

PCO 6315 - Assessment in Counseling
Course Syllabus - Fall 2003

Instructor: [Dr. Ronald Belter](#)

Office: Room 208, [Bldg. 41, Pensacola Campus](#)

Phone: 474-2791 (Office), 474-2364 (Department)

E-Mail: Rbelter@uwf.edu

Office Hours: Mon., Wed., Thurs., 9:00-12:00

Overview of Course: This course is designed to give the student "hands-on", practical training in the process of clinical assessment in the mental health profession. It will include an introduction to the science and art of clinical assessment as a foundation for the actual practice of assessment in a mental health setting. The focus will be on the use of assessment techniques, such as interviewing and psychological testing, in a professionally and ethically responsible manner. The course includes an experiential component in which the student will develop beginning skills in the use of clinical assessment techniques. This course is not a substitute for the supervised clinical experience required to establish competence in the independent use of clinical assessment techniques. As a graduate level course in clinical assessment, it is assumed that the student is familiar with various conditions of psychological disorders to be assessed and has mastered the content of a graduate level course in Psychopathology.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, the student should:

1. Be familiar with and able to discuss the scientific basis for reliable and valid clinical assessment.
2. Be able to apply these concepts in the practical application of the techniques covered in the course.
3. Be familiar with and able to administer, score, interpret, and report the results of the assessment techniques covered in the course.

Required Reading: Reading will be assigned from one textbook to be purchased, and several select readings from different sources that are bound in a coursepack available in the bookstore. All readings assigned are required.

Required Textbook:

Hersen, M., & Van Hasselt, V.B. (1998). Basic Interviewing. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Assigned References: Selections from these sources are bound in a coursepack.

Bellack, A.S. & Hersen, M. (Eds.) (1998). Behavioral Assessment: A Practical Handbook. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Butcher, J.N. (Ed.) (1995). Clinical Personality Assessment: Practical Approaches. New York: Oxford.

Butcher, J.N. (Ed.) (2002). Clinical Personality Assessment: Practical Approaches, 2nd Ed. New York: Oxford.

Groth-Marnat, G. (1997). Handbook of Psychological Assessment, 3rd Ed. New York: Wiley.

Maruish, M.E. (Ed.) (1999). The Use of Psychological Testing for Treatment Planning and Outcomes Assessment. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Wilson, J.P. & Keane, T.M. (1997). Assessing psychological trauma and PTSD. New York: Guilford.

Supplemental References: On reserve in the library.

Butcher, J.N. (1999). A beginner's guide to the MMPI-2. Washington, DC: APA.

Butcher, J.N., & Williams, C.L. (2000). Essentials of MMPI-2 and MMPI-A Interpretation. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Graham, J.R. (2000). MMPI-2: Assessing Personality and Psychopathology, 3rd Ed. New York: Oxford.

Academic Conduct: As members of the academic community at the University of West Florida, we commit ourselves to honesty and integrity as we strive for excellence in performance. This includes a pledge not to cheat, nor to tolerate cheating, nor to plagiarize the work of others, and to comply with established policies of academic conduct. To assure an atmosphere conducive to learning that maintains the dignity of and respect for all parties involved, students will be expected to adhere to the university statement on academic conduct (<http://www.uwf.edu/JudicialAffairs/SCC.html>), as published in the Student Handbook. As a condition of taking this course, students accept adherence to this set of expectations for academic conduct.

Special Needs: Students with special needs who require specific examination-related or other course-related accommodations should contact Barbara Fitzpatrick, Director of Disabled Student Services (DSS), dss@uwf.edu, (850) 474-2387. DSS will provide the student with a letter for the instructor that will specify any recommended accommodations.

Grading and Course Requirements: Each student will be required to complete 2 full clinical assessments, to be conducted with a volunteer subject as described below:

1. A self-assessment in which the student serves as the subject who is interviewed and completes the assessment measures him/herself.
2. An adult subject who volunteers and gives informed consent to be interviewed and complete the assessment measures.

Each assessment will be composed of a clinical interview, including mental status examination, two global or broad-band assessment measures, and at least three specific or narrow-band assessment measures. These assessments will be evaluated and graded in three stages:

- a. Short assignments: This includes the raw data from one individual assessment technique employed with one subject (self or volunteer), with evidence of proper administration, scoring, and interpretation. These assignments will be due in a class period following the class in which the specific measure is discussed. For a minimum of six assessment techniques for each of the 2 subjects, this means a minimum of 12 short assignments through the semester.
- b. Final reports: The final integrated report of assessment findings, one for each subject, based on all the assessment measures employed with each subject.
- c. Subject Feedback: Each student will schedule a feedback session for the volunteer subject during which the results of the evaluation will be presented to the subject. The course instructor will sit in on this session to observe and assist, if needed. In preparation for this session, the student will conduct a feedback session of the self-assessment with a class peer serving in the role of the client. These feedback sessions will be scheduled during the last three weeks of the semester.

