Syllabus

Course Title: School Psychology Practicum I (1 credit)
Catalog Number: PSYC 750-001
Class Location: GMU Center for Psychological Services Classroom
Class Schedule: Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m. (schedule for group supervision listed below)
Instructor: Grover C. Foehlinger, Jr., Ph.D.
GMU Center for Psychological Services, 202G
703-993-5127
gfoehlin@gmu.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:00-4:00 p.m. & Thursdays, 2:00-4:00 p.m. by appointment
Supervisors: Mittie T. Quinn, Ph.D.
Therapy & Assessment Center of Fairfax
mquinn2@gmu.edu
Slavomir Zapata, Ph.D.
Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center
slavomir.zapata@gmail.com

Course Description

PSYC 750 is a one credit-hour practicum that provides graduate students in school psychology with supervised field experience in cognitive assessment. Students conduct individual cognitive assessments of children who have been referred to the GMU Cognitive Assessment Center under direct and individual supervision of a licensed psychologist. In addition, students participate in group supervision to enhance skills in assessment.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this course is to prepare graduate students in school psychology to conduct, interpret, and report assessments of cognitive functioning in children and adolescents.

Students will attain the goal by demonstrating competence in the following objectives:

- Conduct diagnostic interviews with parents and school-aged children
- Enhance proficiency in administration, scoring, and interpretation of individual cognitive assessments
- Prepare written psychological reports that accurately communicate relevant results of cognitive assessment to parents and school professionals
• Communicate results of individual cognitive assessments to parents accurately and professionally in feedback sessions
• Interact with all clients in a manner that is consistent with standards of practice and professional ethics

Course Structure and Requirements

Students are required to complete a total of five cognitive assessments, prepare written reports for the assessments, and provide feedback to parents regarding the results. In most cases, the referral question for the assessment is the child’s eligibility for admission to Advanced Academic Program (AAP) placement in a local school district.

Students receive referrals directly through the GMU Cognitive Assessment Center. Work on all cases must be conducted under direct supervision of the psychologist who is assigned to work with the student, and students are responsible for coordinating consultation with the supervisor. In addition, students are expected to participate in seminar for group supervision as scheduled by the instructors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>01/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>01/30</td>
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<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>02/20</td>
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<td>#4</td>
<td>03/20</td>
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<td>#5</td>
<td>04/10</td>
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<td>#6</td>
<td>05/01</td>
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Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with relevant laws; standards of professional practice; ethical principles of psychologists; and policies of the university, department, GMU Cognitive Assessment Program, and the GMU Center for Psychological Services. Students who have questions about these expectations should consult with the instructor, clinical supervisor, or program director.

Grading

A final grade for the course is derived on performance of the assigned activities. The following factors are weighted in determining a grade:

• Quality of written reports for five cognitive assessments * 50%
• Quality of interactions with clients, i.e., interview with child, feedback session with parent, etc. 20%
• Accuracy of test administration, scoring, and interpretation 20%
• Adherence to standards of practice and policies of the GMU Cognitive Assessment Program and GMU Center for Psychological Services 10%
Quality of written reports is determined by the supervisor based on the attached scoring rubric. Multiple drafts are typically required on the first several cases before a supervisor approves the final report. For the first three reports, the grade is based on the final report; for the last two reports, the first draft submitted for review is graded.

Numerical grades are converted to letter grades at the end of the course:

A  =  93-100
A- =  90-92
B+ =  87-89
B  =  83-86
B- =  83-80

Be aware that violations of ethical principles may result in dismissal from the course, and violations of program policies may result in sanctions or other disciplinary action.

Timely completion of assessments, written reports, and feedback meetings is essential to fulfill requirements of the course. The following deadlines are strongly recommended for final completion of the five written reports:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report #</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>February 13, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>March 6, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>March 27, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>April 17, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>May 6, 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students must complete and submit all final reports by May 14 in order to receive a grade for the course. If extenuating circumstances preclude a student from completing all five cases by the due date, the student may request a grade of “Incomplete.” The student is responsible for initiating the request in writing to the instructor before the end of the semester, and the request should include a rationale for why the extension is needed. Approval of such requests is at the discretion of the instructor.

