University of Northern Colorado  
School of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education  
APCE 673: Appraisal and Assessment in Counseling  
Fall 2018  
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Jason Kacmarski, Ph.D.  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
Class Dates: November 9-11 & November 30 - December 2  
Class Times: Fridays 4-10, Saturdays 8-5, and Sundays 8-4  
Email: jason.kacmarski@unco.edu

Course Description:
This course features an overview of individual and group approaches to assessment used by professional counselors. Course participants evaluate instruments, interpret results, and demonstrate knowledge of psychometric properties.

Required Texts:


Additional Required Readings*:


*Additional readings as assigned by the instructor.
Supplemental/Recommended Readings:

Knowledge & Skill Outcomes (Objectives):
Upon successful completion of this course students will:

1. Understand historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment (CACREP II.G.7.a).
2. Know basic concepts of standardized and nonstandardized testing and other assessment techniques, including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, psychological testing, and behavioral observations (CACREP II.G.7.b).
3. Understand statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations (CACREP II.G.7.c).
4. Understand reliability (i.e., theory of measurement error, models of reliability, and the use of reliability information) (CACREP II.G.7.d).
5. Understand validity (i.e., evidence of validity, types of validity, and the relationship between reliability and validity) (CACREP II.G.7.e).

6. Understand social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations (CACREP II.G.7.f).

7. Understand ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling (CACREP II.G.7.g).

8. Understand the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession (CACREP II.G.8.a).

9. Understand statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation (CACREP II.G.8.c).

10. Understand ethical and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and/or program evaluation studies (CACREP II.G.8.f).

11. Understand various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses, including diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments (CACREP CMHC.G.2).

Course Content:
This course is designed to meet the CACREP 2009 Standards for Assessment (Section II.G.7). Course content includes the history of assessment procedures, types of assessment, technological applications of assessment, culturally appropriate/sensitive assessment, basic statistical procedures, appropriate assessment selection, types of psychological tests (i.e. intellectual, academic, achievement, personality, behavior rating scales, adaptive behavior scales), diagnostic interview techniques, and responsible and ethical use of assessments.

Methods of Instruction:
Methods of instruction include, but are not limited to the following: readings, lectures, papers/reports, exams, class discussions, presentations, role-plays, and other classroom activities.

Course Requirements/Assignments:
Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings prior to coming to class and to actively participate in discussions. All assignments are due at the beginning of class as listed in the course schedule. Not reading the material and/or late assignments will significantly lower your grade. Ten (10) points will be deducted from assignment grades for each day that they are late.

Group Presentation (50 points): Students will be divided into small groups and each group will be required to select an assessment tool that is commonly used in the field and present it to the class (counseling and psychological journals are excellent sources to find assessment tools). Each group will also provide an outline describing the assessment to the class that includes a reference page in APA style. See the sample outline titled Evaluation of Psychological Tests at
the end of this syllabus for an overview of what is expected. Presentations should be approximately 45 minutes in length and include the following: purpose of the test or how it can be used as a counseling tool, standardization, administration/setting, theoretical background, description of scales, scoring procedures, psychometric properties (reliability & validity), and other relevant additional information (e.g., where the instrument can be obtained, test user qualifications). Note that the majority of your presentation time should be spent demonstrating the application of the assessment. Therefore, you will provide each class member with the assessment and they will take the assessment; you will explain to the class how to score and interpret their results. At the end of the presentation, you should conduct a brief role-play that explains how and why you would use the assessment with a client. All topics/tests must receive prior approval by the instructor. Your grade will be determined by ratings from your classmates and the instructor (see Expectations for Group Presentation grading sheet at the end of the syllabus). All group members are expected to present equally during the presentation.

