



Department of Psychology
Psychology 671 (L01) - Psychological Assessment of Adults
Fall 2008

Instructor:	Dr. Kristin von Ranson	Lecture Location:	A 253
Phone:	403-220-7085	Lecture Days/Time:	Thurs. 8:30-11:30
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Office Hours:	Thursdays 11:30-12:30 and by appointment	Labs:	A 135, Thurs. 1:00-4:00

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of the theoretical, professional, and ethical issues in psychological assessment and to develop competence in the administration and interpretation of selected instruments. The course will consist of lectures, discussions, presentations and demonstrations. In addition to providing a basic understanding of the development and psychometric properties of each test, the course will provide students with “hands-on” practical experience both in the classroom and in a practicum setting. During the latter part of the course, students will be required to conduct one or two assessments in a clinical setting, under the supervision of a registered clinical psychologist. Students will be expected to integrate assessment data from various sources and to use this data in the formulation of treatment plans.

Required Texts and Readings

Groth-Marnat, G. (2003). *Handbook of Psychological Assessment* (4th ed.). New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Graham, J. (2006). *MMPI-2: Assessing Personality and Psychopathology* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Selected readings. WAIS-III, MMPI-II, and MCMI-III and other test materials and manuals are available to you through the Test Library.

For your information, the *Journal of Personality Assessment*, the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, and *Psychological Assessment* are three of the key journals in this area. These journals and the *Mental Measurement Yearbooks* are available online through the library.

Integrity and Security of Test Materials

Throughout the course you will be provided with assessment materials. Responsible professional conduct dictates that you exercise careful control over the integrity and security of such materials. You may not supply materials or provide access to individual items and protocols to unqualified users.

Evaluation

In addition to completing the assigned readings you will be required to do the following:

1. **Lab Component (Pass/Fail)**

- Interviewing
- WAIS-III and life history administration

2. **Two Assessment Reports (Pass/Conditional Pass/Fail)**

For these reports, I will provide you with data from some combination of the WAIS-III, the MMPI-II, and the MCMI-III, as well as additional information (e.g. history, diagnostic interview, mental status) which you will be required to integrate with test data. In the interests of good clinical practice, the emphasis will be on the clarity and brevity of psychological reports. These assignments will be evaluated on a pass/conditional pass (subject to revision) basis.

3. **Minor Presentation (10%)**

The purpose of this presentation is to focus on topical areas in adult assessment that have received recent attention in the literature. Presentations should not exceed 30 minutes in length, and should review the assigned readings, highlighting the issues and reviewing the existing research and/or practice issues. Students should distribute an outline of their presentation and a brief reference list.

Minor presentation topics:

- a) *Analogue behavioral observation (class 2)*. Selected article(s) from special series, *Psychological Assessment*, (2001), 13 (1), 3-98 – focus on adult examples
- b) *Self-monitoring (class 3)*. Selected article(s) from special section, *Psychological Assessment*, (1999), 11(4), 411-489.
- c) *Computerized and internet assessment (class 4)*. Selected article(s) from special sections, *Psychological Assessment* (2007), 19(1), 1-73; *Psychological Assessment*, (2000), 12(1), 3-60; *American Psychologist* (2004), 59, 150-162.
- d) *WAIS-III Short-forms (class 5)*. See sections of Sattler and Groth-Marnat.
- e) *Emotional intelligence (class 6)* – validity and assessment. Salovey, P. & Grewal, D. (2005). The science of emotional intelligence. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14, 281-285.
- f) *Outcome monitoring – e.g., SCL-90, Brief Symptom Inventory Scales (class 8)*. Groth-Marnat, chapter 13.
- g) *Evidence-based assessment of adults (depression, anxiety, and/or personality disorders) (Class 8)*. Selected articles from special section, *Psychological Assessment*, (2005), 17 (3), 256-287.

4. **Major Presentation (30%)**

The goal of this presentation is to familiarize students with assessment techniques and issues with specific populations and/or conditions, including but not limited to the following: older adults, forensic populations, personality disorders, eating disorders, chronic pain/illness, substance abuse, risk of aggression, achievement testing for adults (WIAT, WRAT-4). The goal of your presentation is to provide an overview of your topic that includes a selective summary of existing research and clinical assessment issues, emphasizing “best practices” where possible. Presentations should be approximately 50-60 minutes in length. Students should distribute an outline of their presentation and a brief reference list at the start of the presentation. A one-page outline of the presentation is to be submitted to the instructor 3 weeks prior to the presentation for review and approval of the topic.

