COURSE SYLLABUS

Overview and Goals

Students continue the second semester of their two-semester course sequence in Practicum in Child Assessment. Students will continue their placements in the on-campus PEER clinic and local school systems, where they will conduct an additional 4 comprehensive evaluations of referred children. For PEER cases, students are supervised by the course instructor, and for school cases, they receive supervision from both the on-site school supervisor and course instructor. The expectation for the spring is that students will become increasingly autonomous in applying knowledge and skills to conduct psycho-educational assessments. Test protocols continue to be reviewed by the course’s teaching assistant (Jon O’Loughlin).

A major goal of the course is the systematic application of concepts, strategies, and tools to the process of diagnostic assessment. In so doing, students will engage in the following activities throughout the semester: (Note: These activities are consistent with developing NASP competencies 2.1, 2.4, and 2.8):

1. Identify and clarify the referral questions, conduct a record review, and plan an evaluation;
2. Interview children, parents, teachers, and/or others involved in the care or education of the child;
3. Observe children in the classroom and during the evaluation process;
4. Administer an appropriate battery of psycho-educational tests (e.g., cognitive, achievement, developmental, social-emotional-behavioral measures);
5. Score, interpret, and write up test results;
6. Integrate and synthesize material from a variety of tests and other sources in relation to the referral issues and formulate recommendations for interventions;
7. Effectively communicate interpretations and recommendations in written form;
8. Effectively communicate information from the evaluation orally to parents, teachers, other professionals, and/or the examinee as appropriate;
9. Reflect on professional practice following the scientist-practitioner model by synthesizing information from various assessment sources with research and theory;
10. Attend the relevant meetings in the school settings, when possible.

Please note the assumptions about assessment outlined by Dr. Teglasi in the fall semester:

• Assessment is conducted for the purpose of understanding the concerns presented about the child to make informed decisions and select appropriate intervention strategies.
• A “problem” is understood in relation to the whole child as he or she interacts in various contexts (family, school, community) and responds to various situations and tasks.
• Assessment is not a matter of giving tests and reporting test scores. Rather, it is a systematic process of gathering information requiring insight and judgment. Competent assessments demand an open mind and careful examination of various sources and types of data, including prior history, current concerns, performance/behaviors in various life contexts, and responses to the administered measures, as well as reports obtained from various sources.
• Various theoretical perspectives give rise to specific assessment principles and strategies. A flexible repertoire of theoretical constructs and assessment tools best equips students to tackle the range of presenting problems encountered.
• Competence in diagnostic assessment requires the synthesis of a broad knowledge base (development, psychopathology, individual differences, measurement theory) and mastery of specific tools and strategies. These competencies cannot be taught formulaically in step-by-step or cookbook fashion. Rather, students synthesize concepts and models that are woven together during supervision of individual case studies so that theory and practice are systematically integrated.

• Assessment data are placed into context in three ways (Teglasi et al., 2012): (1) child as context – each data point is understood in the context of the whole child; the various attributes within a child team up to face the environment; (2) child of context – what has been learned or not learned from past experience continues to influence current functioning, hence a developmental perspective is taken; and (3) child in context – functioning depends on the match between the child’s developing resources and the demands of various contexts; the “match” in current and anticipated future contexts is considered.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to access course materials, exchange information among classmates, and submit assignments via Canvas.

Class Participation: This doctoral-level course is taught as a practicum/seminar. Most weeks, there will be assessment activities ongoing from approximately 9 to 11 am, followed by a class meeting from 11 am to 12:15 pm. When students do not have a current PEER case, they are expected to arrive to class on time, observe the ongoing cases from the observation room, and provide feedback to their classmates. During class meetings, discussion will be the primary instructional approach, rather than lecture. Class participation is critical. Students are expected to complete assigned readings, discuss their own cases, and participate in discussions about other students’ cases.

Discussion Topic Leadership: Students will select one topic relevant to a case they are working on and lead the class in a discussion about this topic. Topics might include: assessment considerations for a specific population, information about an assessment instrument, research on a particular intervention, etc. The instructor is available to help students identify topics and relevant readings. Students will need to (a) review background information on the topic, (b) select reading material to distribute to the class at least one week beforehand, and (c) lead a discussion with the class using discussion questions, handouts, or other materials.

Four Completed Psycho-Educational Evaluations: Most students will complete 1 case at the on-campus PEER clinic and 3 cases in the school setting (4 total). For most cases, the test battery will include measures of cognitive functioning, academic achievement, relevant behaviors, and social-emotional functioning. Students should review instruments by reading the manual and practicing administration, becoming familiar with standardized procedures prior to testing sessions. Questions about administration and specific instruments should be raised during class and/or individual supervision. Students are strongly encouraged to work with their on-site school supervisors to identify and begin cases early in the semester, so that cases are completed in mid-May. A case is considered complete when the report has been finalized with signatures and results have been shared with the parents and/or school team in writing and orally. Students should submit the de-identified, password protected,
final reports from their school cases to the course instructor on Canvas as cases are completed throughout the semester. The PEER Manual 2013-2014 should be referenced for additional information about expectations, templates, and forms for the psycho-educational evaluations completed during this course.

**Supervision:** Students will meet regularly with the instructor for individual supervision outside of class time. The instructor will schedule a time to meet with each student on approximately a weekly basis. Students should be active participants in the supervision process. For each supervision session, it is expected that students: (a) submit work ahead of time to be reviewed in the session, (b) provide an update on each ongoing case and plans for next steps, and (c) bring questions and topics for discussion. A timeline for when materials should be submitted will be worked out on an individual basis. The instructor will return submitted work to students within one week (or sooner if possible); students should make revisions as soon as possible in order to complete assessments in a timely manner.