**Leading Group Discussion** (25 points): Each student will review a journal article that addresses a contemporary issue on a topic related to psychological assessment in the counseling field and lead a small group discussion of that article. All articles must be published in the past five years (i.e., 2013 or later). You will be responsible for providing a one-page outline of the article to the class with 3 - 4 discussion questions. You will then facilitate the discussion in your small group. Your outline should include at minimum: an overview, strengths, limitations, research implications, and counseling implications. The number of small groups will be determined based on class size. The article must be from one of the following journals: *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development; Journal of Personality Assessment; Psychological Assessment; Assessment; Professional Psychology: Research and Practice; Journal of Counseling and Development; Journal of Counseling Psychology; Journal of Vocational Behavior; The Counseling Psychologist*. All journals listed above are accessible online through UNC’s library.

**Reflection Paper** (25 points): Students are required to complete a reflection paper addressing the following questions: 1) What is the role of assessments in the lives of counselors? 2) What considerations are there for using various assessments in counseling (i.e., statistically, culturally, and in regards to treatment planning)?

**Psychosocial Assessment Report** (50 points): You will conduct a clinical/diagnostic psychosocial assessment of a pseudo/volunteer client (can be a classmate) and then write an assessment report detailing your findings. An outline of the topics to be covered in your interview is provided at the end of this syllabus. Your report should include a thorough psychosocial history, MSE information, suicide/homicide assessment, diagnostic impressions, treatment/counseling recommendations/plan, and any appropriate assessment data. You should use all of the data to formulate your diagnostic impressions based on your hypotheses. Although
this is not included in a typical report, you should discuss disconfirmatory, confirmatory, and alternative hypotheses (see Spengler et al., 1995; Tracey et al., 2014). Your treatment recommendations should help address the presenting problem of the client and should be based on all of the information gathered during the interview, as well as any assessment data. Make sure you provide a thorough rationale for each treatment recommendation/goal. A minimum of 5 recommendations/goals are expected. Your paper should be no more than 6 pages double spaced and written in APA style (6th ed.). As a graduate student, it is expected that you have strong writing skills. Therefore, your report should be professionally written and be free from any grammatical and spelling errors. Please note: Your report is based on fictitious information and should not include any identifying client information.

**Attendance and Participation** (25 points): Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all class meetings. You should NOT expect to receive all attendance and participation points by simply attending class on each scheduled day. Instead, you will earn these points by fully engaging in class discussions and activities. It is expected that you will participate in a professional manner and that your interactions with others in the classroom will be respectful in nature. Missing class or being late will result in a lower final grade. Breaks will be scheduled throughout each class meeting. Returning excessively late from scheduled breaks or taking an excessive number of additional breaks will also result in a lower final grade. Please note that if you miss more than 4 hours of total class time by being late or taking excessive breaks, you will likely fail and probably should drop the course.

**Exams** (50 points): There will be two exams (25 points each) that will cover the information from class readings, lectures, and class discussion.

**Grading:**
Possible point values for each assignment are as follows:

- Group Presentation 50
- Leading Class Discussions 25
- Reflection Paper 25
- Psychosocial/Assessment Report 50
- Attendance and Participation 25
- Exams 50

**TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 225**
Final letter grades will be assigned based on the following distribution:

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| Day 1 (Friday) | Introductions  
Review the Syllabus  
Assessment in Counseling  
Basic Assessment Principles  
Psychometrics  
Selecting, Administering, Scoring, and Communicating Assessment Results | Required Readings:  
Whiston (2017) Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, & 7 |
| Day 2 (Saturday) | Initial Assessment in Counseling  
Diagnostic Interviewing  
Mental Status Examination  
Intelligence and Ability Testing  
Achievement and Aptitude Testing  
Report Writing  
Treatment Planning  
Diagnostic Impressions | Required Readings:  
Whiston (2017) Chapters 8, 9, 10, & 15  
Zimmerman (2013)  
Supplemental Readings:  
Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan (2009) |
| Day 3 (Sunday) | Assessment in Career Counseling  
Personality Assessment  
Behavioral Assessment  
Child Assessment  
Assessment with Couples and Families  
Exam 1 | Required Readings:  
Whiston (2017) Chapters 11, 12, 13, & 14 |
| Day 4 (Friday) | Monitoring and Evaluating Counseling  
Ethical and Legal Issues in Assessment  
Assessment with Diverse Populations  
Risk Assessment  
**Leading Group Discussions** | Required Readings:  
Whiston (2017) Chapters 5, 6, & 16  
Supplemental Readings:  
Jobes & Drozd (2004);  
Jobes, Jacoby, Cimbolic & Hustead (1997);  
Polanski & Hinkle (2000) |
| Day 5 (Saturday) | Clinical Versus Statistical Prediction  
Heuristics and Biases/De-Biasing Strategies  
Clinical Judgment  
Therapeutic Assessment | Required Readings:  
Day 5 Continued