The grade for each assignment and for the course will be based on the instructor's evaluation of accuracy and quality of the student's work. This will include aspects of administration of the assessment method, scoring of data, interpretation of data, reporting of results, and participation in class discussion. Each of the graded items will be weighted as follows:

2 Short Assignments for Interview = 10% each	20%
2 Short Assignments for MMPI-2 = 10% each	20%
2 Short Assignments for SCL-90-R = 2.5% each	5%
2 Short Assignments for Mood = 2.5% each	5%
2 Short Assignments for Anxiety = 2.5% each	5%
2 Short Assignments for PTSD = 2.5% each	5%
2 Final Integrated Reports = 15% each	30%
1 Subject Feedback = 5%	5%
Class Attendance and Participation = 5%	<u>5%</u>
	100%

Class Attendance: As a responsible adult, what you learn and the grade you earn in this class are in your hands. Please refer to the university policy on class attendance in the UWF Catalog. Attendance at class is your responsibility and you are expected to attend each class. Absence will affect your grade unless approved by the instructor and documented as legitimate. You are expected to complete assigned readings prior to the assigned class, so that you can participate meaningfully in class discussions. If a legitimate, unusual, and unavoidable circumstance prevents you from turning in an assignment at the scheduled time, you must notify the instructor in advance to schedule an alternate time to turn in the assignment.

Class Schedule

- Aug. 26: **Topic:** Introduction to course, review of syllabus. Clinical Assessment Issues: Science & Art of Assessment, Models of Assessment, Special Populations.
- Reading:** Begin reading assignment for Interviewing: Hersen & Van Hasselt.
- Sept. 2 & 9: **Topic:** Broad-Band Assessment: Interview and Mental Status Examination (MSE).
- Reading:** Hersen & Van Hasselt.
- Assignment Due:** Signed consent form for volunteer subject, on Sept. 9.
- Sept. 16 & 23: **Topic:** Broad-Band Assessment: MMPI-2/MMPI-A.
- Reading:** Groth-Marnat: Chapter 6, MMPI-2, Coursepack.
- Assignment Due:** 1st Interview/MSE, self-assessment, on Sept. 23.
- Sept. 30: **Topic:** Broad-Band Assessment: Symptom Checklist-90 (SCL-90R).
- Reading:** Maruish, Chapter 23, SCL-90-R, Coursepack.
- Assignment Due:** 2nd Interview/MSE, volunteer subject.
- Oct. 7: **Topic:** Broad Band Assessment: Behavioral Assessment System for Children (BASC) and Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL).
- Reading:** None.
- Assignment Due:** 1st MMPI and 1st SCL-90-R, self-assessment.
- Oct. 14: **Topic:** Narrow-Band Assessment: Mood Disorders and Suicide.
- Reading:** Bellack & Hersen, Chapter 10, Assessment of Depression, Coursepack.
Butcher (2002), Chapter 24, Assessment of Suicide Risk, Coursepack.
- Assignment Due:** 2nd MMPI and 2nd SCL-90-R, volunteer subject.
- Oct. 21: **Topic:** Narrow-Band Assessment: Anxiety Disorders.
- Reading:** Butcher (1995), Chapter 24, Assessing the Severely Anxious Patient, Coursepack.
- Assignment Due:** Both Mood Disorders.

- Oct. 28: **Topic:** Narrow-Band Assessment: PTSD.
 Reading: Wilson & Keane, Chapter 7, Coursepack.
 Assignment Due: Both Anxiety Disorders.
- Nov. 4: **Topic:** Integration of Data, Reporting Results, Recommendations, Referral.
 Reading: Groth-Marnat, Chapters 13 & 14, Coursepack.
 Assignment Due: Both PTSDs.
- Nov. 11: **Veteran's Day, No Class**
- Nov. 18: **Topic:** Integration of Data, Reporting Results, Recommendations, Referral.
 Reading: Groth-Marnat, Chapters 13 & 14, Coursepack.
 Assignment Due: 1st Final Report, self-assessment.
- Nov. 25: **Topic:** Narrow-Band Assessment: ADHD.
 Reading: None.
 Assignment Due: Feedback for self-assessment will take place in class.
- Dec. 2: **Topic:** Ethics and Professional Competence.
 Assignment Due: 2nd Final Report, volunteer subject.
 Feedback session for volunteer subject can be scheduled beginning Dec. 1.