University Policies and Procedures

Academic policies and procedures are established by the University’s College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Additional information about these policies and procedures can be found at http://chss.gmu.edu/gradpolicies.

Dates & Deadlines: Students should be cognizant of the following deadlines established by the Registrar:

- Last Day to Add Course: January 29, 2013
- Last Day to Drop Course without Penalty: January 29, 2013
- Last Day to Drop Course with 67%-tuition Penalty: February 22, 2013
• Spring Break: March 11–17, 2013
• Last Day of Classes: May 6, 2013
• Exam Period: May 8–14, 2013

Official Communications via GMU E-mail: GMU uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. 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.

Honor Code: Academic integrity is an expectation and obligation. By enrolling in this course, students are bound by the University’s Honor Code, [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/9798/honorcod.html](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/9798/honorcod.html). They must also be mindful of ethical principles established by the National Association of School Psychologists and the American Psychological Association.

Accommodations: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with disabilities. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703-993-2474 and to notify the instructor of any requests for accommodations (e.g., extended time, large type, etc.) during the first week of the semester. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the Disability Resource Center.

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**Recommended Resources**


## Rubric for Scoring Cognitive Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Cautions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Style &amp; Clarity of Writing</td>
<td>Report includes no errors in grammar, spelling, or syntax; content is well organized; language accurately communicates information in a manner that is meaningful to parents or teachers.</td>
<td>Check for consistent use of present, past and future verb tense and use of pronouns; run “spellcheck” and “grammarcheck” on each draft; search and destroy “buzz” words and jargon; explain any technical terms that appear in the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Identifying Information and Header</td>
<td>Client information must be accurate, properly formatted, &amp; complete; headers on additional pages match.</td>
<td>Double-check data, especially birthdates and age; be sure to change the header on each report; verify that the child’s name and gender are accurate throughout the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reason for Referral</td>
<td>Who is referring? What are the specific questions for which answers are sought?</td>
<td>Report stated reason for referral, even if results lead to unexpected conclusion; be concise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assessment Techniques</td>
<td>Cognitive assessment used; list other sources of information if used, e.g., interview, observation, etc.</td>
<td>Include test acronyms, (e.g., WISC-IV) following formal &amp; complete name; italicize titles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Background Information</td>
<td>Relatively brief background (3 to 4 paragraphs); include educational information (grades, favorite subjects, results from previous cognitive tests); extracurricular activities &amp; social functioning; family constellation; developmental &amp; medical history (any medications); primary language if other than English.</td>
<td>Include information relevant to the referral question and/or the test findings &amp; recommendations; be sure to attribute source of information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Specifically describe (rather than label) behaviors observed which could be relevant to the results, e.g., child checked his/her work carefully, did not elaborate on responses, etc.</td>
<td>Include your assessment of the validity of results and reasons for your judgment (this can be in a separate short section or paragraph).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Test Results</td>
<td>Accurate scoring, appropriate deductions made, logical connections made; note exceptional results.</td>
<td>Include brief descriptions of tests and relevant subtests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Summary and Conclusions</td>
<td>State major findings completely but succinctly; include most important results &amp; interpretation.</td>
<td>Briefly state highlights or “take-home” points of the assessment; some readers look only at the summary &amp; recommendation sections, so include relevant findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Link relevant results to both referral questions &amp; results.</td>
<td>Section can be brief for cognitive assessments, e.g., “This report of a psychological evaluation may be considered in determining educational services that best meet the child’s academic needs. If you have any questions or if we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call. We can be reached at the George Mason University Cognitive Assessment Program, (703) 993-4200.” Note that recommendations are typically detailed and individually tailored for comprehensive assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Summary of Scores</td>
<td>Scores should be reported in an accurate, well-organized, &amp; complete format; check &amp; double-check accuracy of standard scores.</td>
<td>Double-check for accuracy of scores and transcription from protocols; organize the scoring tables in the same fashion as your narrative &amp; use same test names &amp; headers.</td>
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N.B.: The grade for the written report is based on the **final** document for the first three cases; for the last two cases, the **first draft submitted for review** is graded.