PSYX 526.01: Psychological Assessment II - Objective Approaches and Applications

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Psychology 526
Spring 2017
Psychological Assessment II: Objective Approaches and Applications

Course Information
Time/Day: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30 – 4:50pm; Lab/Workshop: TBA
Location: SB 303

Instructor Information
Instructor: Laura Kirsch, Ph.D.
Email: laura.kirsch@umontana.edu
Office: Skaggs Bldg., Room 364
Office hours: Tuesdays 11am-1pm, or by appointment
Phone: 406.207-7870

Teaching Assistant: Jessica Peatee
Email: jessica.peatee@umconnect.umt.edu
Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

Required Readings

*** None of these texts is available in the bookstore. Please secure copies from commercial vendors.

4. Additional required readings are listed in the course schedule. These supplemental readings will be available via Moodle.

Course Objectives
This course will continue your training in and experience with measurement theory, psychological testing, evaluation and assessment. The course begins with coverage of general measurement topics, including psychometric theory, ethical issues, and test characteristics. We then focus our attention on some of the most commonly-used and researched ‘objective’ personality inventories, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory – 2 (MMPI-2), the MMPI-2 Restructured Form (MMPI-2 RF), and the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI). Following introductory material, you will gain ‘hands-on’ experience with MMPI-2 & PAI administration/interpretation and the written presentation of assessment results. In the interest of linking assessment activities with positive outcomes in psychotherapy, these ‘hand-on’ experiences will facilitate your understanding of how test data have the potential to inform psychotherapeutic intervention and case formulation. You will complete 3 modified psychological evaluations of undergraduate volunteers. These ‘evaluations’—culminating in written reports—will include data from tests, observation, and an adapted clinical interview. By the end of the semester, you will demonstrate basic and beginning proficiency with test administration/interpretation
and the written/oral communication of assessment results. In the final few weeks of class, we will attend to a range of issues, including historical and contemporary controversies in psychological measurement, testing and assessment. Each student will identify an area relevant to personality assessment that was not covered previously, select relevant readings that examine the issue, and lead the classroom-based discussion.

A note about competence: Competent use of assessment tools, techniques and strategies requires considerable study, effort, and applied experience. Stated simply, no single course or learning experience will elevate your assessment skills to a level of full competence. Instead, your competency in psychological assessment will develop over time through multiple and varied experiences as graduate students, pre-doctoral interns, postdoctoral fellows, and early career psychologists.

Learning Outcomes
Over the course of the semester, students will:
1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of basic psychometric principles and their relevance to psychological testing and assessment.
2. Demonstrate beginning proficiency and emerging competence regarding the interpretation of ‘objective’ personality testing and the written communication of assessment results.
3. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the impact of contextual factors on test interpretation and the related distinction between testing and assessment.

Course Requirements
Class Participation
We will meet twice weekly to discuss assigned readings and issues related to test interpretation. In addition to brief lecture on key points, the course will employ a seminar format. This will require active discussion and contributions from each of you. You are required to attend each class meeting with the assigned readings completed and fully prepared for discussion. Once semester schedules fall into place (≈ week 2 or 3), you will participate in biweekly ‘lab’/‘workshop’ meetings, facilitated by the course TA, Jessica Peatee, MA. Early lab meetings will orient you to CPC policies/procedures and the testing materials/facilities. In later weeks, you will use lab time to discuss interviewing skills and approach, techniques and principles of harm assessment, your mock clients’ testing and interpretations, and any other issues that arise over the course of the semester. I expect you to attend each lab/workshop meeting and to respond swiftly to communications from Jessica. Please note that class and lab/workshop participation account for 50 points toward your final grade.

Case Presentations
Each of you is required to present one of the ‘cases’ you evaluate over the course of the semester. These case presentations will include summaries (≈ 30 minutes) of the interview you conducted, the testing data, and your emerging thoughts about what these sources of data mean for the person you tested. These case presentations will facilitate your understanding of how the MMPI-2/PAI function and will give you early experience with concise oral presentation of complex clinical data. This presentation is worth 50 points toward your overall course grade. We will schedule these presentations early in the semester.

Midterm Exam
In week 8 you will complete an in-class exam. The exam will include a series of short answer and essay questions based on the course material to date (i.e., basics regarding testing v. assessment,
psychometrics, ethical issues, test development strategies, MMPI-2 basics, etc.). Your test performance will comprise 100 points toward your final grade. More details will be provided in class.

Assessment and Assessment Reports
You will complete four psychological evaluation tasks over the course of the semester. You will serve as the examiner and examinee for assessment # 1. Assessment #s 2-4 will employ Psychology Department Subject Pool student volunteers as examinees. Later assessment tasks will account for increasing percentages of your final grade (please see ‘grading’ below for specifics); in total, these tasks account for 62.5% of the overall course points. Assessment reports are due during class on the days noted on the syllabus. Late submissions (i.e., those turned in after the designated class period) will incur an initial 5 point penalty. An additional 5 points will be deducted for each day the reports are late. Weekends will be treated as a single day.

*The department has moved subject pool recruitment and sign-ups to an online system, SONA. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with this system and the procedures for ensuring that all volunteers receive appropriate credit for participation.

