Course Description

**Prerequisite: EDRS 590 or EDCD 601.** This course prepares students to become informed about psychological and educational tests and assessment procedures that are used and applied in a counseling context. The course will cover basic psychometric properties of tests, methods of gathering and interpreting data, the development and use of assessment tools, resources for learning about tests, and how to choose, administer, and interpret individual and group tests within a culturally appropriate framework.

Relationship to C & D Program Goals and Professional Organizations

This course is a prerequisite for the career counseling class in the C & D Master’s Program. In addition, this course adheres to the CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) standards regarding assessment as follows:

CACREP-Section II.K.g: An understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation.

Student Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment;
- basic concepts of standardized and nonstandardized testing and other assessment techniques including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, behavioral observations, and computer-managed and computer-assisted methods;
- statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations;
- reliability (i.e., theory of measurement error, models of reliability, and the use of reliability information);
- validity (i.e., evidence of validity, types of validity, and the relationship between reliability and validity);
- age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, disability, culture, spirituality, and other factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations;
- strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling;
• an understanding of general principles and methods of case conceptualization, assessment, and/or diagnoses of mental and emotional status; and ethical and legal considerations.

Course Material
- Test Packet, which includes selected inventories, booklets, and score sheets-Packaged and available in the bookstore (MBTI Type I, and CPI).
- Selected journal readings assigned throughout the semester.

Course Requirements
Students are expected to:
- Actively participate in class completing reading assignments ahead of time. Two or more unexcused absences will result in course failure.
- Actively participate in Blackboard Discussion assignments. Students will be expected to post their responses (a minimum of one response per posting) by the Instructor’s due date and to engage in active and constructive on-line discussions. Students will be responsible for checking Blackboard once a week for any new discussion postings.
- Prepare one behavioral observation report (see attached format).
- Evaluate one test and prepare a class poster presentation with two partners.
- Complete a test interpretation paper, which includes intake interview information, analysis of test data, and test interpretation (see attached format).
- Complete test on technical aspects of assessment (e.g., standard scores, psychometrics).
- Complete final take-home examination.

Grading Criteria

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Class Participation &amp; Blackboard Participation</td>
<td>30 (15 each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment #1: Observation Report</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test on psychometrics</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment #2: Test Evaluation and Poster Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Assignment #3: Test Interpretation Paper</td>
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<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>TOTAL Possible points</td>
<td>100</td>
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Grades: Grading rubrics will be listed on Blackboard.
100-97 = A, 96-93 = A-, 92-90 = B+, 89-83 = B, 82-80 = B-, 79-73 = C

NOTE: All written assignments must be typed and must follow APA format unless indicated by the Instructor. Grading on written work will take into account the following factors: quality of written work including writing mechanics (e.g., grammar), knowledge of content area, and adherence to requirements of assignment. As a graduate student, it is expected that all of your work will be turned in on the assigned dates. There will be
a deduction of a minimum of 1 point for a late assignment or for an assignment not adhering to APA format. Late assignments and class attendance excused for documented medical reasons only.

**Counseling & Development Program Professional Dispositions**

**Professional Performance Criteria** (Effective February 25, 2003). The American Counseling Association (ACA) code of ethics requires counselors and counselor trainees to maintain standards of professional competence and possess good moral character. The Counseling and Development Program in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University has adopted a set of professional performance criteria that is consistent with the ACA code of ethics. Please refer to the dispositions found on the C & D Homepage at: 
http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling/professional_performance.htm

**GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations**
The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See http://gse/gmu.edu/programs/counseling/professional_performance.htm for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

**Course Outline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>Introduction to assessment, historical and current issues. Legal and ethical issues in testing Interviewing and observational techniques</td>
<td>W&amp;B: Chapters 1, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>Statistical Concepts used in Assessment Normal Distributions and their relationship to test scores</td>
<td>W&amp;B: Chapter 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Reliability, Validity and Test Construction</td>
<td>W&amp;B: Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/22</td>
<td>Test Construction Exercise Locating, Selecting, and Administering Tests Review for test on psychometrics</td>
<td>Observation Report</td>
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Assignment 1: Observation Report

This assignment is designed to provide practice in conducting behavioral observations and writing observation reports. Students should select an individual to observe who is appropriate for their program specialization (i.e., students in the school counseling program should select a child or adolescent in a school setting to observe; agency track students should select a child or adult who fits your interest area). Use the following guidelines in conducting the observation and preparing the report:

1. Select an individual and observe him/her in a setting in which he/she has an opportunity to interact with others. This could be a classroom, work environment, a cafeteria, group setting, or similar environment. Avoid settings and situations
such as test taking or television watching in which only a limited variety of behaviors are usually exhibited. To avoid making assumptions on the basis of prior information about the person, choose an individual with whom you have had little or no personal contact.

2. Observe the individual for a period of about 20-30 minutes. Make every effort to be unobtrusive in order that you do not inadvertently cause the individual to modify his/her behavior. Take notes to record relevant behaviors, details of the environment, and other information as indicated in class and in the outline below. Do not use recording equipment.

