CNS 736: APPRAISAL PROCEDURES FOR COUNSELORS (3 credit hours)
Fall, 2015
Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.
Wake Forest University
Carswell 205

Professor: Shannon P. Warden, PhD, LPCS
Office: Carswell 224
Phone: 336-758-2492
Email: wardensp@wfu.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:
In this course, we will study the selection, use, and interpretation of tests in counseling as an adjunct to clinical impressions. More specifically, our focus will be on the appraisal, assessment, and diagnosis of personality, emotional, intellectual, and learning characteristics and disorders of clients in schools, colleges, and community human service agencies. As part of our studies, you will gain a better understanding of psychometrics, norming practices, cultural considerations, and ethical practice as these all relate to appraisal.

Methods of Instruction:
Primary methods of instruction will include, but not be limited to, lecture, class discussion, review of audio/video clips, assignment of an assessment-related research project, and completion of a final exam. You also will review or take several psychological tests throughout the semester as a way of experiencing and understanding assessment firsthand. Many of these tests are available free online or will be provided at no charge by the Department of Counseling.

Goals/Objectives:
The following learning goals, or student learning outcomes, for CNS 736 are taken from CACREP’s 2016 standards for clinical mental health counseling programs. These are agreed upon by counseling professionals and counselor educators as some of the most important knowledge that graduates of CACREP-accredited clinical mental counseling programs should possess upon graduation. These also represent competencies that you will want to continue building in preparation for your state licensure exam and for successful employment in the field. Your understanding of these knowledge areas will be assessed through this course during classroom discussion, reflection activities, a research project, and a final exam. Learning goals, or student learning outcomes, for this course are:

- II.F.4.e. strategies for assessing abilities, interests, values, personality and other factors that contribute to career development;
- II.F.4.i. methods of identifying and utilizing assessment tools and techniques relevant to career planning and decision making;
- II.F.5.f. essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills;
- II.F.7.a. historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment;
- II.F.7.b. methods of effectively preparing for and conducting initial assessment meetings;
II.F.7.c. procedures for assessing risk of aggression or danger to others, self-inflicted harm or suicide;
II.F.7.e. use of assessments for diagnostic and intervention planning purposes;
II.F.7.f. basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, and group and individual assessments;
II.F.7.g. statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations;
II.F.7.h. reliability and validity in the use of assessments;
II.F.7.i. use of assessments relevant to academic/educational, career, personal, and social development;
II.F.7.j. use of environmental assessments and systematic behavioral observations;
II.F.7.k. use of symptom checklists, personality, and psychological testing;
II.F.7.l. use of assessment results to diagnose developmental, behavioral, and mental disorders; and
II.F.7.m. ethical and culturally and developmentally relevant strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and test results.

Requirements:

We will discuss these further in class. I am happy to answer questions and clarify information.

Attendance: Missing class is discouraged. Missing more than two class periods will result in a failing grade for the course except for extraordinary and unanticipated circumstances. Please use your allowed absences sparingly so as not to jeopardize your final grade for the course. Please be mindful of regularly arriving late or leaving early, as this will affect your participation grade.

Participation: You will be expected to participate fully in all components of this course. This includes our time in lecture, class discussion, and class activities. By participation, I mean that you are physically, mentally, intellectually, and emotionally engaged in class. Don’t be afraid to share ideas or respectfully challenge ideas. More talkative students should guard against monopolizing classroom discussions; less talkative students should push themselves to speak up and share their insights and questions.

Participation will include completion of the various psychological tests that you will be asked to complete over the course of the semester. In addition to taking the tests, you’ll also be expected to engage in reflection and class discussion about the tests.

Participation for this course will account for 15% of your final course grade. At the end of the semester, when calculating your final course grade, I will evaluate your participation based, first, on the quality, and second, on the perceived frequency of your engagement in class discussions and activities. This is a subjective grade on my part, and as such, I will let you know if and how at any point in the semester I believe you could improve your participation efforts.
Evidence of contemplation: We will discuss contemplative learning on the first day of the semester and periodically throughout the semester. Generally though, contemplative learning relates to personally meaningful reflection and learning that is generated by way of that reflection. My hope is that during this semester, you will actively and intentionally focus on assessment, watching and listening for how assessment is being used and discussed in the world around you, including at your internship site. “Evidence” of this focus should ideally be most manifest internally in your own thoughts, insights, and curiosity about assessment. However, I ask that you produce external evidence in one of any number of possible formats. Examples of possible formats include: written journals, video journals, scrapbooks, photo essays, artwork, metaphors, and written essays. I am also open to other possibilities, so feel free to consult with me about your plan for this assignment.

At this time, the most appropriate rubric I have for “grading” this assignment is the Reflection Paper/Journal Rubric although you are encouraged to replace “paper” for another term should you choose a non-written format to demonstrate evidence of your contemplation of assessment. This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade. Do what you believe to be worthy of 10% of your final grade. As a way of providing some structure without limiting you, I recommend that you somehow convey a minimum of 3 personal reflections or insights that arise for you during the course of the semester. Furthermore, I recommend that it be evident that you spent a combined minimum of at least 30 minutes constructing your “evidence of contemplation.”