Guidelines for Assessment Process

1) For the assessments to be turned in for the class assignments, each student will need to recruit a suitable volunteer subject to participate. This subject must be the proper age for the assessment techniques to be used and must not be a family member, mental health client, or other person with whom the student has an ongoing professional or personal relationship. In addition, the volunteer subject must not be someone who anticipates being evaluated as a mental health client in the near future.

2) Each volunteer subject and/or parent/guardian must be fully informed of the purpose and circumstances of the assessment, and sign the appropriate informed consent form, before the assessment takes place.

3) Confidentiality should be strictly adhered to. No name or other identifying information should be included in any assessment materials or reports. All assessment materials and reports should be identified by a code number selected by the student. The consent forms should be submitted separately from the assessment materials and reports, and should not be attached to them.

4) Because this class assignment is done for practice in developing your clinical assessment skill, it is expected that you will make mistakes in administration, scoring, and interpretation that will affect the results of the assessment. As a result, scores and results obtained are not considered to be fully reliable or valid. As an ethical practitioner, you should never report incorrect scores or invalid results. Therefore, assessment data and results will not be made available for any professional purpose. This issue will be fully disclosed and agreed to by the volunteer subject, through the informed consent form.

5) However, the volunteer subject is making a substantial investment of time and personal disclosure which warrants some degree of feedback. Within bounds of ethical practice, the volunteer subject will receive debriefing and feedback from the evaluation, with emphasis on the limits of reliability and validity, under the direct supervision of the course instructor. If desired by the volunteer subject, a confidential referral for mental health services will be coordinated by the course instructor.

6) Published tests and test materials are protected by copyright and are considered to be guarded professional information, not available for public dissemination. Such dissemination would weaken the validity and use of the tests. Therefore, you are professionally bound to maintain test security, meaning that you are not to discuss or display the content of these tests with other people who do not have a legitimate need to know, such as family, friends, neighbors, other students, colleagues, etc.

7) Test kits and materials made available to students for this course are the property of the Psychology Department. Each student is responsible for all testing materials that are checked out to him/her for this course. They should be returned intact and in the same condition as when received. Any loss or damage shall be the responsibility of the student.

8) Violation of any of the above guidelines is considered a serious ethical violation and will result in an automatic "F" for the course.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, _____, hereby consent to take part in an educational experience with a UWF graduate psychology student. The nature of this experience is to serve as a volunteer subject in a practice mental health assessment to be conducted by the following graduate student: _____. This student is enrolled in a graduate level class, PCO 6315, Assessment in Counseling, taught by Dr. Ronald Belter. The course requires each student to practice conducting a mental health assessment with an adult volunteer subject. The practice assessment will consist of a mental health interview and a series of “personality tests” to be completed in several sessions through the course of the semester.

As is the case with any experience of this kind, participation is entirely voluntary and strictly confidential. No identifying information will be recorded or used in any way and the results will be viewed only by the student and the instructor of the course, in order to grade the student’s performance for the class. The graduate student will be directly supervised by the instructor of the course, Dr. Ronald Belter, who is a licensed psychologist, board certified in clinical psychology, and Chairperson of the Psychology Department.

The practice assessment sessions will be scheduled at the subject’s convenience. The purpose of the assessment sessions is to provide the graduate student experience in conducting an effective assessment. Because this experience is intended to be for practice for the student, any scores or results that might be obtained would not be considered valid and will therefore not be available for any professional purpose. Toward the end of the semester, the graduate student and the course instructor will meet with the volunteer subject to discuss the evaluation process and give general feedback, within the limits of the validity of the evaluation results. If issues of concern arise in the assessment, for which the volunteer subject might want to seek professional assistance, Dr. Belter will assist the volunteer subject in identifying an appropriate confidential referral to a mental health professional.

Any questions about this process can be directed to the graduate student named above, or Dr. Belter, in the Department of Psychology, at 474-2791 or by e-mail at RBelter@uwf.edu.

I certify that I have read and understand the information provided above and agree to participate as a volunteer subject for a practice assessment as described above. I also certify that I am not a family member, client, or other person with whom the graduate student has an ongoing personal or professional relationship, and that I am not currently a mental health client and do not anticipate being evaluated as a mental health client in the near future.

Signature

Date

Graduate Student Witness

Date

Graduate Student Contact Information: _____

Volunteer Subject Contact Information: _____