

**Texas A&M-Commerce  
College of Education and Human Services  
Department of Psychology, Counseling & Special education**

**Course:** COUN 317 Introduction to Assessment

**Class Meeting:** Monday & Wednesday 11:00am-12:15pm; HEN 206

**Instructor:** Felicia Ward, MA, LPC-Intern, LCDC-Intern

**Email:** Felicia.Ward@tamuc.edu  
(Be sure to include "COUN 317" in the subject line)

**Phone:** 903-886-5037

**Office Hours:** (TBA) Available by appointment

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**Required Texts:**

Hood, A. B., & Johnson, R. W. (2002). *Assessment in Counseling: A Guide to the Use of Psychological Assessment Procedures* (4th ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

**Course Description**

The intent is to make this course informative, challenging, and worthwhile. A variety of learning activities have been structured to provide you with opportunities which will encourage your growth as a counselor. The degree to which you perceive this experience as enhancing to your personal and professional growth will largely be a function of your own goals for this experience and the responsibility and initiative you assume in achieving those goals.

**Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students should have:

- Knowledge of measurement concepts including historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment, and prior and current research-based assessment trends.
- Knowledge regarding the design and purpose of various instruments including standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques. These include but are not limited to the study of:
  - objective, projective, and behavioral measures of personality
  - intelligence, aptitude and achievement instruments
  - interests, work values and career development assessments
  - person-environment interaction and human development assessment.
- Ability to apply statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, distributions of scores, and correlations.
- Knowledge in theory of measurement, including measurement error, validity and reliability.
- An understanding of cultural and social factors that influence assessment, such as: age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, disability, culture, spiritually, social status, etc.
- Application of strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling.

- Knowledge regarding the appropriate application of case conceptualization and mental and emotional diagnostic criteria including the DSM IV.
- Knowledge about current trends and issues in appraisal including ethical and legal considerations.

## **Participation**

This class depends heavily on discussion, exercise, activities, role-playing to ensure students reach the course objectives. It is essential that students be willing to participate in a free, open, and mutually supportive manner to help one another develop the competencies that are a part of the goals of the course. Students can learn more from each other and from their own thinking/processing than they do strictly from a textbook or the instructor in a course like this. This can only happen if the students are active participants in the course. Participation entails conscientious preparation for class meetings by completing readings and other assignments on schedule. Participation is further demonstrated through comments and expressed opinions that convey your perspective on a topic under discussion. Participation involves a willingness to ask questions in class to make sure you obtain clarification for material that you do not completely understand. You will be appreciated by almost everyone else in the class if you speak up and get clarification for material that is in the least bit confusing to you. All professionals must be committed to their work and to expanding the constantly changing knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are part of a career area. A student's level of involvement in a course like this is a better gauge of his/her level of interest and commitment to a future profession than are traditional exams and term papers. In short, an instructor can tell as much about you, how well you are learning this type of material by involvement in class as by reading the scores on your exams and term papers. Finally, it is impossible to participate if you don't attend class.

Attendance is particularly important when practice exercises are taking place with assigned partners. Any absence will affect how you are evaluated in terms of class participation. Make up work will be assigned at the discretion of the Instructor.

## **In-Class Practice Group Lab**

You will build on your knowledge base by applying communication skills to looking closely at the concepts discussed in class. By applying communication skills developed in a variety of in-class practice exercises, lectures, and various assignments, your progress will be evident. Progress and skill development is evaluated by the instructor and by your own assessment through self-review/critiques and peer evaluations.

We will use class time to work on building confidence in administering assessments, conducting interviews, and gathering important information using case scenarios. In small groups, you will be assigned your parts as interviewer or client. You will be given instructions including time limits for interviewing and giving feedback to interviewers.

You'll spread out as much as possible in the space available. Once an interview and feedback to interviewers is completed, you'll return to class to reconvene for large group discussion of the practice session.

## **Course Requirements**

1. *Exams:* There will be three course examinations covering materials discussed in class (from textbook, lecture materials, special assignments, and student presentations). Exam format may be true/false, multiple choice, short answer, or essay.
2. *Review of a Testing Instrument:* Each student will prepare a report on a test instrument. Students will choose a popular assessment instrument and provide an oral presentation to the class (list will be provided by instructor).'

**3. Intake Interview:** In teams of two students, each student will conduct an intake interview and write up a three page report. The interviewee will assume a fake identity. See Assignment 2 Template for Intake Interview Report for more details (see page 7).

**4. Daily Quizzes:** Some classes will begin or end with a short, daily quiz, over the assigned reading material. Quizzes will not be announced and students should be prepared for them daily. Questions will be short and simple. Most will be over key terms and concepts. Students will also have an opportunity to take and score various assessments for daily quiz points, to get an idea of what the client experiences before and after the administration of the assessment.

**5. Presentation:** The testing instrument presentation must be supported by handouts (must include a reference page) and visual aids. Creativity is encouraged. Evaluation will be based on information content, not technical or artistic quality. Students will follow the template for Assignment 1 (see page 6).

**6. Attendance/Class Participation:** Active attendance is defined as arriving to class on time, prepared for the day's lesson, participating in in-class activities, and remaining for the entire class period. Absences will be excused for those specific reasons stated in the Student's Guidebook (pg. 36-37) and students will be permitted to make up missed activities, tests, etc. within a week.