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<td>Group 3 Presentation</td>
<td>Spengler, White, Ægisdóttir, Maugherman, Anderson, Cook, et al. (2009)</td>
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Day 6 (Sunday)

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<td>Group 5 Presentation</td>
<td>Reflection Paper</td>
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<td>Group 6 Presentation</td>
<td>Psychological Masquerade</td>
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<td>Exam 2 - Final</td>
<td>Psychosocial/Assessment Report (Due on 12/06/2018)</td>
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Assignments Due:
- Reflection Paper
- Psychosocial/Assessment Report (Due on 12/06/2018)

Supplemental Readings:
Taylor (2007) Chapters 1 & 3

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**Academic Conduct:** Cheating on examination, submitting work of other students as your own, or plagiarism in any form will result in penalties ranging from an “F” on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Student Handbook: http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html

**Professional Conduct:** Students are expected to adhere to the appropriate code of ethics for their particular program. Any behavior deemed unethical will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

**Disability Statement:** Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

**Diversity Statement:** The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty and staff within CEBS will be accepting of differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and world views may be different from their own. Furthermore, as stated by UNC, “The University will not engage in unlawful discrimination in…educational services against any person because of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, or veteran status. It is the University’s policy to prohibit discrimination in…educational services on the basis of sexual orientation or political affiliation.”
Please visit the CEBS Diversity and Equity Committee website for more information on our commitment to diversity (http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity).

**Equity and Inclusion Statement:** The University of Northern Colorado embraces the diversity of students, faculty, and staff, honors the inherent dignity of each individual, and welcomes their unique perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews. In this course, people of all races, religions, national origins, sexual orientations, ethnicities, genders and gender identities, cognitive, physical, and behavioral abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, immigrant statuses, military or veteran statuses, size and/or shapes are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. Course content and campus discussions will heighten your awareness to each other’s individual and intersecting identities. The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities (located in Decker Hall) serves as resource to anyone seeking support or with questions about equity and inclusion at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). If you area witness to or experience acts of bias at UNC and would like to learn more about bias response or report a bias incident, please visit Bias Response at http://www.unco.edu/biasresponse/

**Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement:** The University of Northern Colorado prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination of any kind. UNC is legally obligated to investigate sexual misconduct (including, but not limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence). If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a faculty member, they have an obligation to report it to UNC’s Title IX Coordinator. “Disclosure” may include communication in-person, via email/phone/text message, or through in/out of class assignments. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact the UNC Counseling Center (970-351-2496) or the Assault Survivors Advocacy Program (970-351-4040). If you would like to learn more about sexual misconduct or report an incident, please visit www.unco.edu/sexualmisconduct.

**APCE Policy on Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of same and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another's work but also the lifting of a substantial or essential portion thereof. Students who have engaged in the act of plagiarism will be given in an “F” in that course. The matter will be referred to the Review and Retention Committee. The decision of the Committee with regard to plagiarism includes the possibility that the student be dismissed from his or her respective program and from UNC.
Expectations for Group Presentation

____(2) – Thorough review of the assessment tool – purpose of the test or how it can be used as a counseling tool; theoretical background if applicable

