

**Required Readings:**

Kaplan, R. & Saccuzzo, D. (2005) Psychological Testing: Principles, Applications and Issues. (6th ed.) Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole.

Toedter, L. (1995) Tests & Measurement Lab Manual.

**Course Overview:**

Tests & Measurement can be viewed as an introduction to psychology as detective work. With your background in PSYC 211, you already have many of the tools you will need. Armed with some additional knowledge of test theory, we will now begin to learn ways to provide answers to important and interesting questions about people. However, as we pursue the answer to these questions, whether from a clinical, educational or vocational framework, we must always keep in mind the limitations placed on us by our investigative techniques (our tests, interviews, etc.) Awareness of these limitations and constraints is what often differentiates the ethical from unethical use of psychological testing. This is a fascinating field. To the extent that I can convey even a bit of my excitement to you I will have succeeded in achieving my goal for the course.

**Course Objectives:**

- (1) To build upon your knowledge in PS 211, adding important information on test theory.
- (2) To enable you to evaluate a published test to determine for what, if any, applications it might be useful.
- (3) To familiarize you with a variety of measures currently in use in clinical, educational and personnel applications.
- (4) To demonstrate the wide range of options available for answering questions about people.
- (5) To highlight and consider various ethical and legal dilemmas in the field of testing.

***Students Please Note:*** I reserve the right to modify the class schedule/syllabus as needed to keep the course flowing smoothly. Only under extreme circumstances (e.g. multiple cancellations due to severe weather) will I change due dates for major assignments or exams.

## Class Schedule

| <u>Class Meeting</u> | <u>Topic</u>  | <u>Assignment Due</u>  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| (1) Mon 1/16         | Introduction to the Course<br>Practice for Lab #1               | None   |
| (2) Wed 1/18         | Necessary Statistics  | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 1, 2   |
| (3) Mon 1/23         | Necessary Statistics (cont.)<br>Practice: Item Writing          | (2) Lab #1 forms (>2 ex.credit)<br>(2) Lab #3 forms                          |
| (4) Wed 1/25         | Lab #2 (in class)<br>Norms                                      | <b>HW</b> : 1 multiple choice item and 1<br>essay item from Ch 1 <i>or</i> 2 |
| (5) Mon 1/30         | Reliability<br>Review Test Items (HW)                           | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 3  |
| (6) Wed 2/1          | Lab #4 (in class)<br><b>Chapter sign up Exam 1</b>              | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 4  |
| (7) Mon 2/6          | Validity  | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 5, pp. 130-144   |
| (8) Wed 2/8          | Validity (cont.)  | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 5, pp. 144-152<br>Validity <b>HW DUE</b>                   |
| (9) Mon 2/13         | Overview: Diagnostic Council<br>Lab #5 (in class)               | <b>EXAM QUESTIONS DUE</b><br>Review Diagnostic Council<br>handouts           |
| (10) Wed 2/15        | Item Writing & Evaluation                                       | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 6<br><b>SPSS Analysis DUE</b>                              |
| (11) Mon 2/20        | <b>EXAM #1</b> (Ch. 1-5, notes & labs)<br>(Sign up for Council) | Prepare for<br>Exam  |
| (12) Wed 2/22        | Overview: Structured Tests                                      | <u>Text</u> , Ch.13, pp.348-81   |
| (13) Mon 2/27        | NEO Interpretation  | <b>Scored NEO due</b>  |
| (14) Wed 3/1         | MMPI  | Review Ch.13, pp. 355-62<br><b>Council Step #1 DUE</b>                       |

*Spring Break – Enjoy!*

| <u>Class Meeting</u> | <u>Topic</u>   | <u>Assignment Due</u>  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| (15) Mon 3/13        | Projective tests: TAT                                  | <u>Text</u> , Ch.7 (Test Admin.)   |
| (16) Wed 3/15        | Projective tests: Rorschach                            | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 14<br><b>Test Evaluation DUE</b>   |
| (17) Mon 3/20        | Catch up Day<br><i>Chapter sign up Exam 2</i>          | <b>Council Step #2 DUE</b>   |
| (18) Wed 3/22        | Work in Councils on Step #3                            | Prepare for Council meetings   |
| (19) Mon 3/27        | Interviewing Skills                                    | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 8<br><b>Council Step #3 Draft Due</b>                                      |
| (20) Wed 3/29        | Interviewing Skills (cont.)<br>Decision Theory         | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 18   |
| (21) Mon 4/3         | Myers-Briggs   | <b>Scored test form DUE</b><br><b>EXAM QUESTIONS DUE</b>                                     |
| (22) Wed 4/5         | WES Analysis<br>Taylor-Russell tables                  | <b>Scored test form DUE</b>  |
| (23) Mon 4/10        | <b>EXAM #2</b> (Ch 6, 7,13,14)                         | Prepare for Exam<br><i>Council testing begins</i>  |
| (24) Wed 4/12        | Overview: IQ testing<br><br><i>Easter Break—Enjoy!</i> | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 9, pp. 231-246   |
| (25) Wed 4/19        | IQ testing (cont.)                                     | Text, Ch. 10, pp. 252-270  |
| (26) Mon 4/24        | Test Bias  | <u>Text</u> , Ch. 19   |
| (27) Wed 4/26        | Diagnostic Council<br>Presentations                    | <b>Council Oral Report DUE</b><br><b>Spy Journals DUE</b><br><b>Final Exam Questions DUE</b> |

