSY646 for adult assessment and PSY647 for child assessment).

By the end of the course, it is expected that students will master the following:

1. Identify and discuss principles of psychological measurement, including reliability, validity, and standard scores. Students also will become familiar with the basic principles of test construction.

2. Identify and discuss relevant theories of intelligence as well as the psychometric and empirical foundation for the process of assessing intellectual ability.

3. Identify and discuss assessment issues with culturally diverse populations.

4. Identify and discuss professional and ethical issues related to the practice of psychological assessment.
5. Demonstrate competent administration and scoring of the Wechsler scales. Demonstrate competent administration and scoring of the WIAT-II and WJ-II Tests of Achievement.


7. Communicate the results of an intellectual assessment orally and in writing.

**Text & Assigned Readings**

Please read each assignment prior to coming to class. Coming to class after carefully reading the materials assigned will enhance your learning, optimize class discussions, and ultimately enable us to help you master the material. The texts are (generally speaking!) well written and you are quite capable of learning via your own reading and study. There is considerable material to cover in this course and therefore, class lectures and discussions will often enhance and elaborate on your readings by covering additional topics. All readings will be made available on Blackboard.

**Course Format/Attendance**

Students are expected to be active and informed participants in the course. Lectures, critical review and discussion of readings will be part of each class meeting. Many class meetings also will involve discussion of actual clinical cases. The course also will involve observing as well as direct administration of assessment instruments. The lab for this course is required and is held on Thursdays 2-4pm (see separate syllabus). Attendance is required for all class and lab meetings.

It is expected that all students will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. Confidentiality is of the highest priority. Individuals being tested or interviewed are to be treated with respect. All testing and interviewing must be done in the Psychological Services Center. It is the responsibility of the student to inform Dr. Lindahl or Dr. Tawfik of any situation that arises that presents an ethical dilemma or threatens the well-being of any student or client.

**Requirements**

A midterm will cover the didactic material from the first half of the semester. The final exam will focus on material from the second half of the semester and may draw on information presented in the first half of the semester as it relates to the second-half material. The Midterm and Final will count for 60% of your grade. Performance in PSY671 (the lab) will account for 40% of your final grade for the course.

**Schedule and Assigned Readings**

August 23  
Introduction to the class

No assigned readings
**August 28**

**Overview of Assessment**


**PSYCHOMETRIC THEORY**

**August 30 – Introduction to Psychometrics**


**September 4 – Reliability - Guest Lecturer: Matthias Siemer, Ph.D.**


**September 6 – Validity - Guest Lecturer: Matthias Siemer, Ph.D.**


**September 11 – Test Construction - Guest Lecturer: Matthias Siemer, Ph.D.**

**September 13 - Test Construction - Guest Lecturer: Alexandra Quittner, Ph.D.**

Quittner, A. L. Patient-reported Outcomes: From instrument development to analysis and interpretation.


**INTELLIGENCE & ACHIEVEMENT TESTING**

**September 18 - History of Intelligence Testing**


**September 20 - Contemporary Theories on the Structure of Intelligence**


OPTIONAL READING:


**September 25 - Contemporary Theories on the Structure of Intelligence (continued)**

OPTIONAL READING:


**September 27 – Controversial Issues in the Measurement of Intelligence**

**October 2 -Controversial Issues in the Measurement of Intelligence (continued)**


**October 4 – MIDTERM**

No additional readings, just all of the above!!

**October 9 – The Measurement of Intelligence with the Wechsler Scales**

Saklofske, D. H., Rolfhus, E., Prifitera, A., Zhu, J., & Weiss, L. G. (2005). Clinical interpretation of the WISC-IV FSIQ and GAI. In A. Prifitera, D.H. Saklofske, & L. G. Weiss, *WISC-IV Clinical Use and Interpretation: Scientist-Practitioner Perspectives* (pp. 33-48; note that I am only assigning the first half of this chapter; Also, this can be skimmed to the extent that some of this material was previously reviewed in a reading previously assigned for lab). Burlington, MA; Elsevier Academic Press.


*See also:* Sattler, Chapter 4: Interpreting the WISC-IV – This was previously assigned in lab.

**OPTIONAL READINGS:**


*NOTE:* The Weiss, Saklofske & Prifitera chapter makes frequent reference to the WISC-IV Integrated, which we will not have time to cover in this class, so this reading is listed as “optional.” You will use the WISC-IV over the course of your career, however, so this is a good reference to be familiar with.

**October 11 – More on the Wechsler Scales**

**OPTIONAL READING:**


**October 16 – Achievement Testing: WJ-III & WIAT-II**


**October 18 - Learning Disorders – Introduction**


**October 23 – Learning Disorders – Dyslexia**


**October 25 – Learning Disorders – NVLD**


OPTIONAL READING:


**October 30 – Learning Disorders – Math and Written Language**


**November 1 - Learning Disorders – ADHD & Differential Diagnosis**


OPTIONAL READING:

November 6 – Adult Neuropsychological Assessment

TBA

MEASUREMENT OF BEHAVIOR AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT

November 8 – Self-report measures

De Los Reyes, A., & Kazdin, A. E. (2005). Informant discrepancies in the assessment of childhood psychopathology: A critical review, theoretical framework, and recommendations for further study. *Psychological Bulletin, 131*, 483-509. Do not get too bogged down with the methodological details in this article. The important points to consider are: How well do different sources of information agree? What characteristics are likely to affect agreement? Is the bias large enough to influence the clinical use of these instruments?

November 13 – Self-report measures: Show and Tell Day


November 15 – Projective & Personality Testing


ISSUES RELATED TO ETHICS AND DIVERSITY

November 20 – Assessment Issues in Culturally Diverse Populations


OPTIONAL READINGS:


**November 22 - HAPPY THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**

**November 27 – Ethical and Diversity Issues in Assessment**


**November 29 – Ethical and Diversity Issues in Assessment (continued)**