5. **Midterm exam (30%)**

6. **Final exam (30%)** - Date TBA

7. **Complete one or two assessments in a clinical practicum setting and submit reports (Pass/Fail)**

Students are expected to respect client confidentiality and, in general, to behave in a professional and ethical manner at all times. Professional demeanor, clinical skills, and report-writing ability will be evaluated by your on-site supervisors on a pass/fail basis. In the unlikely event that a student fails, s/he will be required to repeat the practicum component of the course.

Grading Scale:

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (i.e., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90%; 89.4% will be rounded down to 89%, etc.).

Class Topics and Readings

Class 1 – Sept. 11 **Introduction to psychological assessment**

Groth-Marnat (2003). Chapter 1

Meyer, G. J., Finn, S. E., Eyde, L. D., Kay, G. G., Moreland, K. L., Dies, R. R., Eisman, E. J., Kubiszyn, T. W., & Reed, G. M. (2001). Psychological testing and psychological assessment: A review of evidence and issues. *American Psychologist*, 56, 128-165.

Class 2 – Sept. 18 **a) Clinical interviewing/behavioural and cognitive-behavioural assessment**

Groth-Marnat (2003). Chapters 3, 4

b) Scale development, scale evaluation, and assessment utility

In reviewing the following readings, note that there are basically four issues or questions that are addressed:

1. What are the steps involved in constructing an assessment scale? An equivalent form for another cultural group?
2. How should the psychometric properties of a scale be evaluated?
3. What are reliability and validity, and why do they matter? The articles range from a basic treatment of validity issues (Simms & Watson, 2007) to more complex topics such as distinctions between representational versus elaborative validity, establishing validity for constructs/traits versus behaviours/response classes, and an in-depth discussion of content validity (e.g., relationship to construct validity, the importance of context, and the dynamic nature of content validity).
4. What factors influence assessment utility? Included here are the importance of base rates and problems with using cut scores.

Focusing on these issues may make these readings more helpful.

a) Scale construction, evaluation, and reliability and validity

Cicchetti, D. V. (1994). Guidelines, criteria, and rules of thumb for evaluating normed and standardized assessment instruments in psychology. *Psychological Assessment*, 6, 284-290.

Foster, S. L., & Cone, J. C. (1995). Validity issues in clinical assessment. *Psychological Assessment*, 7, 248-260.

Simms, L. J., & Watson, D. (2007). The construct validation approach to personality scale construction. In R. W. Robins, R. C. Fraley, & R. F. Krueger (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Personality Psychology* (pp. 240-258). New York: The Guilford Press.

Smith, G.T. (2005). On construct validity: Issues of method and measurement. *Psychological Assessment*, 17, 396-408. (Read pages 396-401 only).

b) Assessment utility

Dwyer, C. A. (1996). Cut scores and testing: Statistics, judgment, truth, and error. *Psychological Assessment*, 8(4), 360-362.

Kamphuis, J. H. & Finn, S.E (2002). Incorporating base rate information in daily clinical

decision making. In J. N. Butcher (Ed.), *Clinical personality assessment: Practical approaches* (pp. 257-268). N.Y.: Oxford.

Class 3 – Mon., Sept. 22, 13:00-16:00, A247B – **Note different day, time, and location for this class only **b) Scale development, scale evaluation, and assessment utility**
(cont'd)

See readings above.

Class 4 – Oct. 2 **Legal and ethical issues, automated assessment, report writing and providing feedback**

Groth-Marnat (2003). Chapters 2, 15.

APA (2002). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American Psychologist*, 57, 1060 – 1073. (relevant sections on assessment).

College of Alberta Psychologists. (2005). Professional guidelines: The control and use of psychological tests.

College of Alberta Psychologists. (2005). Practice Bulletin: Protection and disclosure of psychological test data and materials: Ethical and legal obligations of psychologists (pp. 12-13).

Brenner, E. (2003). Consumer-focused psychological assessment. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 34, 240-247.

Pope, K. (1992). Responsibilities in providing psychological test feedback to clients. *Psychological Assessment*, 4, 268-271.

Class 5 – Oct. 9 **Intellectual assessment**

Groth-Marnat, G. (2003). Chapter 5

Sattler, J. M. (2001). *Assessment of children: Cognitive application*. – WAIS-III sections. San Diego: Jerome M. Sattler. (Read selectively.)

