SPSY 750 - Cognitive Assessment Practicum
3 credits, Spring 2019
Center for Cognitive Assessment/Tuesdays 12:10-2:50

Faculty
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Prerequisites
SPSY 709 and admission to school psychology program.

University Catalog Course Description
Semester-long practicum experience in cognitive assessment, to develop and refine
psychological assessment skills. Requires weekly seminar. Provides experience in individual
cognitive assessments of children referred to the GMU Cognitive Assessment Program under
direct supervision of a licensed psychologist. Includes interviewing, testing, scoring, report
writing, and communicating results. Requires group and individual supervision Notes: Open only
to school psychology MA students.

Course Delivery Method
This course will be delivered in practicum and seminar format. Students are expected to
complete five intellectual assessments in the training clinic and attend weekly seminar for group
supervision. Individual supervision is also required. A minimum of 25 hours of practicum is
required.

Learner Objectives
The goal of this course is to prepare graduate students in school psychology to conduct, interpret,
and report assessments of cognitive functioning in children and adolescents.

Students will attain the goal by demonstrating competence in the following objectives:
1. Conduct diagnostic interviews with parents and school-aged children
2. Enhance proficiency in administration, scoring, and interpretation of individual cognitive
   assessments
3. Prepare written psychological reports that accurately communicate relevant results of
   cognitive assessment to parents and school professionals

4. Communicate results of individual cognitive assessments to parents accurately and professionally in feedback sessions
5. Interact with all clients in a manner that is consistent with standards of practice and professional ethics

Professional Standards
This course contributes to the development of knowledge and skills in the following National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) professional standards:
II. Data Based Decision Making
VI. Direct and Indirect Services: Systems level services: family-school collaboration
VIII. Research, Program Evaluation, Legal, Ethical and Professional Practice
       Element 8.2 Legal, ethical and professional practice

Recommended Texts
Flanagan, D. P., & Harrison, P. L. (Eds.). (2012). *Contemporary intellectual assessment: Theories, tests, and issues* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford.
Flanagan, D. P., & Alfonso, V. C. (2017). *Essentials of WISC-V assessment*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
Roid, G. H., & Barram, R. A. (2004). *Essentials of Stanford Binet Intelligence Scales (SB5) assessment.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
Sattler, J. M. (2008). *Assessment of children: Cognitive foundations* (5th Ed.). La Mesa, CA: Jerome M. Sattler Publisher.

Resources for writing mechanics
Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (1999). *The elements of style* (4th Ed.). New York, NY: Longman.
http://www.grammarbook.com/

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Course Performance Evaluation
Students are required to complete a total of five cognitive assessments, prepare written reports for the assessments, and provide feedback to parents regarding the results. In most cases, the referral question for the assessment is the child's eligibility for admission to Advanced Academic Program (AAP) placement in a local school district.

Students receive referrals directly through the GMU Cognitive Assessment Center. Work on all cases must be conducted under direct supervision of the psychologist who is assigned to work with the student, and students are responsible for coordinating consultation with the supervisor. In addition, students are expected to participate in seminar for group supervision as scheduled by the instructors.

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor.

Grading
A final grade for the course is derived from performance of the assigned activities. The following factors are weighted in determining a grade:

- Quality of written reports for five cognitive assessments *   50%
- Quality of interaction with clients, i.e. interview with child, parent, feedback session with parent, etc.   20%
- Accuracy of test administration, scoring, and interpretation   20%
- Adherence to standards of practice and policies of the GMU Cognitive Assessment Program and GMU Center for Psychological Services   10%

*Quality of written reports is determined by the supervisor based on the attached scoring rubric. Multiple drafts are typically required on the first several cases before a supervisor approves the final report. For the first three reports, the grade is based on the **final** report; for the last two reports, **the first draft submitted for review** is graded.

Numerical grades are converted to letter grades at the end of the course.

Grading Scale: (Please note: A course grade less than B- requires that you retake the course. A grade of "F" does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 [B average] to remain in good academic standing.)

