



University of Calgary

Programme in Clinical Psychology
PSYC 673: Psychological Assessment of Children
Winter 2008

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This course outline is still under review and revision and subject to change.

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"It has not been sufficiently recognized that providing services to children and families requires special skills that go beyond adult work. Psychological disorders of childhood and the corresponding assessment procedures and treatment methods for children are often quite different from those used with adults. Frequently, it is more difficult and complicated to work with a whole family than with an individual adult. The parents of the disturbed child may have mental disorders, substance abuse problems, or both, which contribute to their child's disorders and which may complicate the provision of services to the familyServices to children, youth, and families embrace different functions in different settings and may involve different levels of expertise. Professional child psychology should be recognized as a specialty within clinical psychology; nevertheless it is a very broad field that itself includes several very different subspecialties, from school psychology to pediatric psychology..."(p.11)

Paul Wolford, Chief

Psychology Education Program

National Institute of Mental Health, 1990

¹ Will probably move to the second floor during the course

Overall Objective of the Course:

The overall focus of this course is the core knowledge and skills relevant to the psychological assessment of children and their families. There is a particular emphasis on the clinical assessment children between the ages of 3 and 12 years with a variety of difficulties. This course is intended to be part of an ongoing educational process designed to aid you in gaining increasing levels of knowledge and competence in the assessment of children and families, as reflected in the wide range of activities (e.g., research, clinical practice, and consultation) engaged in by Ph.D. level clinical psychologists. The lab and Practicum will necessarily be more practically focused on developing basic skills: Interviewing, cognitive assessment, educational screening and report writing.

Specific Course Objectives:

1. To acquire knowledge about the basic theory, research, and methodological issues in the psychological assessment of children including: theoretical models for child and family assessment; developmental considerations in child and family assessment; scale construction and evaluation; combining data sources; and decision-making approaches to child and family assessment.
2. To acquire knowledge about substantive issues relevant to different types of child, adolescent and family assessment procedures and specific instruments and techniques including: unstructured and structured interviews, intelligence tests, questionnaires, behavioral checklists, and observational assessments.
3. To acquire knowledge about substantive and practical issues involved in assessments relying on information from different informants (e.g., child, parent, teacher, and peers) and carried out in different settings (e.g., clinic, home, hospital, classroom, and peer group).
4. To acquire knowledge about professional issues relevant to the assessment of children and families including ethical, professional, and legal aspects of the assessment process.
5. To acquire knowledge about substantive and practical issues involved in assessing various types of populations and problems, children of different ages, children from varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds and families.
6. To acquire beginning skills and supervised practice in the administration, interpretation, and communication - written and oral - of findings obtained from several commonly used assessment instruments and techniques for children and families: parent and child interviews, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV), Wide Range Achievement Test 3 (WRAT3), Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC-2), observational assessment, informal play assessments, and observational techniques.
7. To acquire knowledge and beginning skills in carrying out assessments in response to clinical exigencies that characterize settings in which children are typically assessed. Such skills include evaluating referral information, formulating assessment questions, selecting appropriate assessment strategies and instruments, integrating different sources of information, presenting assessment findings and recommendations, record keeping, consultation with other professionals, case conference presentation and report writing.

We will not cover in any detail: neuropsychological, projective testing, adolescent specific measures like the (MMPI-A or the MACI) and assessment of infants.

Laboratory and Practicum Objectives:

The primary emphasis of the lab and practicum portions of the course will be on the acquisition of practical skills. These skills will be acquired in the context of:

- a. Supervised feedback-oriented labs during which you will be observing, practicing, and role-playing a variety of assessment procedures and assessing volunteer children and parents at the University.
- b. *Possibly* an observation of one multidisciplinary assessment of a family and child through the Diagnostic Clinic or the Oppositional Defiant Disorder/Conduct Disorder Clinic at the Richmond Road Diagnostic and Treatment Center.
- c. *Possibly* opportunities to observe assessments performed by Residents at the Alberta Children's Hospital or the Child Development Center or the Richmond Rd. Diagnostic and Treatment Center.

The philosophy of this child-focused lab/practicum experience follows from the view that the best initial foundation upon which to build your assessment skills is one that involves:

- a. Acquisition of generic assessment skills including formulating assessment questions, interviewing, engaging children and parents in the assessment process, test administration, observation, and communicating assessment findings to parents and professionals in an appropriate and helpful fashion;
- b. Learning to use a small number of specific assessment instruments. By mastering the administration and interpretation of a small number of instruments, you will have established a foundation for your continued child and family assessment training.