Assessment #1
Your first assessment requires you to complete the MMPI-2, while ‘role-playing’ a person with a particular disorder or a person with whom you are familiar. After scoring the test, you will submit a 1-2 page ‘reaction paper’ that describes your experiences with the test and characterizes your reflections or reactions to it. This assignment will introduce you to the MMPI-2 stimuli and give you a sense of how it feels to take it. You will also gain initial experience with the scoring program and the range/diversity of generated scores. You will be required to submit the testing results, as we will use them in class to facilitate what the various MMPI-2 scales measure and how they work. PLEASE NOTE: this a role-playing exercise; do not take the test as yourself.

Assessments #2-4
Assessments 2 & 3 will include a modified clinical interview and the MMPI-2. For the 4th assessment, you will administer the PAI and an objective measure of depressive symptomatology (e.g., BDI-2, PHQ-9). For all assessments, you will use SONA to recruit departmental participant pool volunteers. The clinical interview should resemble an intake assessment, with necessary adjustments made given the nature of the interaction. As in any ‘clinical’ encounter, the interview will give you an opportunity to engage another person in the informed consent process, establish rapport, and apply your clinical interviewing skills. For your protection and the protection of the undergraduate volunteers, your interviews will be recorded AND observed live by a classmate.

You will submit written assessment reports that integrate interview and test findings for your 2nd, 3rd, and 4th assessments. As noted above, your assessment tasks are worth increasing proportions of your final grade (i.e., 50, 75, 100, 100). Given the sensitive nature of the testing data and accompanying reports, you are required to work on these products in the CPC. Neither the testing data nor the reports (drafts or final versions) can be carried outside of the CPC.

Assessment Grading
Grading of clinical reports will depend on a number of criteria, including writing style, grammar, clarity of communication, interpretive reasoning, data integration, and formatting. You are required to write these assessment reports as if they were professional products intended for client records. As a result, typos and other issues related to writing mechanics matter. I make extensive notes on all submitted
reports. Often, these notes highlight grammatical problems and issues of writing style. Submitted reports that include errors/issues for which I have previously provided clear commentary will be returned ungraded to the student for revision and resubmission. This will effectively mean that the report is late, and it will be graded accordingly. All reports will use an alias to identify the test subject and will be blinded (e.g., no other information should be included that could serve to identify the participant). We will discuss issues related to report writing and grading in more detail during class and lab/workshop.

Presentation/Discussion Leader
Each of you will make a presentation and facilitate the discussion for a full class period during the final weeks of the semester. You will select the presentation topic and readings for these class periods; the topics should address a contemporary issue of relevant interest in the area of objective personality assessment. Toward the beginning of the semester, you will select your area of interest and run it by me for my approval. You will then select 2-3 readings to present the topic and support your plan for the class period. This assignment will account for 75 points toward your final grade.

Course Expectations, Guidelines and Policies

Academic Integrity
Academic dishonesty is antithetical to the mission of the University of Montana; all students must practice academic honesty. Misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. Academic misconduct— including plagiarism— will result in an “F” for the course and might result in dismissal from your academic program and the university. Please let me know if you have any questions about what might constitute plagiarism. Please also familiarize yourself with the Student Conduct Code.

Class Attendance and Punctuality
I expect you to attend every scheduled class period and lab/workshop meeting and to be on time. Class absences are acceptable for the following reasons: 1) your own illness; 2) illness or health care needs of a family member; 3) travel for an academically-relevant event (e.g., conference attendance). Please let me know as soon as you can if you know in advance of a scheduled absence. If you must miss class because of your own illness or a family health care obligation, please let me know before class or as soon as possible. If you choose to use a laptop or iPad to take notes, please restrict your use of these devices to course-related activities during our class meetings.

Absences
Students who miss class FOR ANY REASON will write a brief (≈ 1 page, single-spaced) reaction paper summarizing your reflections on the assigned readings. The paper must be submitted as soon as possible after the missed class period. Be advised: Failure to complete the paper or within two days after return will result in a 2-point deduction of your class participation grade.

Policy on Incomplete Grades
An Incomplete will be assigned only in cases when student hardship precludes completion of the course requirements within the bounds of the semester. It is the student’s responsibility to discuss with me the possibility of an Incomplete prior to the end of the semester. Any student taking an Incomplete is required to finish the course requirements as soon as possible after the semester’s close. The student must communicate his/her plan for course completion to me as soon as he/she is able to do so. Per University policy, Incompletes revert automatically to ‘F’s after 12 months.
Professional Comportment
As psychologists-in-training, your behavior must comply with the ethical and professional standards of our discipline at all times. Issues with particular relevance to assessment (e.g., informed consent, rights of examinees, confidentiality, mandated reporting, duty to warn/protect, test security, etc.) will be discussed in class. I urge you to raise additional ethical concerns for discussion when you encounter them. Please note that the CPC is a functioning mental health clinic. When you conduct your ‘client’ interviews you are required to follow all CPC policies/procedures and are expected to demonstrate professional behavior and dress.

