

**CNS 736: APPRAISAL PROCEDURES FOR COUNSELORS**  
Wake Forest Counselor Education Department

Fall Semester 2008  
Office: Tribble A-122

Debbie W. Newsome, Ph.D., LPC  
Phone: 758-3492 (office)  
e-mail: [newsomdw@wfu.edu](mailto:newsomdw@wfu.edu)

Class Hours: Tuesdays, 9:00-11:30  
Office Hours: By appointment (hours will be posted after Sept. 15)

**Texts:**

Whiston, S. C. (2009). *Principles and applications of assessment in counseling* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole. (required)

Optional (highly recommended):

Neukrug, E. S., & Fawcett, R. C. (2006). *Essentials of testing and assessment: A practical guide for counselors, social workers, and psychologists*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to basic assessment principles and appraisal procedures used by mental health professionals working in a variety of settings. Initially, we will examine ways assessment is used in counseling. Next, we will focus on psychometric constructs associated with testing, including measurement scales, reliability, and validity. Attention then will be given to methods and instruments used for assessing: 1) intelligence and general ability, 2) achievement and aptitude, 3) personality characteristics, 4) mental and behavioral functioning, and 5) marriage, family, and other interpersonal relationships. Students will learn ways assessment is used for diagnosis and treatment planning in counseling. Skills in instrument selection, test administration, scoring, and interpretation, and communication of results will be emphasized. Particular attention will be directed toward ethical issues, technological applications, and considerations for special populations.

The texts have been selected to provide an overview of a wide range of topics on assessment procedures. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to the class date. Supplemental readings are listed on the syllabus and can be accessed online. A portion of your participation grade will reflect your ability to contribute to class discussions based on the reading material.

Assessment instruments and manuals are stored in the Counseling Suite closet. We also have several online assessments. I will give you information about accessing them during class. The instruments are somewhat costly, so it will be important to limit usage to assignments.

**Methods of Instruction**

To encourage active participation by class members, instruction will take place in a seminar format. Learning will be facilitated through a variety of methods, including presentations by the instructor and students, small group activities, role-plays, and supervised practical application of assessment and test interpretation. The practical application component of the course includes opportunities for

students to participate in computer-based assessment as well as traditional paper-and-pencil appraisal procedures.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester, students will achieve the following objectives:

1. Discuss and demonstrate knowledge of selected appraisal procedures and applications in counseling.
2. Demonstrate knowledge and skills related to measurement principles, including frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and variability, standard errors, standardized scores, reliability, and validity.
3. Evaluate the applicability of assessment instruments with respect to individual and group needs.
4. Demonstrate the application of ethical and legal standards of testing and client diagnoses.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of strategies and interventions for working with diverse populations.

### **Course Requirements**

1. **Appraisal Instrument Completion and Response:** *(due by Oct. 28)*. Select 4 instruments to complete and score. A list of choices will be provided by September 9. After completing the instruments, write a brief (4-5) page summary of the results of and your reactions to **3** of the instruments (to qualify for an A) or **2** of the instruments (to qualify for a B). I will give you a suggested format for the write-up.

**\* I encourage you to join the Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education (AACE). If you do this, it will count as 1 instrument. The student cost is minimal, and you receive 4 issues of MECD.**

2. **Class presentation** of one selected assessment instrument. Presentations should be done in groups of three or four. As part of the presentation, prepare a mock case study that includes the following:
  - a) Reason for referral to your counseling setting
  - b) Relevant background information
  - c) Test selected and reasons for that selection
  - d) Anticipated benefits and limitations
  - e) A brief overview of the test manual and a summary of critiques from other sources
  - f) **Interesting** handouts for class members
- In your presentation, include some form of role-play. The type of role-play conducted will depend upon the instrument you are using. Some people may choose to role play the administration of the instrument. This would be appropriate if the assessment is interactive. Others may choose to role-play the communication of the test results to the client (or the client's parents). Or you may choose to include both aspects (administration and communication of results). *A sign-up for presentations will be distributed Sept. 16.*
3. **Menu Choices** Choose one of the following activities *(due by Dec. 11)*
  - *Option A:* Develop a formal **written critique** of an assessment instrument. It may be the instrument presented in Assignment 2 or another instrument that you might use in your setting (i.e., school or community). The written critique should be in paragraph format and follow Anastasi's suggested outline for test evaluation, which will be distributed in class. As a part of the critique, review and cite at least two other references (in addition to the test manual). One of these should be the most recent