3. Prepare a written report on the individual you observed. The report should be 3-5 pages in length, typed. Note: Students observing in a school setting should obtain permission from the teachers and/or principal before conducting the observation. Evaluation of your papers will be based upon objectivity displayed in the observations. Your papers should include the following:

   A. The Person Observed: Report a personal description of the individual by including the person’s age (can be estimated), race, ethnicity, approximate height/weight, eye/hair color, appearance, grade in school, etc. Also include a detailed description of the observation environment including observation day and time. Full points given if all information is included.

   B. The Observation: Describe and discuss in paragraph form the details of the environment and information about others present; the nature of activity or interaction observed, and relevant aspects of individual’s behavior, such as task orientation, activity level, attention, verbal and physical responses, and interactions with others. Details of the environment should give the reader a sense of being present. Colors, sounds, smells, and so forth are used for a rich portrayal of the environment. Additionally, a clear description of the person’s activity is expected. Points will be deducted for use of subjectivity (e.g., she seemed happy) and for written mechanics.

   C. Summary of Data Collection: Develop a summary of the experience in paragraph form. Summarize behavior observed. Do not make interpretations based on the behavior you have observed. Describe what you have seen and recalled and or recorded, paying particular attention to antecedent and consequent events. Discuss any problems in the observation. Avoid making judgments.

   D. Hypotheses: Based on the information you collected what are some hypotheses you would make regarding the person you observed? Are they frustrated, bored, anxious, happy, sad? This is the only section in which you can be subjective based on your observation record.

Assignment 2: Test Evaluation Project

This assignment is designed to provide practice in critically evaluating an assessment instrument and to introduce you to a wide variety of instruments. Follow the steps listed below in completing this assignment:
1. Working with two partners from class, choose a test or inventory based on your interests. You cannot choose a test that will be reviewed in-depth in class.

2. Read at least two reviews or analyses of the test or inventory in the Mental Measurement Yearbook, Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, Journal of Counseling and Development, or other counseling-affiliated journals.

3. Write a 2 page individual critique describing your reactions to the test you have chosen. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Base your evaluation/critique of the test on your personal reactions. For example, would you have one of your clients take this test and why? Is it culturally fair? Is the test valid and reliable?

4. Prepare a poster presentation of the inventory for the class. This presentation should include information that you believe will be most helpful as a learning tool to your classmates. Below is an outline of information that should be gathered. All partners must take part in the poster presentation. Your written individual critique will be due on the date of your presentation.

Outline for Test Evaluation Project

A. General Information
   1. Title of test, including edition and forms, if appropriate
   2. Author(s)
   3. Publisher and date(s) of publication
   4. Time required for administration
   5. Cost [booklets, answer sheets, materials, scoring services available].

B. Description of Purpose and Nature of Test
   1. General type of tests [individual or group, performance, interest inventory, etc.]
   2. Population for who test is designed [type of individual, age, and ranges].
   3. Type of items.

C. Practical Evaluation
   1. Practical features of test material, such as design of booklets.
   2. Attractiveness, appropriateness for audience.
   3. Ease of administration.
   4. Scoring procedures.
   5. Qualifications for examiners.

D. Technical Evaluation
   1. Norms
      a) Type of norms (percentiles, standard scores)
      b) Standardization sample: size, nature, and representatives.
   2. Reliability
      a) Types of reliability and procedures (e.g., retest, parallel-for, split half, Kuder Richardson, or coefficient alpha)
   3. Validity
      a) Types of validation procedures (content, criterion-related predictive or concurrent, construct).
b) Procedures used to assess validity and results of validity assessments.

E. Summary Evaluation
   1. Major strengths and weaknesses of the test.
   2. Recommendations for use.

You will be graded on your written individual critique and group poster presentation.
You can access information regarding your instrument in the Mental Measurement Yearbook, which is located in the library or from the following on-line resources:

- [The Buros Institute of Mental Measurement](http://www.unl.edu/buros)
- [The Eric Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation](http://ericae.net)

**Assignment 3: Test Interpretation Paper**

This assignment will provide practice in conducting an intake interview and interpreting your personality inventories. It includes peer supervision and self-appraisal components to help you refine your counseling and test interpretation skills.

1. Choose a partner from the class and conduct an interview session, gathering background information about him/her. We will go over how to conduct an intake interview in class. Make a 20-minute tape recording the intake session you conduct with your partner. Once you have completed the recording, give each other feedback on your interview, and write up (in paragraph form) results from the interview. Your partner will be able to use this write up as part of his or her test interpretation paper.

2. Following review of the scored inventories in class prepare a typed paper in which you do the following:
   a. Provide descriptive data for yourself, using third person throughout.
   b. Provide an overview of relevant background information. You can use your partner’s write up as part of this section.
   c. Describe client’s (your) attitude toward testing and test taking behavior.
   d. Identify the evaluation components used for this assignment.
   e. Analyze the client’s (your) scores for each of the inventories.
   f. Synthesize your test data, focusing on similarities and differences noted in the results of the inventories and the interview process.
   g. Summarize major client themes, including client (your) strengths and weaknesses.
   h. In a separate section (on a new page) critique your performance in relation to the interview and test interpretation process. **Use first person in this section.**