Disability Modifications
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Grading

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class/Lab Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment #1</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Assessment #2</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>Assessment #3</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Assessment #4</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>600</strong></td>
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Grades are assigned as follows:

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<td>93 – 100</td>
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<td>90 – 92</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>87 – 89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>83 – 86</td>
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<td>60 – 69</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>T Jan 24</td>
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|      | Th Jan 26 | **Introduction and the history of measurement and psychological testing**  
| 2    | T Jan 31 | **Psychometric foundations/classical and contemporary measurement theory**  
2. *Standards...*  
   Chapter 1: Validity (pp. 23-31)  
   Chapter 2: Reliability/precision and errors of measurement (pp. 33-47) |
|      | Th Feb 2 | **Ethics and standards**  
2. *Standards...*  
   Chapter 3: Fairness in testing (pp. 49-72)  
   Chapter 8: The rights and responsibilities of test takers (pp. 131-137)  
For reference:  
2. Montana Legislature: SB 235 (Short title: Clarify law on who may indicate performance of psychological testing) |
| 3    | T Feb 7 | **Clinical Interviewing Overview: Understanding and using interview data**  
For reference:  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Readings</th>
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</table>
| Th Feb 9 | MMPI/MMPI-2: History, development, and overview  
**ASSESSMENT #1 DUE**  
2. Standards...  
   Chapter 6: Test administration, scoring, reporting and interpretation (pp. 111-121)  
   Chapter 1: Development of the MMPI and MMPI-2 (pp. 1-13)  
   Chapter 2: Administration and Scoring (pp. 14-22)  
**For reference:**  
| 4 | T Feb 14 | MMPI-2: Validity Indicators  
   Chapter 3: The Validity Scales (pp. 23-62).  
**For reference:**  
| Th Feb 16 | MMPI-2: Basic Clinical Scales  
   Chapter 4: The Clinical Scales (pp. 63-91). |
| 5 | T Feb 21 | MMPI-2: Codetypes  
   Chapter 5: Codetypes (pp. 92-116). |
| Th Feb 23 | MMPI-2: Content Scales  
   Chapter 6: Content interpretation (pp. 117-155).  
**For Reference:**  
| 6 | T Feb 28 | MMPI-2: Supplementary Scales/PSY-5  
   Chapter 8: Supplementary Scales (pp. 182-221)  
   Chapter 7: Restructured Clinical and Personality Psychopathology Five Scales (pp. 172-181).  
**For Reference:**  
<table>
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<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Readings</th>
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<td>2 supplementary scales. <em>Assessment</em>, 4, 193-205.</td>
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<td>Th Mar 2</td>
<td>MMPI-2: Interpretation</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>T Mar 7</td>
<td>Report writing; linking interpretation to intervention and orientation</td>
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<td>Th Mar 9</td>
<td>MMPI-2-Restructured Form</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>T Mar 14</td>
<td>MMPI-2-RF: Interpretation/Construct validity</td>
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<td>Th Mar 16</td>
<td>Exam</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>T Mar 21</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th Mar 23</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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| 10    | T Mar 28 | Catch up and/or special topics  
|       | Readings: TBA |
| Th Mar 30 | The Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI)  
*** Assessment #2, First MMPI-2 report due*** |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Readings</th>
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| 11   | T Apr 4 | **PAI: Profile Validity**  
   Chapter 4: Negative Distortion: Random Responding and Malingering (pp. 105-127)  
   Chapter 5: Identifying Defensiveness on the PAI (pp. 129-143)  
|      | Th Apr 6| **PAI: Scales**  
   Chapter 2: Interpreting PAI Clinical Scale Elevations (pp. 23-80)  
| 12   | T Apr 11| **PAI: Codetypes and Interpretation**  
   Chapter 3: Two-point Codetypes in Profile Interpretation (pp. 81-103)  
2. Chapter 6: Use of PAI in Diagnosis (pp. 145-196)  
3. Diversity and Multicultural Assessment  
   Chapter 1: Standard and multicultural assessment (pp. 3-33)  
   Chapter 3: Assessment bias and cultural competence (pp.49-66)  
   Chapter 10: Use with Special Groups (Older adults & Ethnic minorities, pp. 261-268) |
|      | Th Apr 13| **Diversity and Multicultural Assessment**  
   Chapter 1: Standard and multicultural assessment (pp. 3-33)  
   Chapter 3: Assessment bias and cultural competence (pp.49-66)  
   Chapter 10: Use with Special Groups (Older adults & Ethnic minorities, pp. 261-268) |
| 13   | T Apr 18| Student Led Topic:  
   *Readings TBA* |
|      | Th Apr 20| Student Led Topics:  
   ***Assessment #3, Second MMPI-2 report due***  
   *Readings TBA* |
| 14   | T Apr 25| Student Led Topic:  
   *Readings TBA* |
|      | Th Apr 27| Student Led Topics  
   *Readings TBA* |
| 15   | T May 2 | Student Led Topics  
   *Readings TBA* |
|      | Th May 4| Course Wrap-Up/Evaluation |

**FINALS WEEK:** Final Report (Assessment #4, PAI) due by 12:00pm, Wednesday, May 10