

**Required Reading:**

Hogan, T.P. (2007) *Psychological testing: A practical introduction*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

**Course Overview:**

I see this course as an introduction to psychological detective work. How do we really know what is going on inside another person? Can we ever really know? Psychologists live in a world of constructs: intelligence, anxiety, happiness, fear. How well we can hope to understand others is a function of our measurement process. How do we tell a good measure of stressful life experiences from a poor one? What about published tests and those you have to purchase to obtain, such as the MMPI, NEO and Myers-Briggs? Can we believe the claims of the test publishers? Would we want these tests to be administered to ourselves? to our loved ones? In this course we will begin to learn about ways to provide answers to important and interesting questions about people. However, as we pursue the answers to these questions, whether from a personality, clinical, educational or industrial/organizational framework, we must always keep in mind the limitations placed on us by our investigative techniques (i.e. our tests and measures) 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:**

After completing this course, you should be able to:

1. Use available resources to choose the best test of a construct for your purpose.
2. Evaluate the usefulness of a published test for a specific purpose using standard criteria.
3. Create a measure of a construct when those available aren't adequate for your purpose or where none exist.
4. Assist others with basic measurement issues.
5. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the most popular tests (e.g. NEO, MMPI, Rorschach) and the indications for their use.
6. Write high quality items to assess knowledge in a specific field (in this case, the field of psychological testing).
7. Use SPSS to assist in the evaluation of test item quality.

***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.

## **Course Requirements & Grading**

Chapter 1 Quiz	10%
Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	15%
Test Evaluation Report	20%
Mini-Project	10%
Final Exam	15%
Homework/Class Participation/Attendance	15%

**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

**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.

## **Grading Components:**

### ***Chapter 1 Quiz***

We will use this quiz as a means of learning about how to write a good test in an achievement-related context (that is, how well individuals know the material in a textbook chapter). We will begin by establishing some basic rules and principles for test construction, and the first homework assignment will be to conceptualize the domain (what is important in that chapter and what is not). Your grade on this quiz will be based on three (3) components: the quality of your contribution to the item-writing process; your performance on the quiz, and the work you do on revising items to make the quiz a better index of your knowledge. My goal is for us to produce an excellent classroom exam, so everyone should be able to get an ‘A’!

### ***Exams***

Both regular exams and the final will consist of 60% multiple choice questions and 40% essay.

Based upon your experience in constructing the Chapter 1 Quiz, and some additional classroom material on “constructed response items” (essays!), you will work in groups of 4 or 5 to create the item pool for the exams. Refer to the Class Schedule for when we will form the groups and when questions are due (one week before the exam). I will post the item pool to Blackboard immediately, and within a day or two will post the percentage of items from the pool that will appear on the test. 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 all exams. If you miss an exam for any reason you will take the *cumulative final* in place of the *regular final* during the final exam period. The *cumulative final* will consist of 50% identification of key terms and 50% short essay. You may also elect to take the *cumulative final* to raise a low grade on an earlier exam. The grade received will count twice - once as the final exam grade and once as a replacement for the low or missing grade on the earlier exam. As with the regular final, students taking this version of the final will work as a group to write the items for it, and will have access to the item pool in preparing for the exam.

### ***Test Evaluation Report***

A key component in the proper use of tests is your assessment of their utility for various purposes. At the beginning of 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. Note the “**TE**” notations in the syllabus, which indicate when drafts of sections of the report are due for peer assistance during class. I have also set aside time for peer feedback and editing for your final draft. Note also (below) that homework credit will be given for the draft sections if they are brought to class the day they are due. Late final test evaluation reports will be accepted, but will be assessed a 3 point per day penalty.

### ***Homework/Class Participation/Attendance***

This grade will be based upon timely completion of assignments, your attendance and participation in class discussions and activities. In addition to the entries marked “**HW**” (*homework*) in the Class Schedule, assignments include submission of test questions, contributions to the construction of our measure for the PSYC 211/212 classes, completion of “**TE**” (test evaluation) drafts for in-class peer assistance, and completion of labs and psychological tests assigned. Late assignments will be accepted, but will result in a 2 point per day deduction from your grade on the assignment. Your *attendance* grade will start at 100 points and will be reduced by 4 points for an unexcused absence, 2 points with a valid excuse (doctor's note, note from other professor or from Student Services). This will be a small and high participatory class, so it is essential that you be fully involved in all class activities, discussions and projects. If I see problems that could negatively affect your *participation* grade I will bring them to your attention via e-mail so that we can meet to discuss ways for you to be more involved.

