

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**School Psychology Program**

SPSY 710 – 001 Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Assessment  
(Lab: SPSY 710-201)  
4 credits, Spring 2021  
Class: Wednesday 1:00-3:40; 10340 Democracy Lane 203N  
Lab: Thursday 11:30-1:00; Democracy Lane 203N

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

SPSY 709 or PSYC 810, or with permission of instructor

**University Catalog Course Description**

Examines major instruments used in clinical assessment of social, emotional and behavioral functioning of children and adolescents. Provides practice in administration and scoring of major techniques for evaluation of social emotional behavioral adjustment. Explores nature, problems, and predictive value, and principles of interpretation of these procedures. Notes: Open only to school psychology MA students.

**Course Overview**

SPSY 710 introduces school psychology graduate students to modern concepts and methods of social, emotional, and behavioral assessment with school-aged children and adolescents.

**Course Delivery Method**

The format of the course includes didactic lectures and experiential labs. Reading assignments for lectures are provided in the schedule at the end of the syllabus. The materials are to be read before the designated lecture. Content presented in assigned readings is essential for developing proficiency as a practicing school psychologist. Not all readings will be discussed in class, but students are responsible for all assigned materials. The lab focuses on developing competencies in conducting diagnostic interviews and behavioral observations, scoring and interpreting social, emotional and behavioral measures, and preparing written reports of psychological assessment.

## **Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

The goal of this course is to prepare graduate students in school psychology to assess the social, emotional, and behavioral adjustment of children and adolescents in educational and clinical settings. Students learn a variety of techniques that can be applied in a diagnostic, problem-solving model. Additionally, students learn how to conceptualize and integrate data from these techniques into a comprehensive psychological report.

Students will attain the goals by demonstrating proficiency in the following objectives:

1. Examine the current issues and themes in assessment of children's social, emotional and behavioral adjustment
2. Evaluate the reliability, validity, and utility of objective and projective tests used to measure personality and social-emotional adjustment
3. Conduct general and focused interviews with children and with parents or guardians of children to collect relevant diagnostic data pertaining to social, emotional, and behavioral adjustment
4. Conduct structured and semi-structured behavioral observations
5. Select broad and narrow band psychological tests relevant to specific referral questions, administer tests in a manner consistent with prescribed procedures, score the tests accurately, and interpret the results
6. Synthesize diagnostic data from multiple sources, formulate valid interpretations of the data, select appropriate educational and clinical recommendations
7. Document results, diagnostic conclusions, and recommendations in a written report

## **Professional Standards**

This course contributes to the development of knowledge and skills in the following National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) professional standards:

Domain 1: Data Based Decision Making

Domain 4: Mental and Behavioral Health Services and Interventions

Domain 8: Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations

Domain 9: Research and Evidence Based Practice

Domain 10: Legal, Ethical and Professional Practice

## **Required Texts**

McConaughy, S. H. (2013). *Clinical interviews for children and adolescents: Assessment to intervention* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Guilford.

Sattler, J. M. (2022). *Foundations of behavioral, social and clinical assessment of children* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Jerome M. Sattler, Publisher.

## **Blackboard Readings:**

Various articles and book chapters to supplement textbook readings will be posted on blackboard. This will be indicated on the schedule of readings due for each class by the designation "BB."

**Recommended Resources:**

American Psychiatric Association. (2020). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (7th ed.). American Psychiatric Publishing.

Strunk, W. & White, E. B. (1999). *The Elements of Style* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Longman. ISBN-13: 978-0205309023

**Course Performance Evaluation**

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

**Attendance and Assignments:** Attendance at classes and labs is required, and students are responsible for all information presented during class and lab meetings. The instructor should be notified if a student is unable to attend a class or a lab. In the event of absence, students should obtain lecture notes from classmates. Students will be responsible for submitting assignments prior to class meeting time on the date due, even if unable to attend class. All assignments must be completed by their due dates. The grade may be deducted by 5% if not submitted by the designated due date. This is intended to help prepare you for meeting deadlines prescribed by special education law while balancing your responsibilities in your future position as a school psychologist.