____(3) – Standardization, administration/setting, scoring procedures

____(2) – Scales/description

____(3) – Psychometric properties (reliability & validity)

____(20) – Explained and applied assessment tool in an effective manner with the class

____(20) – Individual Presentation and Group Collaboration (professional presentation)

_______(50) TOTAL SCORE FOR GROUP PRESENTATION

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Group Member Evaluation Form

Please rate your group members participation in your group presentation:

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Evaluation of Psychological Tests

***NOTE: This is a sample outline only, more/less information may be needed depending on the test

Author and Date Published: _______________ Length: __________
Publisher: _____________________________ Qualifications: Level ___

I. Purpose – What was it designed to measure and how can it be used? Describe the practical application of the instrument. This may include some or all of the following:
   a. Treatment planning
   b. Intervention
   c. Outcome measure

II. Standardization
   a. Norm Group
   b. Population/Age – What is the age range?
   c. Multicultural Norms
   d. Additional Norms Established

III. Administration/Setting
   a. What type of setting is it used in?
   b. How long does it take to administer?
   c. Is it a self-administered questionnaire?
   d. Can it be adapted for use in interview studies?
   e. Is it administered individually and/or in a group?
   f. Can it be computer administered?
   g. Can it be completed on-line via the internet?
   h. Qualification Level

IV. Theoretical Background – What are the theoretical constructs being measured?

V. Scales/Description
   a. How many items are there?
   b. How many factors/subscales are there?
   c. What do the subscales measure?

VI. Scoring
   a. How is it scored (hand scored or computer scored)?
   b. Range of Scores - What do the scores mean?

VII. Reliability – list all types of reliability tested (e.g. test-retest, Cronbach’s Alpha…). If applicable, include reliability estimates for each subscale and total scale

VIII. Validity – list types of validity that were tested (e.g. Content, Criterion, Construct…)

IX. Strengths

X. Weaknesses

XI. Additional Information (as applicable)
   a. Alternate forms – Are there other versions or forms available (e.g. short-forms)?
   b. Cost – What is included in the cost (e.g. manual, scoring forms/software)?
   c. Publisher – how to obtain the instrument
   d. Journal – list the reference if published in a journal
Outline for a Psychosocial Interview Format

A. Identifying Information
   Identifying information includes the client’s name, gender, age, race/ethnicity, relationship status, SES, education, employment, and referral source. (Note: You can make up a referral source for this assignment)

B. Presenting Problem/Chief Complaint
   The presenting problem/chief complaint is a statement about the client’s problems or concerns that brought him or her in to counseling. This can include concerns related to psychological functioning (e.g., depression or anxiety), occupational functioning, or social functioning (e.g., problems in a current relationship).

C. History of Presenting Problem
   The history of the presenting problem is a chronological history of the client’s complaint that can provide counselors with many diagnostic clues. This history should include elaboration on three main areas:
   - Onset/course: When did the problems begin? Was there a time when the client felt worse or better? Was there any particular pattern?
   - Severity: Do the problems interfere with the client’s life in terms of work, relationships, and leisure pursuits and/or lead to suffering or distress?
   - Stressor: Does the client believe that some external event brought on the problems? Have there been any stressful life events associated with the problem?

D. Family History
   Family history focuses on information about the client’s family background, particularly about any history of psychiatric problems among family members, and may include:
   - Client’s first degree relatives (parents, siblings, and children) and their mental history
   - Information about the client’s parents and siblings—age, education, and occupation
   - Composition of the family during the client’s childhood and adolescence
   - Medical history of family members
   - Quality of the client’s relationships with family members, both past and present
   - Any history of child abuse, substance abuse in the family, domestic violence, or other traumatic experiences
   - Any family history of suicide or violent behavior

E. Relationship History
   Relationship history consists of information about the client’s current living situation, current and previous marital and non-marital relationships, number of children, and the nature of his or her social life and friendships. Questions may include the following:
• How many close friends do you have (aside from spouse/partner)? Describe problems, if any, that you think that you have in developing and keeping friendships.
• Are you in an intimate relationship or married? If yes, for how long?
• Tell me about your previous relationship. How long did it last? What happened?
• Describe problems, if any, that you think you have in developing and keeping intimate relationships.
• Has there ever been any violence in your current intimate relationship?
• Have you ever experienced violence in your past intimate relationships?