The mastery of a number of specific skills will be pursued. These include:

1. Using referral information, client file review, pre-assessment developmental history, and screening questionnaires to formulate preliminary assessment questions and strategies
2. Establishing rapport and providing relevant, developmentally appropriate, and culturally sensitive rationales for assessment to parents and children;
3. Conducting interviews with parents and children.
4. Administering, scoring, and interpreting the WRAT3, and WISC-IV.
5. Interpreting empirically-based information from the BASC battery of instruments;
6. Conducting informal behavioral observations.
7. Formulating recommendations based on assessment findings.
8. Communicating assessment findings and recommendations to parents, teachers, and other professionals through written reports and case conferences.

A great amount of time will be needed to achieve these practicum objectives. It is believed that such a time commitment is consistent with the high level of social and ethical responsibility that you are assuming as a psychologist-in-training.

As early in your assessment training as possible, you should begin to formulate an overall conceptual framework to guide your practicum work. To facilitate this, it is recommended that you begin to examine the assessment materials as soon as possible. You should also begin to

read about the development, standardization, and psychometric properties of these assessment procedures.

Integrity and Security of Test Materials:

Your lab instructor will provide you with information regarding procedures for obtaining access to assessment materials. Responsible professional conduct dictates that you exercise careful control over the integrity and security of any test materials made available to you. Please familiarize yourselves with the (P.A.A.; C.A.P.; C.P.A. websites for a range of codes and standards) published "Guidelines for Control of Psychological Tests by Psychologists".

Please note the first two guidelines:

- 1. Psychologists must at all times endeavor to maintain the integrity of psychological tests.** They may not supply test materials, forms, and manuals to unqualified users. They must take reasonable steps to ensure that the purchase and distribution of psychological tests by their employing institutions are for the use of psychologists only.
- 2. Psychologists have an obligation to protect test security.** For example, actual test items or specific test content should not be disclosed in reports and teaching situations (the teaching of psychologists in training is an exception to this rule) and access to test protocols and materials should be restricted to chartered psychologists and those under direct supervision.

Required Textbooks and Readings:

Available from the Bookstore for Purchase:

Prifitera, A., Saklofske, D. H., & Weiss, L. G. (2005). WISC IV Clinical Use and Interpretation: Scientist Practitioner Perspectives, Elsevier Academic Press (ISBN 0-12-564931-2)

Mash, E.J., & Barkely (Eds.) (2007). Assessment of Childhood Disorders (4th Edition). New York: Guilford. (ISBN: 978-1-59385-493-5)

McGoldrick, M. Gerson, R and Petry, S. (2008) Genograms: Assessment and Intervention, Third Edition W.W. Norton & Co. Ltd., New York. (ISBN 978 0 393 70509 6)

These texts are available at the University bookstore. There will be assigned readings from these texts. These books contain a wealth of theoretical and empirical information and are incomparable references in the field of child assessment. They will serve as reference volumes for the duration of your training and beyond.

Available through the Psychology Department Test Library:

Manuals for WISC-IV, WRAT3, BASC-2. CBCL/4-18 and 1991 Profile; CBCL Teacher's Report Form and 1991 Profile

A master set of the specific assigned readings will be available each week at the front counter of the Psychology Dept. office (A275) for you to photocopy.

d. Specific journal articles and book chapters will be assigned each week.

Recommended Additional References:

American Psychiatric Association (2000) DSM-IV-TR Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition, Text Revision. American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.²

See also: <http://www.behavenet.com/capsules/disorders/dsm4TRclassification.htm>
<http://www.behavenet.com/capsules/disorders/dsm4tr.htm>

Braaten, Ellen (2007) The Child Clinicians Report-Writing Handbook. The Guilford Press: New York (ISBN 978-1-59385-395-2)

Kamphaus, Randy & Campbell, Jonathan M. (2006) Psychodiagnostic Assessment of Children: Dimensional and Categorical Approaches. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey (ISBN 978-0-471-21219-5)

Murdoch, Douglas & Barker, Philip (1991) Basic Behavior Therapy. Blackwell Scientific Publications, London (ISBN 0-632-02322-8)

Sattler, J.M. (2008). Assessment of children: Cognitive Applications, Fifth Edition³. San Diego, CA: Jerome M. Sattler, Publisher, Inc.

See at <http://www.sattlerpublisher.com/>

Almost any of the books from the Wiley Essentials of Psychological Assessment series:

<http://ca.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-7198.html>

e.g Stark. Stephen (2002), Essentials of Millon Inventories Assessment 2nd edition John Wiley and Sons Inc. New York.