**Final Exam** Ch. 8-10, 18-19 [Note: Only pages assigned.]

## Course Requirements

|   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| 2 Hourly Exams (15% each)               |     | 30% |
| Test Evaluation Report                  | 20% |     |
| Diagnostic Council                      |     | 10% |
| Final Exam                              |     | 20% |
| Homework/Class Participation/Attendance |     | 20% |

### (1) Hourly Exams

Both exams will consist of 60% multiple choice questions and 40% essay. Since this is a course on tests, it makes sense to allow you to write the items which I will use to assess your knowledge of course content. You may hand in as many questions (both multiple choice & short essay) as you care to write. Obviously, the better the question the more likely it is to be included on the exam. Since you will know the answer to your own questions (I hope!) it will be to your advantage to get as many of your questions on the exam as possible. I reserve the right to edit questions if they are ambiguous, overly obvious, or too difficult. I will also write questions to fill in any gaps, thus increasing what we will come to call the "content validity" of the test.

Note: Students are expected to be present for both exams. If you miss an exam for any reason you will be expected to take the Cumulative Final (described below). You may also elect to take the Cumulative Final to raise a low grade on an earlier test.

### (2) Test Evaluation Report

A key component in the proper use of tests is your assessment of their utility for various purposes. Early in the semester you will be assigned a test to evaluate from the Department's testing files. Your task is to use the materials and information from class to evaluate the test assigned. An outline of the issues you should address is attached to the syllabus. Late reports will be accepted, but will be assessed a 3 point per day penalty.

### (3) The Diagnostic Council

A Diagnostic Council is a group of people who are experts in the field of testing and measurement. Councils are expensive to run in the "real world" and so are usually only convened for very important decision-making. A classic case, which you as a class will emulate as your final class activity, was the Office of Strategic Service's Diagnostic Council, which was convened during the Second World War. Their purpose was to put together a battery of measures to determine who would make the best spies during wartime. After their data were in, their difficult task was to put it all together to make a decision for each candidate. Your job will be identical to theirs. Obviously, your group will need to work on this task outside of class. For this reason, it will be difficult for me to assess the relative contributions of individual members. Therefore, I will ask you to grade one another on level and quality of participation ("peer grading"). Together with my overall assessment of your group's final presentation, this will constitute your grade for the Diagnostic Council. A complete description of the procedure that we will follow will be handed out and discussed in class

on *Monday, February 13*.

(4a) Final Exam (Regular)

The regular final will be the same in format as the earlier two exams and will cover the material from the last third of the course. As with previous exams, students will generate the item pool.

(4b) Cumulative Final

As noted above, anyone missing a regularly scheduled exam must take the Cumulative Final. Additionally, any student wishing to raise a low grade on a previous exam may elect to take the Cumulative Final. The grade received will count twice - once as the final exam grade and once as a replacement for the low or missing grade on an earlier exam. This Final will consist of 50% identification of key terms and 50% short essay.

(5) Homework/Class Participation/Attendance

This grade will be based upon timely completion of assignments, your attendance and participation in class discussions. Late assignments will be accepted, but will result in a 3 point per day deduction from your homework grade. Assignments include such things as submission of test questions, completion of labs and the psychological tests assigned. Please be aware that since attendance is a part of your grade, signing another student in, or asking another student to sign you in, is a breach of Academic Honesty. The attendance grade will start at 100 points and will be reduced by 4 points for an unexcused absence, 2 points with a valid excuse (doctors note, note from other professor or from Student Services).

**Blackboard**

Please logon to Blackboard for this course right away (password is *validity*). In addition to posting my office hours and reminders, I will post the syllabus and other important handouts. I will also post your major grades.

We will also be experimenting this term with posting exam questions on Blackboard, rather than accessing them in paper format on reserve at the library. This will only work if groups writing items select a very reliable person to send me their group submission as a Microsoft Word attachment via e-mail. I will then post the items by chapter as documents on Blackboard.

### **Calculating your Grade**

To calculate your final grade, I first add any extra credit points earned and then weight each grade according to the percentages given above. For example, if an exam is worth 15% and you score an 80 on it, I multiply (.15) (80) for a point total of 12. Adding these points together for all the grading components listed above will give you your final grade for the course (out of 100 points). These points are then converted to a letter grade as follows:

|                |   |    |
|----------------|---|----|
| 92.6-100       | = | A  |
| 89.6 – 92.5    | = | A- |
| 86.6– 89.5     | = | B+ |
| 82.6 – 86.5    | = | B  |
| 79.6 – 82.5    | = | B- |
| 76.6 – 79.5    | = | C+ |
| 72.6 – 76.5    | = | C  |
| 69.6 – 72.5    | = | C- |
| 66.6 – 69.5    | = | D+ |
| 62.6 – 66.5    | = | D  |
| 59.6 – 62.5    | = | D- |
| less than 59.6 | = | F  |

### **Academic Honesty**

Moravian has an official policy on Academic Honesty. The policy appears in your student handbook and is also available from the Academic Dean's office. ***Be sure you understand the definition of plagiarism.*** The Psychology Department requires that APA format be used for referencing. I will be happy to clarify any points you may not understand.

