

Required Reading:

Hogan, T.P. (2007) *Psychological testing: A practical introduction*. (2nd 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. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the most popular tests (e.g. NEO, MMPI, Rorschach) and the indications for their use.
5. Write high quality items to assess knowledge in a specific field (in this case, the field of psychological testing).
6. 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%
Final Exam	15%
Homework/Class Participation/Attendance	25%

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 quiz, 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 small groups 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. **You will find a yellow sheet** attached to the syllabus that gives the due dates for the preparation of various sections of the report. I have set aside time in class for peer assistance with the draft sections of your report. Homework/participation credit will be given for the draft sections that 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

We are a small class that will be working closely with one another on a variety of projects and assignments. To this end, the active participation of all class member is essential to the positive experience of all. In other words, lack of participation on one person's part affects the experience for everyone. Therefore, I have weighted the Homework/Class Participation/Attendance portion of the grade more heavily (25%) than any other component of the course. This grade will be based upon timely completion of assignments as well as 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 “Study Behaviors” measure, completion of test evaluation drafts for in-class peer assistance, and completion of the labs and psychological tests assigned. Late assignments which prevent you from fully participating in the class will be accepted, but will be given only half credit. 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 highly 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 “Study Behavior” measure: I am frequently asked by students and faculty

for ideas for measurement of constructs for their research. Last year the Psychological Testing class developed a measure of shyness (called the “Social Interaction Scale”) that is now available for others in the department to use in their research for *free!* (The available measures of constructs like this tend to be expensive, at \$2.00-4.00 per participant, and are often longer and more involved than what students needs for their purposes). This year I have had an inquiry from Dr. Johnson and her students about a measure to assess “studying”. This is a great example of a construct whose meaning seems obvious until you really stop to think about it! Attached to the syllabus you will find *a blue sheet* with a timeline for the construction of this measure according to principles we will be learning in class. Please pay careful attention to this schedule, as your contributions to this project will constitute a major portion of your participation grade. I may need to change some due dates as we go further into the semester, since we won’t know exactly how time consuming various parts of the task will be until we begin our work on it. I will let you know well in advance if the dates need to be extended or tasks modified.

Extra Credit

Extra credit is available through participation in the psychology department subject pool. You may earn up to 3 extra credit points (each ½ hour of participation is worth 1 point). In addition to these three points, other extra credit opportunities will be announced as they arise during the semester.

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. Groups writing items for exams must select a very reliable person to send me their group submission *as a Microsoft Word attachment* via e-mail. I will post the items by chapter as documents on Blackboard as soon as they are received. ***Do not send*** the items in the body of an e-mail as this will delay the posting until you resend it as an attachment!

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. 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) (Telephone 610-861-1565)

Office hours for Spring 2012: Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays from 1-2:30pm.

Others by appointment. (See also updates posted to Blackboard)

Class Schedule

The textbook is well written and readable 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 much better at clearly explaining topics than the other texts I've reviewed. 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.

Note: Some classes will require that we all have access to a computer. The days and location will be announced in advance, and posted on the Blackboard in our classroom in case you come there by mistake.

<u>Class Meeting</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
(1) Mon 1/16	Introduction to the Course	None
(2) Wed 1/18	Introduction to Test Construction	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 1 (all) HW: Ch. 1 domain elements
(3) Mon 1/23	Test Construction (cont.)	HW: Items for Ch. 1 Quiz <u>Text</u> , Ch. 6: 205-212
(4) Wed 1/25	Quiz Chap.1 Scoring Essays	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 6: 212-225
(5) Mon 1/30	Quiz Data Analysis Sources of Info.on Tests	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 2 (all)
(6) Wed 2/1	Norms/Lab #1 Practice	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 3: 63-75, 77-83, 93-100 HW: Corrections to Quiz
(7) Mon 2/6	Norms (cont.)	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 15: 574-576
(8) Wed 2/8	Work on Our Test	HW: 2 Lab #1's (scored)
(9) Mon 2/13	Lab #2: Creating Norms	HW: 4 Lab #3's (scored)
(10) Wed 2/15	Reliability	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 4: 111-114, 123-140, 148-150

** Form Item writing groups for Exam 1 today [items due 2/22]*

<u>Class Meeting</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
(11) Mon 2/20	Reliability Lab #4	HW: Work on exam items
(12) Wed 2/22	Reliability (cont.)	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 6: 225-229 <i>Items for Exam 1 DUE</i>
(13) Mon 2/27	Item Analysis/SPSS	Prepare for Exam
(14) Wed 2/29	Exam #1 [Ch. 6, 3, 4]	Prepare for Exam
<i>Spring Break --- Enjoy!</i>		
(15) Mon 3/12	Validity	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 5: 155-168, 172-174
(16) Wed 3/14	Validity (cont.)	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 5: 184-187 <u>Text</u> , Ch. 9: 354-357, 365-370
(17) Mon 3/19	Intelligence Testing	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 7: 255-266, 276-286
(18) Wed 3/21	Intelligence (cont.)	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 8: 289-301, 333-335
<i>* Form Item writing groups for Exam 2 today [items due 3/28]</i>		
(19) Mon 3/26	Intelligence (cont.)	Test Evaluation DUE
(20) Wed 3/28	Objective Tests	HW: NEO due <i>Items for Exam 2 DUE</i>
(21) Mon 4/2	Objective Tests (cont.)	HW: MMPI due <u>Text</u> , Ch. 12: 445-477
(22) Wed 4/4	Exam #2 [5, 9, 7/8]	Prepare for Exam
<i>Easter Break --- Enjoy!</i>		

<u>Class Meeting</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
(23) Wed 4/11	Objective Tests (cont.)	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 13: 481-515
(24) Mon 4/16	Projective Tests	<u>Text</u> , Ch. 14: 519-544

** Form Item writing groups for Final Exam today [items due 4/25]*

(25) Wed 4/18	Data analysis	Work on items for final exam
(26) Mon 4/23	Projective Tests: TAT	Work on items for final exam
(27) Wed 4/25	Projective Tests: Rorschach	Items for Final due

Final Exam: [Ch.12,13,14 (only pages assigned); notes & activities]

Likely Timeline for Construction Activities/Assignments for “Study Behavior” Measure

Note: Study Behavior is in quotes because until we do some investigation of the construct it's not clear if there will be more to it than behavior. [e.g. perhaps we will find attitudes and feelings to be equally or more important.] We get to name the scale once we have a clearer idea of its purpose and content.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Homework Required?</u>
Wed 1/25	Defining the Domain	Interview several students to reflect a variety of approaches; Bring your notes to class
Wed 2/8	Finalizing Domain Item writing assignments	Come prepared to participate!
Wed 2/8- Mon 2/27	Work on writing your items	Be prepared to share some examples in class/peer editing
Mon 2/27	Complete draft of scale	Send me the file with your final, edited items before class today
Wed 3/14	Develop validity check & background questions	Ideas for a validity check and background questions (2 each)
Mon 3/26	Data collection begins pending HSIRB approval	Schedule to run at least one group of 8-10 subjects by Wed 4/11
Wed 4/11	Data entry begins	Bring all data to class today
Wed 4/18	Data analysis	Done in class

Due Dates for Test Evaluation Drafts

Date	Draft DUE
Mon 1/23	Purpose of your test
Mon 2/6	Test construction & administration
Wed 2/15	Norms for your test
Mon 2/27	Reliability of your test
Mon 3/19	Validity of your test
Wed 3/21	Summary of strengths/weaknesses [i.e. concluding paragraph(s)]
Mon 3/26	Test evaluation DUE