Note on construction of a measure for PSYC 211/212 use: I am frequently asked by students in 211/212 for ideas for measurement of constructs for their studies (with stress level and anxiety being the two most frequent to date). The available measures tend to be very expensive (\$2.00-4.00 per participant) and are often longer and more involved than what the student needs for his or her purpose. With the cooperation of the faculty teaching 211/212 we will first determine for

what construct it would be most helpful to create a Moravian College Psychology Department \_\_\_\_\_ Scale, and then reach out to current 211/212 students to help us do the construction of the scale and an initial validation. It would then be available (for free!) for future students to use in their projects. Your contributions to this effort, as noted above, will earn you homework credit in addition to the good feelings you will have from helping others!

### ***Mini-Project***

This final portion of your grade will give you the opportunity to apply what you've learned in the course in a way that you feel is most interesting and helpful. I will ask you to indicate by the middle of October (or earlier, if you want to get started) which of the following options you will be electing, as well as your plan for accomplishing it. Project results will be due during the last week of classes, although you may submit your work whenever you have it completed.

**Option 1:** Use your knowledge from the class to help one or more 211/212 students with their measurement issues for their project(s). Whether you help one person or several will depend upon the complexity of the measurement help needed. I will provide access to the students in my 211 class, as will the other faculty teaching the course this semester. You will keep a journal of the process and the outcomes to submit for your grade.

**Option 2:** For those of you considering (or doing) Honors or Independent Study, you may have a measurement issue of your own to tackle. You can follow the procedure we use in developing the Moravian College Psychology Department \_\_\_\_\_ Scale to outline how you would go about measuring a construct of importance to you. You don't actually need to write all the items and collect data, as this would be too time-consuming. What you will give me for this option is an outline of the process (more like a brief proposal) with sample items.

**Option 3:** Compare how thinking about psychological testing has changed over time. Compare the position your text author takes on an issue to the same topic in a textbook or textbooks from the past (which I can supply). As an example, previous textbooks will take a very different slant on the usefulness of the Rorschach inkblots. Your analysis should be about 4-5 pages long to be comparable to the other options.

**Option 4:** Design your own! If you have a good idea, see me before break so we can work through how you will proceed.

### **Other Important Information**

#### ***Blackboard***

Please logon to Blackboard for this course right away. In addition to posting my office hours and reminders, I will post the syllabus, other important handouts and your major grades. I will also post class-submitted exam questions on Blackboard. This only works 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 as soon as they are

received. I also hope to use Blackboard to facilitate the writing and sharing of items for the Moravian College Psychology Department \_\_\_\_\_. Scale if this makes it easier for us.

### *Portfolios*

Each student who majors in psychology has a portfolio of writing assignments, completed as a part of his or her coursework, maintained by the department. Each psychology syllabus designates which writing assignment will be included in the portfolio. For this class, your *test evaluation report* will serve as that writing assignment. Only psychology faculty members will have access to your portfolio, which will be used to assess and improve our ability to meet a major goal for our department: training our students to write professionally using APA style.

### *Academic Honesty*

Moravian has an official policy on Academic Honesty. The policy can be accessed through AMOS as part of the student handbook. ***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 with learning disabilities*

Students who need special accommodations for this course should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer in Learning Services at 1307 Main Street (ext. 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from Learning Services based upon proper documentation of the conditions and needed accommodations. **Accommodations must be authorized on a class by class basis every term.** (This is required by the ADA and is not just an arbitrary annoyance).

### *Contacting Me & Office Hours*

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 and change this information in Blackboard for this course.

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

**Office hours for Fall 2010:** TBA (See also updates posted to Blackboard)

## Class Schedule

*This is a very readable textbook until the author begins to feel the need to be comprehensive. He then includes material that is well beyond the scope of this book, as well as material that even he admits is pretty much irrelevant! Sorry for the need for the extensive use of page numbers below, but the book is much less expensive and (in sections) much better at clearly explaining topics than the text I've previously used. It is also an excellent resource for those going on to graduate school or to careers in teaching. I would recommend keeping the text as a reference if either of those options is a part of your future plans.*

**Key to Syllabus Abbreviations:**    **HW**-Homework due  
    **TE**-Work due on your test evaluation for peer assistance  
    **CL**- Class will be held in computer lab (Memorial 202)  
    **MD**- Work on measure being developed by class for 211/212