**Students Please Note: It is within the course instructor's purview to use qualitative judgments in the assignment of grades. If at any time you have questions about where you stand in the course, please come see me.**

**Office Hours:** Posted on Blackboard (including any necessary changes on a weekly basis).

(email: [meljt01@moravian.edu](mailto:meljt01@moravian.edu)) (Telephone 610-861-1565)

e-mail is the preferred means of contacting me. Phone messages will be returned via e-mail, except for special circumstances. If you are using an e-mail address other than your college address, please let me know what it is.

## Criteria for Evaluating a Test

- I. General
  - (a) What is the stated purpose of the test?
  - (b) Is the test based on any psychological theory (e.g. psychoanalytic; social learning) or is it atheoretical?
  - (c) What type of item is used? Does it seem the most appropriate choice given the purpose of the test?
  - (d) How were the items developed?
  
- II. Administration
  - (a) How is the test to be administered? Scored? Interpreted?
  - (b) How much training/practice is needed to administer, score and interpret the test?
  - (c) Are the instructions for administering the test clear to you? to your subject?
  - (d) What comments did your subject make about the test?
  
- III. Norms
  - (a) How clearly does the manual describe to whom the test applies?
  - (b) Does the normative sample seem large enough?
  - (c) Are subgroup norms available?
  
- IV. Reliability
  - (a) What types of reliability analyses are reported? (**Note:** Were both temporal and internal consistency assessments included?)
  - (b) What were the average (or typical) coefficients?
  - (c) Are the reliability coefficients reasonable? For what sort of decision-making? (**Note:** for test-retest: Is length of time between testings reported? Does it seem reasonable for this construct?)
  
- V. Validity
  - (a) What sort of validity studies have been done (use terms from class: predictive, concurrent, construct)?
  - (b) Describe several of those studies, giving typical or average coefficients.
  - (c) The key Question: How confident are you that the test actually measures the construct it claims to measure? (consult notes and readings). Be sure to say why you believe this, and in what circumstances with what individuals (if any) this test could be useful.

***Be careful to distinguish between the test author(s) opinion about the test and your own opinion. If paraphrasing you can indicate, "The author indicates that ..." However, if you are using the author's exact words you must put them in quotes followed by the page number. Also be aware that this is a test evaluation, not merely a test description. While a 'B' paper answers the above questions clearly and thoroughly, an 'A' paper applies what we've learned in the course to evaluate the test author's statements about the test!***

## Procedure for Writing Questions for the Exams

1. You will work in a group of between 3 and 6 people, depending on course enrollment. Groups will sign up to be responsible for writing questions for one chapter *along with its corresponding labs, exercises & lectures*.
2. Although you may elect to assign section of the text (notes, labs, etc.) to different group members, *overlap is key!* Not all group members will be equally good item writers and at least 2 heads are better than one. Remember your goal is to get as many of your items onto the exam as possible. This will only happen if you have good content coverage and good quality items.
3. If it is not possible to get all group members together to select the items that you will submit to me, I strongly suggest that at least a significant subset of individuals try to get together, communicating with the other members via e-mail.
4. Choose a reliable member of your group (in fairness, rotate this task) to send me the final set of items from your group via e-mail attachment of a Microsoft Word file. The file must reach me no later than the end of class on the day the questions are due.
5. **Each group member is responsible to bring to class the set of questions which he or she submitted to their group for consideration.**
6. I will post the questions as documents (by chapter) to Blackboard.
7. For at least the first exam, I will assess the quality of each member's individual contribution to their group's effort as part of the homework grade.
8. I will post to Blackboard as an Announcement the percentage of questions which will appear on the exam from class members at least 5 days prior to the exam.

## Question Writing Tips and Suggestions

1. I recommend that each group submit *no fewer than* 15 multiple choice questions and 3 essays.
2. The submitted questions should represent *the best* of the questions submitted by members:
  - Multiple choice items (as practiced in class) should have 4 response options. Of these, at least one should be clearly correct, with at least one other option designed to confuse someone who doesn't know the material well.
  - Multiple choice questions should be carefully edited to make sure the grammar of the phrasing of the options doesn't give the answer away.
  - You may indicate the correct answer to multiple choice questions if you wish, but only as an attached key to facilitate studying by class members.
  - Essay questions should be written to cover aspects of the material where opinion, example or interpretation of the material is key to its understanding. ***Write essay questions that require the test taker to apply or interpret what he or she has learned rather than just listing facts.***
  - Do not try to give answers for essay questions submitted. You may indicate where one might look for an answer to assist in preparation only.
3. Items should be typed into a Microsoft Word file by each group member to facilitate editing and submission to me of the final set of questions.