Neisser, U., et al. (1996). Intelligence: Knowns and unknowns. *American Psychologist*, 51, 77-101.

Class 6 – Oct. 16 **a) Personality assessment**

Lanyon, R. I., & Goodstein, L. D. (1997). *Personality assessment*. New York: Wiley. Chapter 2: Concepts and definitions.

Wiggins, J. (2003). *Paradigms of Personality Assessment*. New York: Guilford. Chapter 4: The

multivariate paradigm.

Hogan, R., Hogan, J., & Roberts, B. W. (1996). Personality measurement and employment decisions. *American Psychologist*, 51, 469-477.

b) The MMPI

Groth-Marnat, G. (2003). Chapter 7

Graham, J. (2006). *MMPI-2: Assessing Personality and Psychopathology* (4th ed). New York: Oxford. (Read selectively, focusing on chapters 1-5, 7, 9-11)

Hathaway, S. R. (1990). *MMPI-2: Manual for administration and scoring*. Minnesota: U. of Minnesota Press. (Available from the test library. Read selectively.)

Helmes, E., & Reddon, J. R. (1993). A perspective on developments in assessing psychopathology: A critical review of the MMPI and MMPI-2. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113, 453-471.

Class 7 – Oct. 23 **Midterm Exam**

Class 8 – Oct. 30 **The MCMI-III / Cultural Issues in Assessment / Clinical Judgment**

Groth-Marnat, G. (2003). Chapter 8.

Branch, C.B. (2005). Racial-cultural issues in clinical assessment. In R. Carter (Ed.), *Handbook of Racial-Cultural Psychology and Counselling: Training and Practice*, Vol. 2 (pp. 316-339). Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.

Suzuki, L. A., Kugler, J. F. & Aguiar, L. J. (2005). Assessment practices in racial-cultural psychology. In R. Carter (Ed.), *Handbook of Racial-Cultural Psychology and Counselling: Training and Practice*, Vol. 2 (pp. 297-315). Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.

Garb, H. N. (2005). Clinical judgment and decision making. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 67-89.

Class 9 – Nov. 6 **Rorschach and Other Projective Techniques (Konnert) / Student Presentation**

Groth-Marnat, G. (2003). Chapter 10

Lilienfeld, S. O., Wood, J. M., & Garb, H. N. (2000). The scientific status of projective techniques. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 1, 27-66.

Class 10 – Nov. 13 **Malingering in Assessment / Student presentation**

Baer, R. A. & Miller, J. (2002). Underreporting of psychopathology on the MMPI-2: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Assessment, 14*, 16-26.

Rothke, S.E., Friedman, A.F., Jaffe, A.M., Greene, R.L., Wetter, M. W., Cole, P., & Baker, K. (2000). Normative data for the F(p) scale of the MMPI-2: Implications for clinical and forensic assessment of malingering. *Psychological Assessment, 12*, 335-340.

Class 11 – Nov. 20 **Neuropsychological Assessment (Suffield) / Student presentation**

Lezak, M. D., Howieson, D. B., & Loring, D. W. (2004). *Neuropsychological assessment* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press. Chapters 5 & 6

Class 12 – Nov. 27 **Wechsler Memory Scales / Student presentation**

Groth-Marnat, G. (2003). Chapter 6

Budson, A.E. & Price, B.H. (2005). Memory dysfunction. *New England Journal of Medicine, 352*, 692-699. (for reference only – will not be examined)

Class 13 – Dec. 4 **The relationship between psychological assessment and treatment planning / Student presentation**

Groth-Marnat, G. (2003). Chapter 13 and 14.

Harkness, A. R., & Lilienfeld, S. O. (1997). Individual differences science for treatment planning: Personality traits. *Psychological Assessment, 9*, 349-360.

Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

Absence from a Test

Make-up exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). You must contact the instructor before the scheduled examination or you will have forfeited any right to make up the exam. At the instructor's discretion, a make-up exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup exam is written within two (2) weeks of the missed exam. A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test for health reasons. The student will be required to pay any cost associated with the Physician Counselor Statement.

Important Dates

The last day to drop this course and still receive a fee refund is **September 19, 2008**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **December 5, 2008**.

A copy of this course outline may be viewed on the Internet at the following web address:

<http://psychology.ucalgary.ca/courses>

Course announcements, notes, and information may be found on the Internet at:

<http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/webapps/login>