

Psychology 8520
Foundations of Psychological Assessment
UNO, Fall 2022

Instructor:

Adam D. Weaver, PhD, BCBA
UNO Department of Psychology, School Psychology Program
Office: Arts & Sciences Hall, 347T
Phone: 402.554.3848
Office hours: T & Th (9-11)
Email: adamweaver@unomaha.edu

Time & Location: T & Th, 11:30 - 12:45am, CPACS 126

Course texts and materials:

- Reynolds, C.R. & Livingston, R.B. (2012). *Mastering modern psychological testing: Theory and methods*. Pearson.
- Additional text and media will be assigned throughout the semester. These will generally be provided via Canvas, but some may be your responsibility to find.

Course goal:

This course is designed to provide graduate students with a thorough review of measurement and statistical concepts relevant to testing. Assessments tools for a variety of domains (e.g., academic, social-emotional, cognitive, personality) will be presented and discussed. The course will provide students with knowledge of different types of test scores and the ability to interpret test results. Students will learn to evaluate the psychometric adequacy of psychological and educational tests.

UNO School Psychology Program Training Objectives

Based on the UNO School Psychology Program's philosophy and the NASP Training Model, students are trained according to the following objectives throughout their coursework.

1. Data-based Decision Making
 - As reflected in course goal: *“Demonstrate understanding of measurement concepts, types of assessments, and purposes of various types of assessment tools.”*
3. Academic Interventions and Instructional Supports
 - Students are introduced to principles of assessment and data-collection methods to implement and evaluate services that support cognitive and academic skills.
4. Mental and Behavioral Health Services and Interventions
 - Students are introduced to principles of assessment and data-collection methods to implement and evaluate services that support socialization, learning, and mental health.
8. Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations
 - Assigned readings and discussion topics cover testing special populations.
9. Research and Evidence-Based Practice
 - Students learn about the core components of research-based assessment measures and how to evaluate these tests.
10. Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice
 - Students reflect on the adequacy (technical and otherwise) of various commonly used assessment measures.

Course Requirements and percentage of grade:

Quizzes	30 percent
Norming Project	20 percent
Test review: ability	15 percent
Test review: achievement	15 percent
Test review: other	15 percent
Participation (class discussions, questions, staying awake, etc.)	5 percent

Course Policies:

- The general expectation is that students will be able to attend all class meetings **IN PERSON** and complete all assignments **on time**. Make-up assignments will not be allowed unless there is a legitimate, reasonable excuse that is communicated directly to the instructor **PRIOR** to the absence. **Unexcused late assignments will result in a deduction of 10% of earned points per day the assignment is late** up to a maximum of 50% of points deducted (remember...emailing assignments as an attachment is a viable option for handing in assignments on time).
- I realize that Covid or other illnesses can throw ALL of us a curveball. The expectation is in-class participation; however, in the event that you are unable to attend class in person due to illness or quarantine, please communicate with me in advance and I will make every effort to allow you to connect to class via Zoom.
PLEASE NOTE: Zoom will not be an option for missing class due to non-Covid activities (e.g., babysitting, dropping your car off at the shop, vacation).
If you are using Zoom, please make every effort to focus on class and participate in discussion.
- I want to be accessible to students! When on campus, my office door is usually and open and I check email regularly throughout the week. During weekdays, you can expect your emails to be answered within 24 hours. Over the weekend, however, I may not answer your email until Monday.
- Please **DO NOT** ask me for my personal notes if you miss class. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a peer. If you have questions about those notes, once obtained, feel free to ask questions in person or via email. *Please notify the instructor if you need to miss class.*
- Please discontinue the use of cell phones and other portable electronic devices as soon as class begins. Phones should be TURNED OFF so as not to disturb the learning of others. In unusual circumstances when you need to have your phone available, please notify the instructor prior to class. In addition to turning off cell phones, please refrain from checking email, text messages, or social networking sites during class time. Not only is it very distracting to the instructor and to the other students who are participating actively in the class, but it interferes with your learning and participation.

