

# INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

**Course # PC6240**

**Argosy University  
SPRING 2, 2007**

**Donald Niall Fallin, Psy.D.**

**Class:** Introduction to Psychological Testing  
**Program:** M.A. - Counseling Psychology  
**Instructor:** Donald Niall Fallin, Psy.D.  
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**Class Meets:** SPRING 1: Saturday - Sunday 1/13-14, 2007;  
Saturday - Sunday 2/10-11, 2007  
SPRING 2: Saturday - Sunday 3/10-11, 2007;  
Saturday - Sunday 4/14-15, 2007  
**Office Hours:** By special arrangement only  
**Required Texts:** Psychological Testing and Assessment with Exercises Workbook,  
6th Edition  
Authors: Ronald Jay Cohen and Mark E. Swerdlik.  
Publisher: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.  
ISBN 0073199044. Copyright 2005.  
(It is acceptable to use the fifth edition of this textbook)  
  
Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth  
Edition, Test Revision: DSM-IV-TR  
Publisher: American Psychiatric Association  
ISBN: 0-89042-024-6 or 0-89042-025-4, © 2000

## **Course Description:**

This class is an introductory graduate course, covering the major methods of psychological assessment and the instruments or tests most commonly used by professional psychologists. Related topics include ethical issues in assessment, socio-cultural client factors including ethnicity, basic test construction concepts including introductory statistics, scoring and interpreting psychological tests, and professional application of testing knowledge, and assessment of children and the elderly.

## **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course students should be able to:

- Understand the basics of test construction, especially validity and reliability, sampling and standardization
- Identify and understand the professional application of numerous psychological tests, including objective and projective personality tests, neuropsychological tests, intelligence tests, achievement and aptitude tests and behavioral rating scales
- Understand the procedures used by clinicians in determining which tests are appropriate for a given clinical situation.
- Critically assess the limitations, ethical implications and biases in testing specific populations (including children, the elderly, and clients with diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds).

### **Course Requirements:**

You will be evaluated in four ways: a written assignment, a verbal presentation, a final exam, and class participation. The written assignment is due by the Friday after the final class meeting. You will perform the verbal presentation during the final class weekend. The final exam will be taken at the end of the final class meeting, in class. Participation is measured both by your responses to online weekly content, and your attendance and participation during weekend class meetings.

### **Written Clinical Assessment Plan, 75 points (due no later than Friday following final class weekend).**

You will be given a vignette (a mock psychological testing referral for a fictional client), and using it as a reference, will prepare a written a clinical assessment plan. You may choose either an adult or a child; the instructor will be able to provide either. The purpose of this assignment is to show your ability to apply the class material in a way that approximates actual clinical work. A handout with detailed instructions will be provided.

### **Individual Presentation, 75 points (presented to class during second weekend)**

You will make a verbal and/or visual presentation to the class about a specific psychological testing instrument, including basic information about its type, clinical uses, appropriate populations, etc. The specific testing instrument will be assigned to you during the first weekend. Your presentation must include (a) a critical review of the test's construction, validity and reliability, as well as (b) a brief discussion about its uses and limitations. If possible, arrange for visual aids as part of your presentation (bring the actual testing instrument if you can get it at the library or elsewhere, or have handouts or other aids that demonstrate the purpose and nature of the testing instrument you have chosen). Note that some tests are not available for students to use unsupervised; you may not be able to see the actual test materials. Also, you will distribute to the class a one-page fact sheet, written by you, summarizing your findings. When the semester is finished, all students will have fact sheets to keep about every major test. The presentation should last about 10 minutes. This assignment will require you to do some independent research, and you should be prepared to answer questions about the test from the class or the instructor. You may be asked to give your presentation on either of the

final two days of class during the final weekend.

**Attendance and Participation, 20 points (0-5 points per class)**

Because this is a high-intensity class occurring over two long weekends, attendance is critical. You are expected to attend all classes. If you are absent even once, your ability to synthesize the material will be undermined. Unless special arrangements are made ahead of time with the instructor, your final grade will be negatively impacted by any absences. You will earn up to 5 points a day for attending and participating in a meaningful way.

**Online Participation: 35 points (0-5 points per weekly assignment)**

You will earn up to 5 points per week (35 points total) for your participation in the online component of the class. The 7 weekly topics are listed below. You are required to log on each week to participate in the online component via Embanet-Interlearn: <http://online.argosyu.edu>. Note that the first week of "class" occurs before we actually meet in person, and that there may be one or more online assignments after the final meeting. Check with the school to confirm when the official start and end of the semester is.

Each weekly assignment will include, at a minimum, responding in a discussion format to questions posed by the instructor. Some weeks may include supplemental reading on the internet, and some weeks you may be required to respond to posts made by fellow students. Online assignments will be posted by Tuesday night each week. You are expected to respond within 7 days.

Week 1 : Discussion of observation and interviewing as assessment tools.

Week 2 : Intelligence.

Week 3 : Clinical assessment vignettes.

Week 4 : Cultural considerations in assessment.

Week 5 : Final Exam Review

Week 6: Therapist factors that impact assessments

Week 7: Assessment of children

**Final Examination, 150 points (given at end of last class meeting)**

There will be only one graded exam in this class, a comprehensive final exam administered in person at the end of the final class meeting. The exam may cover all relevant material from your text, and any material in the instructor's lectures. The format of the exam will include, at a minimum, 50 4-item multiple-choice questions, and between 5 and 10 written "short answer" questions. There may be other components to the exam, as well. The top student exam will be given a grade of 100%, and all other student exams will be graded against this standard.

