Syllabus - Psychology 4511 (Spring, 2016)
Psychological Testing

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course when you enroll may be different. Use the syllabus provided by your instructor for the most up-to-date information. Please refer to your instructor for more information for the specific requirements of a given semester.

From OSU catalog: An overview of theoretical and practical aspects of the assessment and prediction of human behavior; topics include achievement, intelligence, personality, attitudes, interests, and interpersonal relations. Prereq: 2220 and 2300. Not open to students with credit for 511 or 597.02.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are to
1. Introduce students to a variety of test instruments, their uses, and their limitations
2. Provide students with a basic knowledge of psychometric concepts (reliability, validity)
3. Provide students with a basic knowledge of the domains in which psychological tests are commonly used
4. Help students acquire foundational theoretical knowledge about the construction and statistical evaluation of tests and test items
5. Introduce students to widely used measures in the domains of achievement, intelligence, personality, attitude, interest, and interpersonal relationship assessment

A Note about Ethics

The instructor is bound by the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct. This Code prohibits the instructor from compromising test security. Students are expected to abide by test security limitations as well. To the extent that you learn about how psychological tests are constructed and used in the course, please do not share this information with non-psychologists. Some of your friends and relatives may need to take a psychological test at some point, such as to assess the impact of a head injury to determine whether a particular job is a good fit,
and it could prevent that person from obtaining a valid assessment if they know too much about how the test works.

In addition, if you yourself foresee that you will need to undergo a psychological assessment, it would be in your interest to have that assessment completed before this class gets underway, and especially before the class moves on to the discussion of specific tests of intelligence and other domains.

Although I will make every effort to protect test security in this course, it is inevitable that you will learn things that might help you fake a psychological examination. It would be extremely unethical for you to use this course in such a manner, and I strongly discourage you from doing so. I also very strongly discourage you from using anything you learn in this class to subvert the validity of any other person’s psychological assessment by telling them things you learned about tests in this class, other than things about the general utility of psychological testing.

I will consider it academic misconduct to utilize information from this class to fake or subvert any evaluation conducted for any academic purpose, such as to obtain a disability accommodation, or to subvert any evaluation conducted on any fellow OSU student for any purpose.

For obvious ethical reasons, you will not be taught to administer real psychological tests in this course. That skill is reserved for graduate students or advanced undergraduates working under close supervision of a psychologist and only when such undergraduates or graduate students are specifically trained to administer particular tests. Such opportunities do exist (in research settings), and you can see the instructor if you want to learn more about how to take advantage of them.

As a clinician and consultant, I may occasionally illustrate lectures with case examples. I will disguise identifying information in such examples consistent with APA ethical requirements. However, I ask that you also exercise integrity and professionalism by not recounting these case examples to students not enrolled in this class or in any public setting. Even if you are at a coffee shop, for example, with a fellow student from this class, someone overhearing your discussion of a case discussed in class might become discouraged about the possibility of obtaining psychological help if you are not careful how you present things, and such a person might draw the erroneous conclusion that their own confidentiality would be compromised if they saw a psychologist who also trains students.

**Students with Disabilities**

The following required statement comes from OSU administration.

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue, telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901, http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/ This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. In addition, if you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact the instructor immediately. Students with special needs should contact Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 292-3307 for certification if they have not already done so. Upon
such certification, the ODS and the instructor will make every effort to accommodate special needs. However, to ensure that evaluation of student performance in the course is conducted in a manner that is fair to all students, special accommodations will not be granted in the absence of ODS certification.

**Academic Misconduct**

The following required statement on academic misconduct comes from OSU administration.

> It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct [http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf](http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf).

All students at the Ohio State University are bound by the Code of Student Conduct (see studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp) and are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Code. In particular, Rule 3335-23-04 (Prohibited conduct), section A, defines academic misconduct as, "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university or subvert the educational process." Suspected violations of the code in this class will be dealt with according to the procedures detailed in that code. Any alleged cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Specifically, the use of unauthorized materials during exams, the use of unauthorized assistance on a graded assignment, falsification of documents, serving as or enlisting the assistance of a substitute for an exam or graded assignment, or violation of course rules as contained in this syllabus, in addition to the other prohibited conducts described in Rule 3335-23-04 Section A, constitute academic misconduct. If you have a question about whether or not an activity is or could be perceived to be prohibited, for this or any other class, please ask me for advice before you engage in the activity. All graded assignments in this course should be completed by you alone and not by or in collaboration with anybody else.