- General class information, announcements, and most readings will be posted online on Canvas. Any Powerpoints, assignment guidelines, and grades also will be posted on Canvas. You should check email and Canvas for announcements regularly!
- There is an expectation of professionalism for this course and all your other UNO courses. This means you should arrive to class on time, stay for the entire length of class, dress professionally for service learning and applied activities, and communicate verbally and in writing (including email) using professional language and style. Sloppy work reflects poorly on you and our program.
- Participation in class activities and discussions is expected. **Ask questions!** In the event you disagree with ideas presented by others, please refrain from any negative comments, but please **do** feel comfortable offering your ideas. Class members not respecting others' right to learning will be asked to leave the classroom and need to speak to the instructor before returning. You may note there is a participation grade for this course. As a graduate level class, participation is expected from all students. Please come prepared to class having read and reacted to the readings so you may fully participate in the conversation. Participating in class is practicing a vital skill for school psychologists who are expected to talk in groups, ask and answer questions, and stand up for themselves and their opinions.
- Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will be addressed in a manner consistent with the University's Academic Integrity Policy (<https://www.unomaha.edu/campus-policies/academic-integrity.php>). In accordance with this policy, consequences for engaging in behavior that goes against academic integrity will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the instructor. Penalties may range from zero credit on the assignment, to reduced or failing course grade, to expulsion from the program. ANY instances of plagiarism or other misconduct may be reported to the Program Director, Department Chair, Dean, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and the registrar. Furthermore, a record of the event will be placed in the student's graduate file. Depending on the situation, there may be consequences imposed by your degree program in addition to those imposed at the course level. Students who do not agree with the penalty decided by the instructor may follow a sequence of appeals. If you are unsure of whether or not you are committing plagiarism, or want to refresh yourself, please check the tutorial at <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>. **Students should be aware that ALL assignments are subject to a check for plagiarism using the internet and/or plagiarism detection software.**
- I want to facilitate the learning of all students in the class. Accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Accessibility Services and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact Accessibility Services (MSBC 126, Phone: 554-2872, TTY: 554-3799) or go to the website: <https://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/accessibility/>. Use of accommodations in the classroom or in testing situations will remain confidential. Please contact the instructor with any special requests or accommodations. In addition, if at any time there are specific issues or concerns related to your performance in class, please address these with the instructor as soon as possible.

- **Course Grading:**

98% - 100% = A+

93% - 97% = A

90% - 92% = A-

87% - 89% = B+

83% - 86% = B

80% - 82% = B-

77% - 79% = C+

73% - 76% = C

70% - 72% = C-

60% - 69% = D

Below 60% = F

Description of Requirements:

Quizzes: The purpose of quizzes is to ensure that students are gaining the knowledge presented in class lectures and readings. Quizzes will be given nearly each week and will be held at the beginning of the class period. Quizzes will cover the preceding lecture(s) and readings that have not yet been covered on a quiz, and will consist of multiple-choice and/or short answer/essay responses. All quizzes missed must be made up prior to the next scheduled class after which time 5 points will be deducted from the quiz per day.

Quizzes will be taken electronically on Canvas during class, so all students must bring a tablet or laptop to class.

Test reviews: The purpose of the test reviews is to have students review a variety of assessment tools to demonstrate understanding of measurement principles, to determine acceptable uses for the tool, and to assess the merit of the measure. The first test to be reviewed will be an intelligence/ability test. The second test to be reviewed will be an achievement test. The final test to be reviewed will be on a domain of the student's choosing (e.g., behavior, adaptive, personality).

Potential tests for review will be referenced in class although students may review a test not on our list, if cleared by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to decide upon a test and find all materials and sources for the test review.

In preparing the test review, students should rely heavily on the Standards for evaluating the assessment measure. Information regarding the test can be found in the test's manual, *The Buros Mental Measurement Yearbooks*, and/or through literature reviews. Literature reviews only need to be conducted if a test manual and The MMY do not present sufficient reliability or validity support. If using additional literature, please cite the references in APA style. Reviews should include the following information:

1. Description and purpose of the test.
2. Populations the test was developed with/for, and those appropriate for the test.
3. Test results information (e.g., does the test give scaled scores, percentile ranks, z-scores, t-scores, etc.).
4. Reliability evidence collected.
5. Validity evidence collected.
6. What kind of interpretations can the test giver make given the results?
7. Under what circumstances would you give this test? How would it be helpful to a school psychologist, parent, teacher, and student?