**Student Evaluation/Grades:** Student grades will be based on the instructor's assessment in the following areas:

- Attendance/Participation 50 points
- Intake Interview 50 points
- Presentation 50 points
- Daily Quizzes 100 points
- Test Instrument Review 100 points
- (3) Exams 300 points

600 - 650 A

520 - 559 B

455 - 519 C

390 - 454 D

Below 390 F

### **Tentative Schedule**

Week 1 Introductions; Overview of Syllabus; Student/Instructor Expectations and Feelings; Ch. 1 Use of Assessment Procedures in Counseling

Week 2 Ch. 1 Use of Assessment Procedures in Counseling; In-Class Practice Group Lab

Week 3 Ch. 2 Nature of Psychological Assessment in Counseling  
In-Class Practice Group Lab

Week 4 Ch. 3 Measurement Concepts and Test Interpretation  
In-Class Practice Group Lab

Week 5 Ch. 4 Initial and Outcome Assessments in Counseling  
In-Class Practice Group Lab

Week 6 Ch. 5 Assessment of Intelligence; **Exam #1**  
**Instrument Presentation**

Week 7 Ch. 6 Academic Aptitude and Achievement  
**Instrument Presentation**

Week 8 Ch. 7 Measures of Career Choice and Development

Week 9 **Spring Break!**

Week 10 Ch. 7 Measures of Career Choice and Development  
Ch. 8 Measures of Work and Personal Values

Week 11 Ch. 8 Measures of Work and Personal Values  
Ch. 9 Assessment of Interests; **Instrument Presentation**

Week 12 Ch. 9 Assessment of Interests  
Ch. 10 Comprehensive Assessment Programs for Career and Life Planning; **Exam #2**  
**Instrument Presentation**

Week 13 Ch. 11 & 12 Personality Inventories and Measures; self-report instruments;  
**Instrument Presentation**

Week 14 Ch. 13 Assessment of Interpersonal Relationships  
Ch. 14 Mental Health Assessment: Interview Procedures; **Instrument Presentation**

Week 15 Ch. 15 Mental Health Assessment: Standardized Inventories  
Ch. 16 Assessment of Minority and Special Populations; **Instrument Presentation**  
**Exam #3**

Week 16 Ch. 18 Ethical and Social Issues in Testing  
Ch. 17 Communication of Test Results; **Intake Interviews**  
**Finals Week**

Professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus schedule.

### **Diversity Policy**

You are encouraged to contribute your perspective and insights to class discussions. However, offensive language (swearing) and remarks offensive to others of particular nationalities, ethnic groups, sexual preferences, religious groups, genders, or other ascribed statuses cannot be tolerated. Common courtesy and respect will be extended to all. Students abusive to this policy may be asked to leave the classroom and will lose

points. Problems in adhering to this policy may result in being dropped or failing this course.

### **Conduct and Academic Honesty**

"All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Polices and Procedures, Conduct) "Graduate students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work." (See Section A13.12, Academic Honesty, A&M-Commerce Procedures.)

### **Students with Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)**

### **University Closing Due to Weather**

Check <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/> regarding class cancellations. Also, KETR radio on 88.9 FM and television channels 4, 5, and 8 (channel 7 for Tyler & Longview Area). Professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus schedule.

## **Assignment 1**

### **Template for Review of Testing Instrument**

1. Review of Testing Instrument (3-5 pages)
  - a. General Information
    1. Title of test and author
    2. Original date of publication; newest date of revision
    3. Cost (if easy to find – check website)
  - b. Brief description of purpose and nature of test
    1. Type of test (intelligence, etc)
    2. Purpose of test
    3. Structure of test questions: true/false, open-ended questions, etc.
    4. Complexity of test: short, subtests, etc.
  - c. Administering the Test
    1. Time needed to administer and, if information is available, time to score
    2. Clarity of manual instructions for administrator to use and score  
(manual may not be available)
2. Scoring procedures: complex, simple, etc.
3. Qualifications needed by administrator to give the test.
  - a. Technical evaluation
    1. Information on norms and standardization sample.
    2. Reliability coefficient (test-retest, parallel-form, split-half, Kuder-Richardson or coefficient alpha) including size and nature of sample.
4. Validity coefficient for test (content, criterion, and construct)
  - a. Critique of instrument in applied situations
    1. Identification of 3-5 research studies in which this instrument was used and a brief summary of effectiveness of test as either a research tool or an evaluation instrument.
- Example: Wechsler intelligence tests have been used to identify mental retardation, learning disabilities, and other issues among special needs audience. In a nutshell, did the test do what the author hypothesized that it would do!
5. Brief paragraph summarizing strengths and weaknesses of this test based on reviews that are available through *Mental Measurement Yearbooks* and other books on testing. MMY is available at TAMU library.

## **Assignment 2**

### **Template for Intake Interview Report**

Please follow this template to complete your Intake Interview Report.

**1. Title (centered): Confidential Test Report**

**2. Demographic information on CL:**

Name: Date of Report:

Age:

Date of Birth:

Gender:

Other information that is relevant to this report such as: marital status, number of children, religious preference, medical events, etc.

**3. Name and title of examiner (YOU!)**

**4. Name and title of person receiving the report**

**5. Referral question (typically a paragraph with a final sentence stating the referral)**

**6. Background Information**

Family History (might include work history)

Medical history

Alcohol, drugs and/or legal history

Current psychological history (might include friends, support system)

**7. Behavioral observation:** Observations of CL's behavior during interview.