*Mental Measurements Yearbook* in which the instrument is reviewed. **Follow APA guidelines in writing your report.**

- *Option B:* Select a pertinent topic in the assessment field, such as technological applications, multicultural assessment, or assessment of individuals with disabilities. Review current writings on the topic, using journals such as *The Journal of Counseling and Development*, *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, the *Professional School Counselor* journal, or *The Journal of Educational Psychology*. Write a brief (6-8 page) paper, **following APA guidelines**, in which you review relevant articles and summarize implications.
  - *Option C:* Attend a presentation or workshop on a topic directly related to assessment in counseling (e.g., suicide assessment, substance abuse assessment, qualitative assessment techniques). Write a thoughtful **summary of the presentation and your reactions/responses** to what you learned (5-6 pages). Be sure to include the **title, presenter, and date of the presentation** in your write-up.  
(To get credit for this activity, please let me approve it in advance. Presentations held on Tuesdays should not be selected in lieu of class attendance.)
  - *Option D:* Conduct an assessment battery with an individual at your internship and write a confidential testing evaluation based on the results. It will be important to consult with your site supervisors and with me before engaging in this activity. Examples can be an ADHD screening with a child, a career-related or personality-related assessment with an adult, or a family assessment with families. Your site supervisor and I will help you with assessment instrument selection, administration, and interpretation. It will be important to share results appropriately.
4. A **take-home examination**, which will be distributed at the end of class on 11/11/08. The examination will cover material discussed in class between 9/2 and 11/4 and will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. The exam is due by 11/18/08.
5. **\*\*\*Class attendance and participation** demonstrate your professionalism and contribute positively to the course. Therefore, **15% of your final grade** is based on active participation in class. Please make every effort to attend all classes and to be punctual. To receive full credit for participation, all classes must be attended. Also, there will be some on-line assignments and journal article readings that will be announced at least one week prior to their due date. If circumstances make it necessary for you to miss a class, please consult with me about ways to complete an alternative assignment.

### **Course Evaluation**

Class Participation	15%	150 points
Instruments	20%	200 points
Class Presentation	20%	200 points
Menu Choice	20%	200 points
Exam	25%	250 points
Total:		1000 points

A = 935-1000

A- = 900 - 934

B+ = 870 - 899

B = 835 - 869

B- = 800 - 834

C+ = 770 - 799

C = 735 - 769

C- = 700 - 734

### **Tentative Class Schedule/Assignments**

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments
9/2	Introduction, Course description, Syllabus/Assignments	Whiston, Ch. 1
9/9	Using Assessment in Counseling Historical underpinnings (class activity) Professional identification (AACE)	Whiston, Ch. 1, 13
9/16	Measurement Concepts Initial Assessment in Counseling (Intakes will be covered briefly; John Anderson will focus on intakes in his class)	Whiston, Ch. 2 & 6
9/23	Measurement Concepts: Reliability Legal and Ethical Issues in Assessment Part I	Whiston, Ch. 3, 14
9/30	Measurement Concepts: Validity Fair Access to Testing (FACT)	Whiston, Ch. 4
10/7	Selecting, administering, scoring, and communicating results  Review of Reliability and Validity	Whiston, Ch. 5
10/14	Assessment & Diagnosis Legal and Ethical Issues (part 2) <b>Student Presentation</b>	Whiston, Ch. 12, 14
10/21	Assessment in Career Counseling (intro only) <b>Student Presentation</b>	Whiston, Ch. 9
10/28	Assessment of Diverse Populations Psychological Report Writing (intro only) <b>Student Presentation</b>	Whiston, Ch. 15
11/4	Intelligence and General Ability Testing <b>Sonya Stiles, School Psychologist (Date and speaker subject to change)</b>	Whiston, Ch. 7
11/11	Achievement and Aptitude Testing <b>Student Presentation</b>	Whiston, Ch. 8 <b>Take-home Exam</b>
11/18	Personality Testing  <b>Student Presentation</b>	Whiston, Ch. 10
11/25	Assessment in Marriage & Family Counseling <b>Guest speaker?</b>	Whiston, Ch. 11
12/2	<b>Wrap-up/Review Game</b>	<b>Anything you've not yet read 😊</b>

Note: Your Menu Option is due by December 11. It may be turned in earlier, if you wish.