The following should be handed in on the date it is due: **review paper and the MMY review** (if applicable). **Also, provide copies of your review for others in the class. (These may be exchanged electronically.)** Papers turned in late will be penalized 10 percent for each day.

Norming Project: Each student will create their own assessment instrument to be normed on a sample of their choosing. The assessment instrument should contain at least 20 items, and should be normed on a group of at least 15 participants. Students will submit a copy of the assessment tool as well as a paper detailing the following:

1. A description of the assessment tool
 - a. What does it intend to measure?
 - b. Why you decided to create this particular tool to measure this particular construct?
2. The population the assessment is intended for.
3. Description of the sample the assessment was normed on.
 - a. How was the sample obtained?
 - b. Is it in any way representative of the population?
4. Report mean & standard deviation for the test.
5. Report the reliability of the assessment.
 - a. What type(s) of reliability are you reporting on (e.g., *test-retest*, *split half*)?
 - b. Discuss what the reliability coefficient tells you about this measure. Higher or lower than you expected?
6. Discuss why you think this is or is not a valid measure. What would/could you do to report on the validity of this measure?

In addition to the paper, students will present their assessment instrument and norming data to the class. Presentations should be about 10-15 minutes. Visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint) are encouraged.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Activity/ <i>Assessment</i>	Readings (to be completed prior to class)
1	8/23 T	Introduction & syllabus review Course overview		Syllabus
	8/25 Th	Psychological Testing & Assessment: Tools & Techniques	Lecture	Ch. 1 Witt et al. (1998)
2	8/30 T	History and Uses of Testing	Lecture	Ch. 1
	9/1 Th	Ethical Considerations	Lecture	Ch. 17
3	9/6 T	Basic Statistics & The Normal Curve (<u>bring paper to class!!</u>)	Quiz 1 Lecture	Ch. 2 (p. 36-55) Ch. 3
	9/8 Th	Norms & the Meaning of Test Scores Practical Applications	Lecture; Practice with variability	Ch. 3
4	9/13 T	Catching up & looking ahead	Quiz 2 Discussion	
	9/15 Th	Reliability	Lecture	Ch. 2 (p. 55-67) Ch. 4
5	9/20 T	Practical applications	Activity	
	9/22 Th	Validity	Quiz 3 Lecture	Ch. 5
6	9/27 T	Practical applications	Activity	
	9/29 Th	Test Development & Construction	Quiz 4 Lecture	Chs. 6, 7, & 18
7	10/4 T	Practical applications	Activity	
	10/6 Th	Test Utility Practical applications	Lecture Activity	<i>Additional Readings</i>
8	10/11 T	Catching up & looking ahead	Quiz 5 Discussion	
	10/13 Th	Testing, fairness, and social justice	Discussion	Ch. 15, <i>Additional Readings</i>
9	10/18 T	No Class – Fall Break (Work on Norming Project!)		
	10/20 Th	Intelligence & Ability Testing	Lecture	Ch. 9, <i>Additional Readings</i>
10	10/25 T	Intelligence & Ability Testing (continued)	Discussion	Radiolab podcasts
	10/27 Th	Practical applications in intelligence testing Test Review 1 (Ability Test) Due	Quiz 6 Activity	

11	11/1 T	Educational Assessment	Lecture	Ch. 8, <i>Additional Readings</i>
	11/3 Th	Curriculum Based Measurement	Lecture	<i>Additional Readings</i>
12	11/8 T	Practical applications in educational testing	Quiz 7 Activity	
	11/10 Th	Test Review 2 (Achievement Test) due Checking in on Norming Project	Discussion	
13	11/15 T	Accommodations, Special Populations & Adaptive Behavior	Lecture	Ch. 16, <i>Additional Readings</i>
	11/17 Th	Practical Applications in Adaptive Behavior	Quiz 8 Activity	
14	11/22 – 24	Thanksgiving Break No Class (Work on Norming Project!)		
15	11/29 T	Personality Assessment	Lecture	Ch. 10
	12/1 Th	Practical Applications in Personality Testing Test Review 3 due	Quiz 9 Activity	
16	12/6 T	Assessment Interpretation, Social Validity	Lecture & Activity	<i>Additional Readings</i>
	12/8 Th	Norming Project due Presentations		
17	12/13 (Noon- 2:00pm)	Presentations (cont.)		