### Grading:

Your final course grade will be based on the following:

Written Clinical Assessment Plan	75 points (due no later than last class)
Individual Presentation	75 points (presented to class during final weekend)
Attendance and Participation	20 points (0-5 points per class)
Online Participation	35 points (0-5 points per week)
Comprehensive Final Exam	150 points (given at end of final weekend)
Total	355 points

Letter grades will be assigned according to a traditional percentage system. Late assignments will be graded down significantly.

### Criteria for Class Participation

Grade	
A = 90+	Student actively participated in discussions in <b>&gt;80%</b> of class sessions; <b>nearly all</b> comments were <b>thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings</b>
B = 80 – 89	Student actively participated in discussions in <b>&gt;80%</b> of class sessions; <b>most</b> of the comments were thought provoking and incorporated material from the assigned readings
C = 70 – 79	Student participated in discussions in <b>&gt;70%</b> of class sessions; comments/questions demonstrate a surface level understanding of course topics
F = <70	Student participated in <b>&lt;70%</b> of class sessions; comments/questions did not demonstrate an understanding of course topics, or <b>student did not participate</b> in class discussions.

### Criteria for Class Presentation

Grade	
A = 90+	Presentation is well organized and provides <b>excellent</b> coverage of the topic area; informative visual aids provided to the instructor and classmates
B = 80 – 89	Presentation is well organized and provides <b>adequate</b> coverage of the topic area
C = 70 – 79	Coverage of material is marginal; presentation is slightly disorganized
F = <70	Presentation is <b>disorganized</b> and does not provide adequate coverage of the topic area, or presentation was <b>not completed</b> by student.

### Criteria for Paper

Grade	
A = 90+	Paper is in appropriate APA format, well thought out and provides

	<b>excellent</b> coverage of material
B = 80 – 89	Paper is well thought out, but is missing one component of APA format OR coverage of material is <b>adequate</b>
C = 70 – 79	Insufficient number of references provided AND <b>limited</b> coverage
F = <70	Paper is disorganized AND coverage is not adequate AND does not conform to APA format, or there is evidence of <b>plagiarism</b> , or paper not submitted

### **Recommended Texts:**

In addition to the required texts, these are books that I personally find helpful and actually use regularly when using psychological testing instruments and writing evaluation reports. None are required or necessary for this class.

DSM-IV-TR Casebook: A Learning Companion to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision. Robert L. Spitzer (Editor), Miriam Gibbon (Editor), Andrew E. Skodol (Editor), Janet B. W. Williams (Editor), Michael B. First (Editor), Mariam Gibbon. American Psychiatric Pr; 4th edition (January 2002) ISBN: 1585620599  
*Vignettes give prose examples for difficult diagnostic situations.*

DSM-IV-TR Handbook of Differential Diagnosis. Michael B. First, Allen, Md Frances, Harold Alan, MD Pincus. American Psychiatric Pr; 1st edition (January 15, 2002) ISBN: 1585620548  
*Helpful in making diagnostic decisions.*

Essentials of Rorschach Assessment. Tara Rose , Michael P. Maloney, Nancy Kaser-Boyd. John Wiley & Sons; 1st edition (December 15, 2000) ISBN: 0471331465  
*An easy-to-read basic book on Rorschach interpretation. The book is insufficient for administering and scoring the Rorschach, but is helpful for novices in understanding results.*

Essentials of WAIS-III Assessment. Alan S. Kaufman, Elizabeth O. Lichtenberger. John Wiley & Sons; (January 7, 1999) ISBN: 0471282952  
*From the same series as the above book; highly readable.*

Handbook of Psychological Assessment. Gary Groth-Marnat (Author). John Wiley & Sons; 4th edition (February 21, 2003) ISBN: 0471419796  
*This was the text I used as a doctoral student. It is the standard for clinical psychologists, but a little too narrow in focus to be used as the main text for an introductory counseling psychology class.*

MMPI-2: Assessing Personality and Psychopathology. Graham, John. Oxford Press; 3rd edition (July 1999) ISBN: 0195114817  
*This is the best reference book for understanding and interpreting the MMPI.*

The Essential Enneagram. David N. Daniels, Virginia A. Price. Harper San Francisco (2000) ISBN-10: 0062516760 ISBN-13: 978-0062516763

### **Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism**

In an effort to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity during the learning process, Argosy University requires that the submission of all course assignments represent the original work produced by that student. All sources must be documented through normal scholarly references/citations and all work must be submitted using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2001)*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association (APA) format. Please refer to Appendix A in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* for thesis and paper format. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual (required in some courses) and become familiar with its content as well as consult the Argosy University catalog for further information regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Additionally, Argosy University considers resubmission of a work produced for one course in a subsequent course or the submission of work done partially or entirely by another to be academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification from the instructor regarding how much help may be received in completing an assignment, exam or project and what sources may be used.

**Scholarly writing:** The faculty at Argosy University is dedicated to providing a learning environment that supports scholarly and ethical writing free from academic dishonesty and plagiarism. This includes the proper and appropriate referencing of all sources. You are responsible for maintaining an electronic copy of any work submitted, because you may be asked to submit your course assignments through "Turnitin," ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)), an online resource established to help educators develop writing/research skills and detect potential cases of academic dishonesty. Turnitin compares submitted papers to billions of pages of content and provides a comparison report to your instructor. This comparison detects papers that share common information and duplicative language.

### **ADA Policy**

It is AU/San Francisco Bay Area Campus policy not to discriminate against qualified students with a documented disability in its educational programs, activities or services. If you have a disability-related need for accommodations in this class, contact the Campus Director of Student Services at 510-215-0277.