Course Syllabus – PSY 631: Industrial and Personnel Testing (i.e., Personnel Selection)
Spring Semester 2013, Thursday, 10:30am-1:10pm (Robinson A 349)

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Office hours: Wednesdays from 10-11am and by appointment


Objectives
This course is an advanced graduate seminar designed to provide an overview of personnel selection from the perspective of industrial/organizational psychology. My goal is that each of you will develop: (1) familiarity with constructs central to selection research and practice, (2) an understanding of contemporary perspectives of (and debates regarding) selection, (3) an ability to apply empirical research findings to real-world selection problems, (4) practice communicating about selection-related issues to non-academic audiences, and (5) critical thinking skills regarding research, theory, and practice of IO psychology.

Grading
Class participation (10%)
Discussion facilitation (10%)
Job analysis project (15%)
Validation project (20%)
SIOP discussion post (10%)
Research Proposal (35%: Outline- 5%, Paper- 25%, Discussion Post- 5%)

Class Participation & Discussion Facilitation Responsibilities
It is essential that you be present and participative in class discussion. To improve class discussion, I will ask one person to be responsible for facilitating discussion about each article or chapter. Given the size of the class, this will likely translate into each person being responsible for 3 different articles during the course of the semester. Please note that this responsibility does not absolve you from having questions, ideas, and opinions about other articles. Thus, your overall class participation grade will be based on (a) voicing your reflections on the readings (e.g., by noting positive contributions and constructive criticisms), (b) getting others in the class involved (e.g., by asking questions, having stimulating discussion/debate), (c) contributing information and experiences that supplement the readings, and obviously (d) attending class and being on time.

Job Analysis Project
The goal of this assignment is to give you some exposure (albeit abbreviated) to the process and outcomes of job analysis. In this exercise, you will practice conducting an interview and direct observation for a job. The job can be one that you are interested in or one that you have easy access to (e.g., consultant, coffee shop worker).

The requirements of the assignment are:
- Select a job that you have some interest in/or familiarity with.
- Select a person who holds that position (cannot be yourself).
- Conduct an initial interview and a direct observation. (Your interview should be 15-30 minutes in length, and your observation should be at least 30 minutes in length.)
- Create a list of task statements; categorize them in an organized fashion. (Should have ~50 task statements - real job analyses have 300-500. Use ONET and the SME information.)
- Create corresponding KSAOs for each task.
- Evaluate the tasks and KSAOs on frequency and importance.
- Write a one-page description of how you conducted the job analysis, and how the results could be used to make personnel decisions.
- Turn in the one-page description, task statements, KSAOs, and KSAO ratings.

It is absolutely imperative that the interview and observation conducted as part of this assignment be conducted in an ethical manner consistent with the basic practices used in human subjects research. In other words, although this is a class...
project and not a research endeavor, your interviewees should be informed of the basic procedures, guaranteed complete confidentiality, given the opportunity to withdraw from the interview at any time without consequence, and be debriefed regarding the purpose of the interview.

Validity Project

The purpose of this project is to give you hands-on experience working on applied topics in the area of personnel selection. I would like you to approach this project from a “consulting” perspective. In other words, your response to this project should be in the form of a technical report, and will be graded on both technical adequacy and “readability.” As detailed below, you will need to write a technical report (with an executive summary) outlining your expert opinion regarding the fairness and utility of a battery of selection tests. The data for this project will be available on the course website. I reserve the right to make minor changes to the following questions (mostly with hopes of clarifying any questions that arise).

Imagine that you have been asked to analyze an existing selection system for the job that you considered in the previous assignment. Incumbents have participated in battery of tests and been rated on their overall performance as detailed in the data file provided on the website. An example of the information (and tabular format) that might be included can be found in the Gael et al. (1975) paper provided on Blackboard.

Given the data, first advise the organization regarding optimal prediction of performance of new hires. Be sure that you compare alternative approaches to combining the predictors. You might consider using expectancy tables to help convey the basis for your recommendations, but this is NOT required. (It would be good practice for those of you who anticipate performing selection projects in future jobs.)

Second, assume that the performance of half of the current force is considered to be successful. Use the Taylor-Russell tables (on Blackboard) and the composite predictor validity to make statements about the utility of this test battery for situations in which the selection ratio is .10, .50, and .90.