<u>Class Meeting</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
(1) Mon 8/30	Introduction to the Course	None
(2) Wed 9/1	Introduction to Test Construction	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 1 (all) <b>HW</b> : Domain list
(3) Wed 9/8	Test Construction (cont.)	Test items for Ch. 1 <u>Text</u> , Ch. 6: 205-212 <b>TE</b> : Purpose of your test
(4) Mon 9/13	Quiz Chap.1 Scoring Essays	<b>MD</b> : Interview 211/212 students on measures <u>Text</u> , Ch. 6: 212-225
(5) Wed 9/15	<b>CL</b> : Ch. 1 Quiz Data Analysis <b>MD</b> : Sources of Info.on Tests	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 2 (all)
(6) Mon 9/20	Norms/Lab #1 Practice	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 3: 63-75, 77-83, 93-100 <b>HW</b> : Corrections to Quiz
(7) Wed 9/22	Norms (cont.)	<b>TE</b> : Test construction & administration <u>Text</u> , Ch. 15: 574-576
(8) Mon 9/27	<b>CL/MD</b> : Work on Our Test	<b>HW</b> : 2 Lab #1's and Lab #3's
(9) Wed 9/29	Lab #2: Creating Norms	<b>TE</b> : Norms for Your Test

**Key to Syllabus Abbreviations:** **HW**-Homework due  
**TE**-Work due on your test evaluation for peer assistance  
**CL**- Class will be held in computer lab (Memorial 202)  
**MD**- Work on measure being developed by class for 211/212

<u><b>Class Meeting</b></u>	<u><b>Topic</b></u>	<u><b>Assignment Due</b></u>
(10) Mon 10/4	Reliability Lab #4 Part 1	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 4: 111-114, 123-140, 148-150

*\* Form Item writing groups for Exam 1 today [items due 10/13]*

(11) Wed 10/6	Reliability Lab #4 Part 2	<b>MD</b> : Work on Items
(12) Wed 10/13	Item Analysis Lab #5	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 6: 225-229 <b>HW</b> : Tables for Lab 5 <i>Items for Exam 1 DUE</i>
(13) Mon 10/18	<b>CL</b> : SPSS Item Analysis	<b>TE</b> : Reliability <i>Project selection due</i>
(14) Wed 10/20	<b>Exam #1</b> [Ch. 6, 3, 4]	Prepare for Exam
(15) Mon 10/25	Validity <b>MD</b> : Finalize Items	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 5: 155-168, 172-174
(16) Wed 10/27	Decision Theory SAT/GRE <b>MD</b> : Work on Validity	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 5: 184-187 <u>Text</u> , Ch. 9: 354-357, 365-370

*\* Form Item writing groups for Exam 2 today [items due 11/3]*

(17) Mon 11/1	Intelligence Testing	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 7: 255-266, 276-286 <u>Text</u> , Ch. 8: 289-301, 333-335
(18) Wed 11/3	Intelligence (cont.)	<i>Items for Exam 2 DUE</i>

**Key to Syllabus Abbreviations:** **HW**-Homework due  
**TE**-Work due on your test evaluation for peer assistance  
**CL**- Class will be held in computer lab (Memorial 202)  
**MD**- Work on measure being developed by class for 211/212

<u><b>Class Meeting</b></u>	<u><b>Topic</b></u>	<u><b>Assignment Due</b></u>
(19) Mon 11/8	<b>TE:</b> Peer Assistance	<b>TE:</b> Complete Draft
(20) Wed 11/10	<b>Exam #2</b> [5,9,7/8]	Prepare for Exam
(21) Mon 11/15	Objective Personality Tests	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 12: 445-477 <b>HW:</b> NEO due <b>MD:</b> Data collection begins
(22) Wed 11/17	Objective Tests (cont.)	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 13: 481-515 <b>HW:</b> MMPI due
(23) Mon 11/22	Objective Tests (cont.)	<b>TE: Test Evaluation Due</b>
(24) Mon 11/29	Projective Tests	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 14: 519-544

*\* Form Item writing groups for Final Exam today [items due 12/8]*

(25) Wed 12/1	<b>CL/MD:</b> Data analysis	Work on items for final exam
(26) Mon 12/6	Projective Tests: TAT	Project submission due
(27) Wed 12/8	Projective Tests: Rorschach	Items for Final due

**Final Exam: Tues. 12/14 @ 1:30pm** [Ch.12,13,14 (only pages assigned); notes & activities]