**Interviews with Child, Adolescent, and Parent, with Reflections:** You are required to conduct three interviews: one with a parent, one with an adolescent age 12 or older, and one with a child between the ages of 7 and 11. It is best to interview someone unfamiliar to you. Given COVID-19, you may conduct these interviews in person or via teleconference. You are to compose a written reflection of your experience with each interview (i.e. what was the process like, what, if anything, made you nervous, what went well, what you would do differently the next time, what are the differences among interviews with a parent, child, and adolescent). Rather than focusing on the details of the interview, attend to the process that you experienced while conducting them and your reflection of the experience. Each write up should be approximately two pages, double spaced; one document can be submitted containing all three interview reflections. 10 points each interview, total = 30 points

**Behavioral Observation:** You are to conduct a classroom behavioral observation of a target student and comparison peer. I have arranged this to take place at an elementary school, or if you have a school you are able to visit on your own, this might be permitted. If you are unable to do this in person, there is a video on Bb you can use, but this option is considered only in extenuating circumstances. Conducting an in-person observation is critical to learning this skill. Your observation should include both narrative (descriptive) and objective (data from time sampling) information. Format and details will be discussed in class. 20 points

**Administration and Scoring of Tests:** You will administer, score and/or interpret common tests including the BASC, CBRS, Kinetic Family/School, PAI, and the Roberts. Time will be allotted for some of these activities over the course of your labs. 10 points each for a total of 50 points.

- For the BASC and CBRS, you will receive a protocol and you will interpret the results (2 page write up for each, all in one document). (10 pts each = 20 pts total)

- You will “administer” the Kinetic Family/School drawing to a partner online during lab and ask follow up questions about the drawings. You will upload the pictures and reflection of your experience. (10 pts)
- You will also take a personality inventory yourself (the PAI); you do not need to score it, just submit the response sheet/protocol. (10 pts)
- The Roberts will be initiated in lab, but time is needed to continue scoring on your own. (10 pts)

**Comprehensive Report:** You will write one comprehensive assessment report. The assessment data (background, interview information, raw data and appendix of test results) will be provided. The assessment data are based on a real case, but all identifying information is changed. The focus of the case will be the impact of social, emotional, and behavioral factors on adjustment and educational performance; however, cognitive and achievement results will be provided and will need to be integrated into the report. The assignment includes five drafts that culminate in a single comprehensive report. The following content should be incorporated in the respective drafts:

- 1) identifying information, reason for referral and background information,
- 2) behavioral observations, (assessment of cognitive abilities, processing, and academic achievement will be provided);
- 3) social/emotional and behavioral functioning (1<sup>st</sup> attempt);
- 4) social/emotional and behavioral functioning (2<sup>nd</sup> attempt);
- 5) summary and conclusions (comprehensive integration of all data), diagnoses (if warranted), and recommendations.

The various drafts will be due throughout the semester and graded as they are turned in via BB (each draft is worth 20 points). Feedback/edits will be provided to you electronically and you are expected to make revisions and incorporate them into the report as you complete the remaining drafts. While the grading is cumulative as you add each draft of the report, areas that are revised well will be given extra consideration in the overall grading of the report. Please see guidelines at end of syllabus for report writing tips. Lab time will be allotted to writing Q&A and guidance. 20 points per draft, total = 100

## Grading

Each assignment is listed below, along with the number of points each contributes toward the final grade:

Interview with child (age 7-11) and reflection	10
Interview with adolescent (12+) and reflection	10
Interview with parent/guardian and reflection	10
Behavioral observation	20
Administration/Interpretation/Scoring of Tests (10 pts each)	
• BASC, CBRS, Drawings, PAI, Roberts	50
Comprehensive Report (20 pts. per draft)	100
Total	200

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 (198 – 200)  
 A = 93-98 (186 – 197)  
 A- = 90-92 (180 – 185)  
 B+ = 87-89 (174 – 179)  
 B = 83-86 (166 – 173)  
 B- = 80-82 (160 – 165)  
 C = 70-79 (140 – 159)  
 F = below 60 (below 140)

### 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 and department. Students who have questions about these expectations should consult with the instructor or program director.

See also <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

### Class Schedule

Class	Topics	Required Readings/Items Due (by start of class unless noted otherwise)
1 1/25	<p>Framework for social emotional assessment, issues in assessment and classification, educational and DSM 5 criteria, cultural considerations</p> <p>1/26 LAB: introduction, course format, lab format, discuss sample case and report format; report writing basics, “do’s and don’ts,” and how to structure the report.</p> <p>Note: Ch. 16 in Frick, et. al. 2020 is a great reference on report writing basics.</p>	<p>Sattler: ch.. 1 (ps. 1-42);</p> <p>Bb: Geva &amp; Wiener (2014)</p>
2 2/1	<p>Interviewing children and parents</p> <p>2/2 LAB: practice interviewing, preparation for writing section 1</p> <p>Note: McConaughy, 2013 is very helpful when you create interview questions.</p>	<p>Sattler: ch. 4,</p> <p>McConaughy ch. 6 (be familiar with Appendix 6.1 for lab); Skim chs. 2-5 (how to interview children)</p>
2/8	<p>No Class – NASP conference</p> <p>No Lab</p>	<p><b>Report: draft 1 due: ID’ing info, referral, background</b></p>