Third, assume that an internal study based on SME evaluations determined that the standard deviation of performance in these positions reflects $5,000 to the organization. Assume that the testing and recruitment costs for each applicant are $900 and that 100 workers are needed. Using the composite predictor validity and performance scores of incumbents (assume that the top half of the current workers would be selected under the new system), compute the utility of this selection test battery according to the Brogden model for selection ratios of .10, .50, and .90.

Fourth, evaluate the extent to which use of your composite predictor will result in differential selection and/or differential validity with respect to race. Using your predictor as a basis for your rank ordering, do adverse impact analyses for selection ratios of .10, .50, and .90 assuming a top-down strategy of test use with regard to race. Interpret your findings and indicate what you would advise the organization given your results with respect to both bias and adverse impact.

SIOP Discussion Post

One of the most efficient ways to learn about contemporary issues in selection is to attend conferences in which these topics are discussed. For this assignment, you will need to attend at least one selection-related session (at least one symposium presentation or at least one poster) at SIOP (or PTC, if you cannot attend SIOP). You should create a Blackboard post that represents a brief (one-page) summary of the presentation that includes a description of the topic, method, and results, as well as your own reflections on the insights gleaned from the presentation. In addition to your own post, you should comment on AT LEAST one other student’s post.

Research Proposal (Outline/Paper/Discussion Post)

One of the major goals of this seminar is to get you to focus on research in personnel selection. As such, you will work in small groups of 2-4 people to develop a research proposal as part of your participation in this seminar. The proposal counts for a large portion of your grade (i.e., 35%), and will include three distinct parts; an outline that you will turn in to me (5%); a summary posted for the class on Blackboard (5%) and a written proposal (25%). The topic of the proposal is your choice, but it must be relevant to course content, written in APA style, and it should be around 12-15 pages in length.

Grading criteria for the proposal are: adequacy of literature review, rationale for hypotheses, meaningfulness of research question, feasibility of the study (it should be something that can actually be done), soundness of proposed methodology and analysis, and clarity of presentation (including APA style). The Blackboard post should represent a brief (200-500 word) description of your idea that could be understood by a non-academic audience (like HR Magazine or Fortune). In addition to making a post for your own group, each member of your group should comment on AT LEAST one other group’s post.
Disabilities and special needs
If you are a student with disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 709-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Academic Integrity
You are expected to follow the George Mason University Honor Code. Any form of scholastic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) can result in a variety of negative consequences (not the least of which is failing this course).

Email Communication
Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

Course Schedule
Topics, readings, and assignments tentatively follow the schedule below. Due dates for class assignments will not be moved up, but dates for seminar topics might. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. All assignments should be submitted via email. Five percent will be deducted for every day an assignment is late.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>Assign facilitation responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>C&amp;A Ch. 1 (Ch. 3 rec.) Salgado, 2001 Schmitt et al., 2003 SIOP Principles, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>Analyzing Jobs</td>
<td>C&amp;A Ch. 9 Brannick &amp; Levine, 2002 Lievens et al., 2010 Morgeson &amp; Campion, 1997 Sanchez &amp; Levine, 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>C&amp;A Ch. 4 Campbell, 1999 Murphy &amp; Shiarella, 1997 Miner &amp; Glomb, 2010 Rotundo &amp; Sackett, 2002</td>
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<td>3/7</td>
<td>Bias &amp; Legal Issues</td>
<td>C&amp;A Ch. 8 (Ch. 2 rec) Campion et al., 2001 Hough, Oswald, &amp; Ployhart, 2001 McDaniel et al., 2011 Ployhart et al., 2008</td>
<td>Job Analysis Due Paper Outline Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Predictors</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
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<td>3/14</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)</td>
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<td>3/21</td>
<td>Week 8 Predictors (1)</td>
<td>Past Behavior</td>
<td>LORs, Biodata, Interviews</td>
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<td>3/24</td>
<td>Week 8 Predictors (2)</td>
<td>GMA, Personality, AC</td>
<td>C&amp;A Ch 13, Kanfer &amp; Kantrowitz, 2002, Arthur, Bell, &amp; Villado, 2006, Morgeson et al., 2007, Collins et al., 2003, McDaniel et al., 2007</td>
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<td>4/11</td>
<td>Week 10 SIOP</td>
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<td>Attend Selection Session</td>
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<td>5/2</td>
<td>Presentations and Wrap Up</td>
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<td>5/9</td>
<td>Final Exam Period</td>
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<td>Final Paper Due 10:30am</td>
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References


