

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
School Psychology Program
Cognitive Assessment Practicum
SPSY 750, 3 credits
Spring 2020
Center for Cognitive Assessment/Tuesdays 10:00-12:50

Instructor: Nicole Beadles, PhD, NCSP
Email: nbeadles@gmu.edu
Phone: 703-993-5127
Office location: Thompson 1706
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

Prerequisites
SPSY 709

Catalog 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. (2018). *Assessment of children: Cognitive foundations* (6th 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. Supervisors will observe the student give feedback to the parents for the first case.

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/policies-procedures/>

Class Schedule

| Class | Date | Topic |
|-------------|------|--|
| #1 | 1/21 | Syllabus, overview of CAP procedures, case assignments |
| #2 | 1/28 | Interviews, testing considerations, administration issues |
| #3 | 2/4 | Administration, Scoring, Report writing |
| #4 | 2/11 | Report writing, Interpretive/feedback guidance |
| | 2/18 | No Class – NASP Convention |
| #5 | 2/25 | Feedbacks, general supervision/case consultation |
| #6 | 3/3 | Supervision/Case consultation |
| | 3/10 | No Class – Spring Break |
| #7 | 3/17 | Supervision/Case consultation |
| | | Individual supervision with your supervisor, class will meet as needed |
| Final class | 5/5 | 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.

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

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 <https://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 <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices 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 <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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

Rubric for Scoring Reports for SPSY 750

| AREA | CONTENTS | NOTES |
|--|--|--|
| Clarity of Writing 1.0 pts. | Report includes no grammar, syntax or punctuation errors; Paragraphs are well organized with topic sentence; 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 grammar check 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 1.5 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 1.5 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 2.5 pts | Accurate scoring, appropriate deductions made, logical connections made. | Index and subtests are described accurately; FSIQ includes confidence interval; Use of GAI when appropriate; Double check scores transcribed from appendix for accuracy. |
| Summary and Conclusions 1.0 pts | Succinct but complete; Provides a clinical summary and conclusions from the findings; Does not repeat individual test results | This highlights the take-home points of the assessment. Note: Some readers look only at the summary and recommendation sections. |
| Recommendations .5 pts | Standard recommendation is made using CAP template | This is a short sentence and should not vary. |
| Score Appendix .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. |

Each report is worth 10 pts (10% of your grade). Five reports = 50 pts, or 50% of your grade.