3 2/15	Behavioral observations  2/16 LAB: video practice - behavior observations, how to write up behavioral observations; debrief/process section 1 write up	Sattler: ps. 79-92, ch. 7, and ps. 317-321
4 2/22	Objective measures: broad band behavioral measures  BASC-3 (parent, teacher and self-report)  2/23 LAB: how to administer and interpret rating scales; BASC-3 interpretation; Q&A for section 2	BB: Frick, Barry & Kamphaus (2020) pgs. 91-100, 121-134; (this book is available online at the GMU library)  BASC 3 publication summary form;  BASC 3 scale descriptions
5 3/1	Objective measures: cont'd ASEBA, CBRS  3/2 LAB: CBRS interpretation	BB: Frick, et.al. (2020) pgs. 100-103, 134-142;  CBRS manual chapters  <b>Report: draft 2 due: Behavioral observations</b>
6 3/8	Assessment of specific internalizing problems (anxiety, depression, DMDD) narrow bands: MASC, RCMAS BDI, CDI  3/9 LAB: discuss outline of social emotional section; Q&A to prepare for section 3.  Note: Ch. 15 in Frick, et. al. (2020) can be helpful here.	BB: Frick, et.al. (2020) ch. 18  Sattler pp. 441-452  <b>BASC and CBRS interpretations due</b>
7 3/15	Spring break	
8 3/22	Assessment of specific externalizing problems (ADHD, oppositional and conduct disorder) Conners 4  3/23 LAB: review CBRS and BASC externalizing disorder scales/interpretation, debrief section 2, prep for section 3,	BB: Frick et.al (2020) Ch. 17;  Conners 4 manual chs 1-2 (login given in class)
9 3/29	Assessment of suicidality/risk assessment, threat assessment in the schools  3/30 LAB: suicide risk assessment interview practice with student and parent	McConaughy Ch. 9  BB: Kelly, 2018  Columbia screener  <b>Report: draft 3 due: soc emot (1<sup>st</sup> attempt)</b>
10 4/5	Objective measures: personality functioning (MMPI-RF, MACI-II, PAI-A),  4/6 LAB: Take the PAI – the questionnaire and answer sheet are on BB under assignments	BB: Frick pgs. 103-114 (MMPI-A-RF); pgs. 116-118 (PAI-A)  Morey & Meyer, Sharp & Wall

	Report writing Q&A for section 3 revisions and prep for section 4	<a href="https://www.millonpersonality.com/theory/role-of-personality/">https://www.millonpersonality.com/theory/role-of-personality/</a> please review all areas on the left sidebar of this page
11 4/12	Projective Measures: introduction and issues, story telling (Roberts), drawings, sentence completion  4/13 LAB: administering/scoring drawings - KFD and KSD	Sattler: ch. 10 pgs. 357-362 BB: Frick ch. 10; Rogers <b>Report: draft 4 due: soc emot (2<sup>nd</sup> attempt)</b>
12 4/19	Rorschach  4/20 LAB: Score the Roberts	BB: Garb et.al.; Groth-Marnat ch. 10 (through p. 434) <b>Kinetic Drawings due</b> <b>Behavioral Observations due</b>
13 4/26	Assessment of social skills, adaptive behavior Assessment of specific disorders (ID, Autism)  4/27 LAB: Continue scoring the Roberts; report writing Q&A for section 5	Sattler Ch. 15 (Aut) Harrison & Raineri (Adaptive Beh) Q&A of child with autism (if you have time) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLqmeOF3lpc&amp;t=239s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLqmeOF3lpc&amp;t=239s</a> <b>PAI due</b> <b>Interview write ups due</b>
14 5/3	Social Emotional and Behavioral problems in the schools – Assessing and understanding ED in the schools How to give feedback to parents No Lab	BB: Olympia, et.al.; Gacono; Hanchon & Allen 2018; Tharinger <b>Roberts scoring due</b>  <b>Report: draft 5 - Due May 10 at 11:59 pm (summary, diagnoses, recommendations)</b>

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 VIA should be directed to [viahelp@gmu.edu](mailto:viahelp@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments> . 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, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:**

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

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



## Report writing guidelines and suggestions

Clarity of Writing	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 grammar check on your final version; Search and destroy your “buzz” words.
Identifying Information	Accurate, properly formatted, complete	Double check data, esp. birthdates and age
Reason for Referral	Who is referring? What are the specific questions for which answers are sought?	Can be short section.
Assessment Techniques	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	Clinic cases, and where possible school cases, include: 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	Specifically describe (rather than label) behaviors you observed which could be relevant to the results reported.	MUST 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	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 <u>brief</u> 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	Succinct but complete; Provides a clinical summary and conclusions from the findings; Answers referral question; Does not repeat individual test results/scores; 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	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/Appendix	Accurate, well-organized, formatted consistently, 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.