F. Developmental History
The purpose of developmental history is to identify risk factors, cultural issues, and system variables (e.g., family, community) associated with the later development of mental disorders. Questions should be focused on known child and adolescent risk factors associated with the development of mental disorders in adulthood including:
• Behavior problems in childhood
• School performance (including failed grades)
• Childhood diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
• Childhood depression
• Child abuse
• Traumas and/or losses during childhood

G. Educational History
Educational history consists of information about the client’s educational level and professional, technical, and/or vocational training. This includes academic performance, failed grades, and social interaction with peers. Questions may include the following:
• Did you graduate from high school? If not, what was the highest grade level achieved?
• Did you go to college or receive technical/vocational training? If yes, describe the area of study.

H. Work History
Work history consists of specific information about current employment status, length of tenure on past jobs, job losses, leaves of absence, and occupational injuries. The following are sample questions:
• Where is your current employment? What is your position? How long have you worked there?
• Where did you last work? What was your position? How long did you work there? Why did you leave? (Note. Ask these questions to document jobs held over a period of several years. Ask about any periods of time when the client did not work.)
Where you ever in the military service? If yes, for how long? Did you experience combat? What was your discharge (e.g., honorable, general, dishonorable)?

I. Medical History
The client’s medical history consists of information about previous and current medical problems (major illnesses and injuries), medications, hospitalizations, and disabilities. Questions may include the following:
- What is your current, overall health?
- Have you ever had a serious medical illness or injury?
- Have you ever been hospitalized for a medical problem?
- Are you taking any medications related to a medical problem?

J. Substance Use
Every interview should include questions about alcohol and drug use even if it is not part of the client’s presenting problem. Often, individuals who seek counseling have existing substance use problems, but they do not cite the substance use as a presenting problem to the counselor. It is important to rule out alcohol or drug use as the underlying cause or contributor to a client’s difficulties. It is often helpful to begin with questions about behaviors that are consistent with problematic substance use such as:
- Do you drink coffee? Caffeinated? If yes, how many cups per day?
- Do you smoke (e.g., cigarettes)? If yes, how much do you smoke? For how long have you smoked? Have you tried to quit?
- Have you smoked in the past? If yes, when did you quit?

After asking about caffeine and smoking, move on to questions about alcohol and drug use such as the following:
- Do you enjoy a drink now and then? If yes, what kinds (e.g., beer, wine, distilled spirits)?
- In the last week, how many days did you drink alcohol (every day, 4-5 times, 1-2 times)?
- How much do you drink in one day (a case of beer, 12-pack, 6-pack, 1 to 2 beers)? How many drinks can you hold?
- Do you sometimes drink or use drugs more than you planned?
- Have you used any drugs in the past year? If yes, what kinds? (Be sure to ask about prescription drugs.)
- Have you ever had an arrest for driving under the influence of had other legal problems associated with drinking or using drugs?

K. Legal History
Legal history entails a description of past or current involvement with the legal system. This may include warrants, arrests, detentions, convictions, probation, or parole as an adult as well as involvement with the juvenile justice system.
Do you have any past or current involvement with the legal system (e.g., warrants, arrests, detentions, convictions, probation, parole)?

Do you have any past or current involvement with the court system (e.g., family court, workers compensation dispute, civil litigation, court-ordered psychiatric treatment)?

I. Previous Counseling

The history of previous counseling includes a chronological summary of the previous counseling sought by the client and their perceived benefit (or lack thereof). Questions about previous counseling include the following:

- Have you ever been to counseling before (as an adult or a child)? If yes, why? How long did treatment last? Was it helpful?
- Have you ever been hospitalized for a psychiatric problem? If yes, why?
- Have you ever been on medications for psychiatric problems (e.g., antidepressants)?