Locate an in-take form: Early in the semester, you should identify a site/practitioner where/from whom you will obtain an in-take form. Most ideal is that you bring from your internship site the form the site uses for in-take meetings. If your site does not have a form, you may contact or visit another place/person to actually obtain a form, or you may locate one online. Once you have a form, evaluate the form and type two bulleted lists—one labeled “like/makes sense” and one labeled “don’t like/doesn’t make sense.” The form you choose should be substantive enough that you are able to produce two substantive lists of likes/dislikes (between 10 and 20 bullets for each list). On the due date, bring your list and your assessment form to class for group discussion. This assignment (the bulleted lists) is worth 5% of your final course grade.

Administer the Self-Directed Search: Earlier in the semester, you will take the Self-Directed Search (SDS) online for yourself as a way of familiarizing yourself with the instrument. Then, I will provide you with a second online administration of the SDS so that you can administer it for another person. Along with administering the SDS, you will complete a questionnaire that asks about the experience, the client’s reaction and input about the process, and your thoughts on the SDS. Use this assignment as an opportunity to continue practicing building rapport, explaining test administration, and debriefing with a client following an assessment. This assignment is worth 15% of your final course grade.

Research project: This assignment is graded in two sections: 30% of your final course grade will be based on the content of your project; 10% will be based on your presentation of the content. Early in the semester, you will choose an assessment instrument, or test, of interest to you, and then across the semester, research that instrument in a comprehensive manner. Ideally, you should focus your research on an instrument that you foresee yourself
using in a counseling setting or with a population of interest to you. This will make your research more personally meaningful. I would prefer that no two students research and present on the same instrument, and so to help accomplish this goal, we will “draw” for choice on the second day of class. You will notice in the schedule that I have made time for presentations based on their relevance to our reading for a particular week. Please factor this in when selecting your presentation date.

For the content portion of this project, you should use a minimum of 7 scholarly sources (peer-reviewed journal articles, Mental Measurements Yearbook, or other professor-approved source). You may use your textbook as one of your resources.

For the presentation portion of this project, plan on taking 10 minutes for your presentation and then being able to field and answer questions for up to 5 minutes.

Here again, many possibilities exist for how you may want to approach the content portion of your project. Examples of possible formats include writing a traditional research paper, creating a 3-panel poster such as those presented at professional conferences, designing a newsletter about your test of choice, or creating some type of video or podcast about your test. I am open to your ideas about format, so please feel free to consult with me about your plan for this assignment.

As a way of providing some structure without limiting you, I recommend that you clearly demonstrate your understanding of and integration of the required minimum 7 scholarly resources; that you clearly demonstrate your study of the test’s psychometric properties, strengths, limitations, and population-specific considerations; and that you clearly demonstrate a time investment worthy of 30% of your final grade. I furthermore recommend that if writing a paper, you write a minimum of 7 content pages (this number doesn’t include title, abstract, and references pages); that if doing a newsletter, you create it such that an average reader may require between 10 and 15 minutes to fully read it; that if doing a video or podcast, you create it such that it runs for 10 to 15 minutes; and that if doing a 3-panel poster, you create one that would be presentable at a professional conference. In summary, whatever format you choose to present your information should require you the same amount of time. Having a choice of format merely allows you some creativity and flexibility in how you approach your project. In all aspects of your project, remember to use APA style.

For the presentation portion of your project, you have the same freedom as you have with the content portion. However you decide to structure your 10-minute presentation (plus 5 minutes of Q&A), at a minimum, I recommend that you are informative (teach us about your test), creative (grab our attention), and interactive (involve us in ways that keep our attention without taking away from your responsibility and desire to inform us). But above all of these elements, you must educate on the instrument you chose to research.

The content portion of this project will be graded using the Written Assignment Rubric. Please talk with me if you have questions about how I might adapt that rubric for something other than a “written” assignment. The presentation portion of this project will be graded using the Presentation Rubric.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will count as 15% of your final course grade. Early in the semester, I will provide you with a “reading guide/exam study guide” to help you focus your reading in preparation for the exam. The exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and fill-
in-the-blank questions that come directly from our textbook. I will provide additional details about the exam closer to the end of the semester, but in general, you will take this timed, open-book exam via Sakai.

**Required Text:**


**Evaluation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of contemplation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate an in-take form</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administer the SDS</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research project</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale:**

- 93.5 - 100  A
- 90 – 93.4  A-
- 87 – 89.9  B+
- 83.5 – 86.9  B
- 80 – 83.4  B-
- 77 – 79.9  C+
- 73.5 – 76.9  C
- 70 – 73.4  C-
- 69.9 – below  F

**Our tentative course schedule is provided in a separate document.**

**Final Note:** Let’s keep the lines of communication open! Please feel free to share with me if at any time during the semester you have questions, concerns, great new ideas, etc., related to this course. I continually seek to improve my knowledge of best practices, both in counseling and in counselor education, and I appreciate constructive student feedback. You can assist me by sharing your ideas in a respectful and positive manner. Together, we create an outstanding learning experience!