² Copies should be readily available in the psychology library as well as in your practicum settings. DSM-V is anticipated in 2010 and personally, I would try to borrow copies of the DSM -IV- TR or use online resources like BehaveNet and then purchase the DSM-V as you enter your residency/internship year.

³ This has historically been one of the texts for this course. However, the last edition is too out of date to use for this course and the new edition will not be out until April 13, 2008. I could not in good conscience have you buy a book that is out of date and would need to be replaced four months from now. Unfortunately, the author/publisher is only offering a 40% discount on the new edition, if you buy the current edition. I have therefore decided to not use this text this term and to substitute the Prifitera et al. text instead which is very good and highly recommended but with a narrower focus. I would however strongly recommend the purchasing of the new Sattler text when it comes out as many consider it one of the few "standard" text of child clinical psychology. Here is the communication directly from Jerome Sattler regarding the new edition.

Dear Colleague,

We have a tentative publication date for our text, Assessment of Children: Cognitive Foundations, Fifth edition and its accompanying Resource Guide. Because we wanted to keep book to a reasonable length, we decided to have a Resource Guide that contains all of the appendixes. The date is April 10, 2008. The book should be available for shipment on April 13, 2008, if all goes according to schedule.

Thank you so much for your past support. The Fifth edition will incorporate the WISC-IV and WPPSI-III Supplement. It will also contain chapter on the DAS-II and SB5. However, it will not contain any information about the WAIS-IV that will be coming out in the future.

Course requirements and evaluation:

1. Professional and ethical behaviour at all times in all settings regarding clients (real or practice), supervisors, classmates and instructors. This includes the responsible use of test materials and the return of all test materials in good order at the end of the course.
2. Active class participation reflecting the weekly assigned readings have been completed.
3. A class presentation on a relevant child/family assessment topic. The purpose of this presentation is to familiarize you and your classmates with the psychological assessment of selected populations of children and families. Presentation topics will be selected at the beginning of the term. This can either be done solo (30 minutes) or in pairs⁴ (60 minutes).
4. Completion of a midterm examination. Part of this examination will be written in class and part will be take-home. The take-home portion of the examination will require you to write a psychological report based on information that will be provided by the instructor.
5. Lab administration, interpretation, write-up and class presentation of practice assessments using the interview, WISC-IV, WRAT3, and BASC-2. As will be explained, you will be responsible for assessing suitable non-clinical cases for these exercises and for assisting with the recruitment of volunteer parents and children for these assessments as needed.
6. A written final examination

Assignments, due dates and Percentage Values:

	Percentage Values
1. Professional and ethical behaviour (Pass/Fail)	P/F
2. Class participation demonstrating knowledge of the readings	10%
3. Class presentation on a specific population or diagnostic area	15%
4. Midterm examination	
In-Class Portion (March 3)	15%
Take Home Portion (due March 10)	15%
5. Lab administration, interpretation and write-up of practice assessments	
a. Interview/BASC-2	P/F
b. WISC-IV/WRAT-III Integrative	P/F
c. Integrated report of the above	P/F

*All assignments are due within one week of the time of administration

Note: Successful completion of the above assignments requires that you demonstrate mastery of each of the component skills

TOTAL FOR LAB	20%
6. Presentation to the class of your clinical assessment Dates: April 10 and 17	P/F
7. Final examination	

⁴ If in pairs, then the same mark will be assigned to both parties

Date: April 24 (3 hours)

25%

Please note:

1. Credit for the lab, practicum, and course requires that all P/F components of the course are successfully completed.
2. A maximum of 10% will be assigned for class participation grades based on the appraisal of your mastery of the required readings and your course involvement as reflected in class comments and effectiveness in responding to questions that are raised in class.
3. A maximum of 15% will be assigned for class presentation grades. Assignment of the full 15% indicates that you have done the appropriate background reading, identified relevant reference material, assigned a suitable reading(s) to the class, carefully and critically considered the issue in question, prepared a 2-3 page outline of your presentation, prepared a list of relevant references, led the class discussion by raising relevant issues and involving others in the discussion.

A+	Super terrific (Exceeds all expectations and then some)
A	Terrific (Exceeds all expectations)
A-	Very Good (Meets all expectations with quality)
B+	Good (Adequately meets expectations)
B	Good, but (Adequate, something important missing or misunderstood)
B-	Sort of OK (Superficial)
C+	Some Trouble (Superficial and/or major missing or misunderstood points)
C	Trouble (Significant deficiencies of major elements)
C-	Big Trouble (Misses the substance of the question)