**Policy on Missing Exams**

You may miss one mid-term exam for any reason. You do not need an excuse. I will average your two highest mid-term grades if you take all three of them, and I will average the two you took if you only take two. If you only take one mid-term exam, then you will receive a zero on the other exam. Because I am allowing you to drop one mid-term grade, I will not grade on a curve, and I will not look kindly on any problem that interferes with your ability to come to an exam on time and give your best performance possible. I strongly recommend that you plan to attend all examinations so that if unforeseeable circumstances arise later, you are still likely to be able to complete two of the three mid-term exams successfully. You must attend the final examination.
Textbook

Cohen and Swerdlik *Psychological Testing and Assessment, Eighth Edition*

We will use this text by Cohen and Swerdlik, which I chose in part because of the good coverage and in part because of its examples and explanations of complex ideas. I have asked electronic copies to be ordered at the bookstore so you can access a copy online. I believe you can also order a copy over the internet. Please be sure to get the correct edition. If you go to graduate school, this book should help you understand graduate level psychometrics as well.

I will add supplemental, optional readings throughout the course. Copies of these will be made available on Carmen. You will not be examined on these, but it will enhance your learning if you are diligent about reading them. Some of the unrequired readings may also provide leads for papers you’d like to draw upon in writing your own research paper.

Evaluation

You will be evaluated based on your two highest scores from three mid-term examinations, as well as your grade on a required final examination, your grade on a short research paper, and class participation.

Research Paper Requirements

Your research paper will be evaluated by Turnitin to ensure that you have not violated norms of academic conduct (i.e., that you have not copied someone else’s published work without putting quotation marks around it and providing a citation to it). Please note: outlining another work and writing a paper using that identical outline is academic dishonesty in many cases, as well. This is not to say you cannot learn from analyzing the structure of other works. However, if you are making a straight copy of the bones of another work, and merely fleshing out those bones with your own words, you are also probably engaged in plagiarism. If this is causing you anxiety, come see me so I can make sure that you understand the rule properly. There are some exceptions, such as certain general guidelines for papers that have been used to set out arguments clearly for centuries. Use of such an approach would not be regarded (at least by me) as cheating.

You will write one short (7-15 page) research paper, double spaced with one inch margins, using the most recent APA style guide (6th edition). You do not need to include an abstract, but you should have a cover page and reference section, neither of which counts toward the page requirement. Your paper should include at least 10 references to empirical journal articles (articles in scientific journals which describe data in quantitative form or report on the results of original research studies conducted by the authors). You can approach this paper in one of three ways.

- Review a particular test and describe the research supportive of (or critical of) its norms, reliability, and validity. Be sure to describe its common uses and populations with which it is commonly used.
- Review a particular application of testing, and describe the instruments in common use, describing the research supporting their norms, reliability, and validity
- Choose a combination of test application and demographic group, and review the literature related to norms, reliability, and validity when the test is used in the particular way you chose with the particular group you chose
Jan 12 Tue Overview of syllabus and course; Origins of psychological testing
Jan 14 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 1 (modern test history, review of statistics)
Jan 19 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 4 (test norms)
Jan 21 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 5 (reliability)
Jan 26 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 5 (reliability, continued)
Jan 28 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 6 (validity)
Feb 2 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 6 (validity, continued)
Feb 4 Thur First Midterm Examination
Feb 9 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 9 (intelligence)
Feb 11 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 9 (intelligence)
Feb 16 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 10 (individual IQ tests)
Feb 18 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 10 (individual IQ tests, continued)
Feb 23 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 10 (group IQ tests)
Feb 25 Thur Reading to be announced (test fairness)
Mar 1 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 16, “SCREENING, SELECTION, CLASSIFICATION, AND USING TESTS IN PERSONNEL SELECTION”
Mar 3 Thur Second Midterm Examination
Mar 8 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 12 (objective personality tests)
Mar 10 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 12 (objective personality tests, continued)
Mar 15 Tue The assessment of alcohol use disorders (fieldwork: spring break)¹
Mar 17 Thur How to recognize the Dark Triad of personality in social settings (fieldwork: spring break)²
Mar 22 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 13 (projective personality tests)
Mar 24 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 16 (measures of interests and attitudes)
Mar 29 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 16 (measures of interests and attitudes, continued)
Mar 31 Thur In-class personality workshop
You will need to complete a personality questionnaire before this workshop
Apr 5 Tue Third Midterm Examination
Apr 7 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 15 (neuropsychological testing)
Apr 12 Tue Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 14 (clinical methods)
Apr 14 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 11 (achievement tests)
Apr 19 Tue Using tests in interpersonal relationship assessment (readings to be announced)
Apr 21 Thur Cohen and Swerdlik, Chapter 16 (Using tests in organizations)
Final Paper due
May 2 Mon Final Examination - 8:00-9:45 AM

