

**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. Evaluate the usefulness of a published test for a specific purpose using standard criteria.
2. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the most popular tests (e.g. NEO, MMPI, Rorschach) and the indications for their use.
3. Write high quality items to assess knowledge in a specific field (in this case, the field of psychological testing).
4. Use SPSS to assist in the evaluation of test item quality.
5. Apply the testing principles learned in the course by participating in an Assessment Center role played activity.

**Required Reading:**

Kaplan, R. & Saccuzzo, D. (2013) *Psychological Testing: Principles, Applications and Issues*. (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) Belmont, California: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning. [Selected chapters]

## Course Requirements & Grading:

Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	20%
Test Evaluation Report	25%
Assessment Center Activity	15%
Homework/Class Participation/Attendance	20%

*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:

### *Exams*

Both Exams #1 & #2 will consist of 60% multiple choice questions and 40% essay. Based upon your experience in constructing the Chapter 1 & 2 Practice Test (for up to 100 pts. of homework credit), and some additional classroom material on “constructed response items” (essays), you will work in small groups to create the item pool for the exams. We will form the item writing groups well in advance of the item due dates. Refer to the Class Schedule for when questions are due (typically 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 both exams. If you miss an exam for any reason you will take a *cumulative 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 serve as a replacement for the low or missing grade on the earlier exam.

**Students taking the cumulative 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. Late final test evaluation reports will be accepted, but will be assessed a 3 point per day penalty.

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

In this class we will be working closely with one another on a variety of projects and assignments. To this end, the active participation of all class members is essential to the positive experience of all. In other words, lack of participation on one person's part affects the experience for everyone. The Homework/Class Participation/Attendance portion of your 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, your score (after corrections) on the Chapters 1 & 2 Practice Test, 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). 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.

### ***The Assessment Center Activity***

This final portion of your grade is based upon your participation in the Assessment Centers which we will create as a capstone experience in this course. You will volunteer to be either an Assessment Center team member or an applicant for a position. All positions will involve creating a persona which you will role play as part of the assessment process. Team members will do the Job Analysis, develop the Qualifications and create a battery of measures to test applicants for their position. Grades for this portion of the course requirements will be heavily (although not exclusively) based on peer grading of your contributions to the process.

### ***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 enroll in Blackboard for this course right away. In addition to posting my office hours and reminders, I will post the syllabus, 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. ***Please 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*

For this class, your *test evaluation report* will serve as the writing assignment that will be included in your portfolio.

### *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 wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, the Assistant Director of Academic and Disability Support in the Academic Support Center, Monocacy Hall, lower level (ext. 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support center.

**Office Hours:** Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays from 1-2:30pm  
*or by appointment*

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)

## Class Schedule

***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.

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 1/13	Introduction to the Course	None
(2) Wed 1/15	Introduction to Item Writing	<u>Text</u> , Ch 1 <u>Text</u> , Ch 2, pp. 25-52 only
<b><i>MLK Day—No classes held</i></b>		
(3) Wed 1/22	Test Development & Evaluation I	<b>HW:</b> Ch 1 & 2 Domain elements
(4) Mon 1/27	Test Development & Evaluation II Lab #1 Practice	<u>Text</u> , Ch 6, pp. 157-170 <b>HW: Practice Test Items</b>
(5) Wed 1/29	Practice Test [Ch 1 & Ch 2, thru p. 52] Test Development & Evaluation III	Prepare for Practice Test
(6) Mon 2/3	Evaluating the Practice Test	<u>Text</u> , Ch 6, pp. 170-183 <b>HW:</b> (2) Lab #1 due
(7) Wed 2/5	Lab #2: Norms	<u>Text</u> , Ch 2, pp. 53-63 <b>HW:</b> (2) Lab #3 due
(8) Mon 2/10	Reliability: Lab #4	<u>Text</u> , Ch 4, pp. 101-19
(9) Wed 2/12	Reliability (cont.)	<u>Text</u> , Ch 4, pp. 119-129
(10) Mon 2/17	Overview: Validity	<u>Text</u> , Ch 5, pp. 134-156
(11) Wed 2/19	Validity (cont.)	<b>Items DUE for Exam #1</b>

<u>Class Meeting</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
(12) Mon 2/24	Overview: Intelligence testing	<u>Text</u> , Ch 9, pp. 234-241 <u>Text</u> , Ch 10, pp. 256-271
(13) Wed 2/26	<b>Exam #1</b> [Ch 4-6]	Prepare for Exam
<b><i>Spring Break --- Enjoy!</i></b>		
(14) Mon 3/10	Intelligence testing (cont.)	Work on Test Evaluation
(15) Wed 3/12	Structured Tests NEO Interpretation	<u>Text</u> , Ch 13, pp. 342-379 <b>HW:</b> Scored NEO Due
(16) Mon 3/17	MMPI	<b>HW:</b> MMPI subscales [will not be collected]
(17) Wed 3/19	Behavioral Interviewing Assessment Center Overview	Assessment Center Handout <u>Text</u> , Ch 18, pp. 500-530
(18) Mon 3/24	Decision Theory Incremental Validity	<b>Test Evaluation DUE</b>
(19) Wed 3/26	Assessment Center: Job Analysis	Work on Assessment Center
(20) Mon 3/31	Assessment Center: Qualifications WES Interpretation	<b>HW:</b> Scored WES DUE
(21) Wed 4/2	Projective tests: Administration	<u>Text</u> , Ch 14, pp. 382-409
(22) Mon 4/7	TAT Scoring & Interpretation	<b>DUE: <i>Items for Exam #2</i></b>
(23) Wed 4/9	Rorschach Scoring & Interpretation	Assessment Center testing
(24) Mon 4/14	<b>Exam #2</b> [Ch 9 & 10 ( <i>only assigned pages</i> ) 13,14,18]	
(25) Wed 4/16	Assessment Center: Integration	Prepare data for discussion
(26) Wed 4/26	Assessment Center Presentations	Prepare presentation

**Note:** *No final exam for this course, unless you choose to (or must) take the cumulative final.*