A+ = 99-100
A = 93-98
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C = 70-79
F = below 70

Be aware that violations of ethical principles may result in dismissal from the course, and violations of program policies may result in sanctions or other disciplinary action.

Timely completion of assessments, written reports, and feedback meetings is essential to fulfill requirements of the course. Students must complete and submit all final reports in order to receive a grade for the course. If extenuating circumstances preclude a student from completing all five cases by the end of the course, the student may request a grade of "incomplete." The student is responsible for initiating the request in writing to the instructor before the end of the semester, and the request should include a rationale for why the extension is needed. Approval of such requests is at the discretion of the instructor.

Professional Dispositions
Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with relevant laws, standards of professional practice, ethical principles of psychologists, and policies of the university, college, division, GMU Cognitive Assessment Program, and the GMU Center for Psychological Services. Students who have questions about these expectations should consult with the instructor, clinical supervisor, or program director.

See also https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

Class Schedule

Class	Date	Topic
#1	1/22	709 final review (Ellen) Syllabus, overview of CAP procedures, case assignments
#2	1/29	Interviews, testing considerations, administration issues
#3	2/5	Administration, Scoring, Report writing
#4	2/12	Report writing, Interpretive/feedback guidance
#5	2/19	Feedback, general supervision/case consultation
#6	2/26	No Class – NASP convention
#7	3/5	Supervision/Case consultation
#8	3/12	No Class – Spring Break
TBD		Individual supervision with your supervisor, class will meet as needed
#15	4/30	Wrap up, final questions, etc.

If seminar needs to be canceled, an email will be sent to students. Remember that a significant portion of time is spent in supervision with your supervisor outside of these scheduled classes. You are responsible for initiating supervision with your supervisor.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see http://ods.gmu.edu/).

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/ .

Rubric for Scoring Reports

AREA	CONTENTS	NOTES
Clarity of Writing 5 pts.	Report includes no grammar, syntax or punctuation errors; No professional jargon or "buzz" words; no slang terms unless used by client and these are presented in quotes.	Check for consistent use of present, past and future verb tense and use of pronouns; run spellcheck and grammarcheck on your final version; Search and destroy your "buzz" words.
Identifying Information 5 pts.	Accurate, properly formatted, complete	Double check data, esp. birthdates and age
Reason for Referral 5 pts	Who is referring? What are the specific questions for which answers are sought?	Can be short section.
Assessment Techniques 5 pts	Complete; May be presented alphabetically or grouped by type; please italicize titles	Include test acronyms, (e.g. WISC-IV) following formal & complete name; italicize titles.
Background Information 15 pts	Family constellation; Developmental/medical, social and educational history. Include summary of results from previous evaluations, diagnoses, and medications.	Be alert to include information relevant to the referral question and/or the test findings & recommendations; be sure to attribute source of information.
Observations 15 pts	Specifically describe (rather than label) behaviors you observed which could be relevant to the results reported.	Include your assessment of the validity of results and reasons for your judgment (this can be in a separate short section if you wish)
Test Results 25 pts	May be organized according to major areas of functioning or major themes. Accurate scoring, appropriate deductions made, logical connections made.	Work on integration of data from all sources; Include brief descriptions of each test and relevant subtests. First time mention of particular tests, full title is included. Thereafter, acronym may be used; Double check scores transcribed from appendix for accuracy.
Summary and Conclusions 10 pts	Succinct but complete; Provides a clinical summary and conclusions from the findings; Does not repeat individual test results; Includes a DSM Diagnosis	This highlights the take-home points of the assessment. Note: Some readers look only at the summary and recommendation sections.
Recommendations 10 pts	Relevant to both referral questions and findings.	Tie recommendations to findings. If you find a particular area of deficit, be sure to offer a strategy or intervention relevant to that deficit. Good intervention resources are invaluable here, as is your own judgment.
Score Summary 5 pts	Accurate, well-organized, complete. Includes descriptions of the tests used and key for scores presented (e.g. scaled scores have a mean of 100 and sd of 15)	Double check for accuracy of scores and transcription from protocols; organize the scoring tables in the same fashion as your narrative – use same headers.