Weight Evaluated Product Date or Deadline
50% Average of highest 2 midterm exam grades February 4, March 3, April 5
25% Final examination grade May 2, 8:00-9:45 AM
15% Short research paper grade April 21
10% Attendance and participation Ongoing
Your paper should adequately support any point you make with references and well-articulated logical arguments. You may occasionally refer to experiences any person might be expected to share. Your personal experience, while fascinating to be sure, will generally not be considered an adequate basis of support for any point you might advance in your paper. Personal experience is best used as an illustration, rather than to support arguments. It is very difficult to fit personal experience into the idiom of academic writing, so it is best to avoid it until you have achieved mastery of the form of academic discourse, generally not until you are well along in graduate school, unless you pursue the kind of field in which personal experience is accorded a central place in its idiom. However, if you are clever, you may pepper your paper with personal anecdotes in a highly effective way that earns high marks. In no instance should you consider this paper to be a personal reaction paper in which your thoughts and feelings are the central point of interest. I am assigning you a research paper to help you learn academic research writing, a skill that is far more likely to help you in life than is the ability to write papers in roughly the form of a blog. Please know that it is also more difficult for me to grade this kind of paper than to grade a personal reaction essay, and I am investing this time and energy to facilitate your education.

Mid-term Exams

Each exam will consist of 20 multiple choice questions, 5 short-answer questions, and one longer essay. The points will be divided roughly equally between the multiple choice questions and the combined short-answer and essay questions.

Final Exam

Our final examination time is set by OSU to be the following:
Monday, December 15, 8:00-9:45 AM
The final exam schedule is at the following URL:
registrar.osu.edu/scheduling/SchedulingContent/SP16Finals.pdf
I will let you know the place of the examination once I know. The format of the final will be the same as the exams that came before it. The final is comprehensive. About half of the final will cover the material presented since the third midterm, and the other half will cover material from the rest of the course.

Class Participation

Throughout the semester, you will have many informal opportunities to participate by answering questions, asking questions, or adding to the class discussion by bringing in examples of research or (in some cases) personal experience. Some students are shy about talking in class, and I am happy to provide alternative ways to meet the participation requirement, such as by doing a few short homework assignments or brief research projects (which you might fulfill by coming to office hours and describing your findings, rather than writing a paper). I will provide feedback to each of you about the midpoint of the semester to let you know how I am evaluating your participation at that point. This will give you an opportunity to raise your participation grade by make sure that you are earning more participation points in the second part of the semester. I will occasionally take attendance at the beginning or end of class and give a point for participation to each student who is in attendance, and these points will constitute part of your participation grade. If you miss class quite frequently, your participation grade is likely to be a C or lower.
Grading Scale

All assignments as well as the overall course grade will be based on the following scale, following OSU guidelines.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>61-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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In the event that the overall course average is a fractional value falling between two grades (such as a 92.5), I will round up to the higher of the two grades (A). The final grade will be based on a weighted average of individual assignment and exam grades.

Attendance Policy

You are required to attend all classes unless you are ill, have a legitimate need to miss due to family emergencies or so forth, or are on a school sponsored activity (e.g., off helping win another game for OSU or playing an instrument to help inspire fellow buckeyes with school spirit and spur our team to victory). Please let me know in advance of an absence if possible, or after the fact if you could not have let me know in advance. I will not deduct points for excused absences.