Students are responsible for making sure that reports are submitted to the instructor far enough in advance of deadlines so that they complete all school-based assessments in accordance with school timelines. The suggested timeline for PEER cases is outlined in the PEER manual.

**Two Assessment Plans:** For the PEER case and at least one school case, students should submit an assessment plan outlining their proposed test battery and explaining test instrument selection. The plan should specifically state: (a) what information from the student’s records, previous reports, intake/initial meeting, etc. was used to guide decision making, (b) the purpose of each instrument selected, citing the manual and relevant theory/research as applicable, and (c) initial hypotheses about the referral questions and how these hypotheses will be tested with the chosen battery. Students should submit at least a draft of the assessment plan to the instructor prior to test administration for each case.

**Case Presentation:** Students will select one completed case and show how the data from various sources contributed to the conceptualization and addressed the referral questions. The student will discuss the planning of the assessment battery, integration of data using various methods and sources, hypothesis testing, and application of models or theories. The student will present the completed case to the class (~20 minutes) and lead the class in relevant discussion (~10 minutes). Students should use a visual aid, such as PowerPoint slides or a handout, excluding identifying information to protect client confidentiality.

**Evaluation**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirement</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Topic Leadership</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Completed Cases (2 with Assessment Plans)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5/13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Varies</td>
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*If prior arrangements are made, deadline may be extended.

**Total points possible: 100**

90 – 100 = A, 80 – 89 = B, 70 – 79 = C, 60 – 69 = D, Below 60 = F
Additional Information & Expectations

Accommodations
If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please see the course instructor as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity
In all class work and assignments, it is expected that students adhere to the highest personal and professional standards that reflect both the objectives of the University of Maryland and our professional ethics. Proper citations, paraphrasing, and quotations are essential in all work. Each student’s work is expected to be consistent with the affirmation in our University’s Code of Academic Integrity (I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination/assignment).

Confidentiality and Case Management
Students are expected to engage in ethical and professional behavior and adhere to the APA and NASP confidentiality and case management rules and policies. Proper informed consent must be obtained before engaging in assessment activities. All materials related to cases are to remain confidential. Students must use the password provided by the instructor to encrypt all confidential documents before submitting them to the instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to protect confidential information by using initials and fake names whenever possible. Identifying information should be removed before circulating materials within the class.

Timely Completion of Assignments
Students are expected to complete assignments as specified by the due dates in the syllabus, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Late assignments will not receive full credit unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. All assignments must be completed by the end of the semester in order to avoid a course grade reduction or receipt of a grade of “Incomplete.” Students are responsible for working with their school-based supervisors to ensure that evaluations are completed in accordance within the special education process timelines. Due to the nature of the assessment process, cases not completed by the end of the semester may receive an extension if prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

Attendance
Regular attendance to class is required to successfully complete this course. In the unlikely event that a student becomes ill or must miss class on the day he/she is scheduled for assessment activities, the student should contact the instructor by phone and email as soon as possible. Students who miss class may be asked to complete additional assignments to make up for missed class time.

Course Materials and Readings

Recommended references (students are NOT required to purchase these books for this course)
Practicum in Child Assessment - Part 2  
EDCP 738  
Spring 2014, Thursdays 9 – 12:15 (Schlossberg Conf. Room)


**Readings**

- Manuals for selected test instruments are available through PEER and school sites.  
- DSM V: Available on Canvas and may be accessed through University of Maryland Research Port.  
- Required readings are listed on the Weekly Class Schedule (primarily selected chapters from *The Handbook of School Psychology—4th Edition*, 2009, eds. Gutkin & Reynolds, referred to as “Handbook”) and will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester. Additional required readings will be assigned by the instructor based on relevance to students’ ongoing cases. Students will also assign readings based on Discussion Topics.

**Weekly Class Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Assignments/Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/30</td>
<td>Course overview and review of procedures</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 2/6  | Intake #1 (BEN) and #2 (KEVIN) | Sattler (2006)  
*Review PEER Manual as needed* |
| 2/13 | Testing #1 (BEN) and #2 (KEVIN) | Handbook Chapter 11 (Diagnosis & Classification) |
| 2/20 | **NASP Conference – NO CLASS** | *Attend a relevant assessment presentation at NASP and share with the class – optional* |
| 2/27 | Testing #1 (BEN) and #2 (KEVIN) | Handbook Chapter 25 (Struggling Readers)  
**Assessment Plan #1 due** |
| 3/6  | Testing #1 (BEN) and #2 (KEVIN); Discussion Topic (KATIE) | Readings assigned by Katie |
| 3/13 | Intake #3 (KATIE) and #4 (ALISA) | Handbook Chapter 26 (Children with Math Problems) |
| 3/20 | **Spring Break – NO CLASS** | |
| 3/27 | Testing #3 (KATIE) and #4 (ALISA); Discussion Topic (KEVIN) | Readings assigned by Kevin |
| 4/3  | Testing #3 (KATIE) and #4 (ALISA); Feedback #1 (BEN) | Handbook Chapter 31  
(Psychopharmacology)  
**Assessment Plan #2 due** |
| 4/10 | Testing #3 (KATIE) and #4 (ALISA), Feedback #2 (KEVIN) | Handbook Chapter 34 (Learning Strategies) |
| 4/17 | Case Presentation (KEVIN); Discussion Topic (BEN) | Readings assigned by Ben |
| 4/24 | Case Presentation (BEN) | TBA |
| 5/1  | Feedback #3 (KATIE); Feedback #4 (ALISA) | TBA |
| 5/8  | Case Presentation (KATIE) | TBA |
| 5/13 | **Last day of the semester (no class meeting): All assignments due.** | |

*Note:* Topics/activities may change throughout the semester, and students will be notified of any changes to the weekly schedule during class/on Canvas. Assignments/readings that are optional appear in *italics.*