

Psyc 329 – Psychological Testing

Daniel J. Beal (dbeal@rice.edu)
Phone: (713) 348-3917
Office: 429E Sewall Hall

Class Meets: TR 9:25 AM – 10:40 PM
Location: 101 Sewall Hall
Office Hours: By Appointment

Teaching Assistant

Shu Wang (shu.wang@rice.edu)
Phone: (713) 348-3921

Office: 203C Sewall Hall
Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Course Overview

This course is designed to get you acquainted with the purpose, merits, and faults of a variety of existing psychological tests, as well as to familiarize you with the process of test development and analysis. Because psychological testing is used in virtually all aspects of psychological research and practice, the scope and workload of the course is substantial. Requirements include performing and interpreting statistical analyses related to two lab projects and completing three written examinations. For those of you planning to attend graduate school in psychology, this course provides a solid foundation in the basic principles of measurement. In addition, and particularly for those of you not entertaining graduate education in psychology, this course will provide you with the tools to understand the innumerable tests that populate our modern world and the ability to evaluate their legitimacy.

Goals

As the course instructor, I have several goals for each student to accomplish this term:

1. Understand what psychological tests are and the differences between various types of tests
2. Grasp the fundamental concepts of psychological constructs, validity, and reliability
3. Be able to analyze and interpret data collected as part of a test administration
4. Be able to communicate results of your analyses to a wide audience
5. Have an appreciation for the many different settings in which psychological tests are used

Class Meetings

Classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:25 AM to 10:40 PM in 101 Sewall Hall. This is a computer lab which will be necessary for quite a few classes starting in February. Because class discussion and assigned readings will overlap only partially (particularly the hands-on class meetings in the computer lab), and because several classes depend on the presence of project group members (see below for more details), class attendance is *essential* and will be used in determination of final grades. If you cannot attend class, I would highly recommend dropping the course.

Assigned Readings and Materials Needed for the Course

Kaplan, R. M. & Saccuzzo, D. P. (2008). *Psychological Testing* (7th ed). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

In order to complete the class projects, you will need to become familiar with two computer applications: Microsoft Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which are available through many of the computer labs on campus.

Evaluation

Class Participation

The success of this class is dependent on everyone participating. The main project will be group based will require everyone's help. Therefore, attendance is required. Having everyone "on-board" will make the class much more enjoyable and will satisfy an easy 10% of your final grade.

Exams

There will be two exams during the semester that will count for 60% toward your final grade (30% each). The exams will be based on information contained in the textbook and the lectures. If you miss an exam you must present a well documented excuse in order to avoid getting a grade of zero. I will determine whether such excuses are legitimate or not. If you know that you will miss an exam ahead of time, you must coordinate an early exam time with the TA.

Lab Project

Over the course of the semester, the class will develop a test for some psychological construct of interest, administer the test, and complete a lab project (30% of your grade) that will hone your psychometric skills and evaluate your test. The particular details of the project will be given as we approach the relevant dates on the syllabus, but generally, the project will involve an examination of basic test statistics, reliability, and validity of your test. Although the development and data collection portions of the project will be group efforts, the final project report will be individually completed.

Participation in Psychological Research

This course, as with all psychology courses, encourages students to gain experience with the methods and ideas underlying modern psychological research. These experiences include such things as learning about research through lectures and colloquia, serving as a participant in psychology experiments, and reading research articles. Although such participation is not required for this course, it is encouraged in the form of extra credit. For each hour of research participation, attendance at a psychology departmental colloquium, or 2-page article summary, you will receive an extra half point (.5) on your final grade up to a maximum of 2 points (i.e., 4 "participations").

Honor Code

All aspects of this course are bound by the honor principle. All exam work should be your own, independent work. Also, please refrain from looking at past students' exams. Any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, inadvertently or not, will be reported directly to the honor council. The Rice University Honor Code prevents any exceptions to this rule.

Learning Disabilities

Some students with disabilities (physical, learning, or psychiatric) fail to identify themselves to the professor UNTIL a problem arises. I encourage students with such disabilities, including "invisible" disabilities like chronic diseases, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities to discuss with me at the beginning of the course, after class or during my office hours, appropriate accommodation that might be helpful to you. All discussions will remain confidential. Additionally, students should consider contacting appropriate resources such as the Disabled Student Services in the Ley Student Center.

Grading Policy

Final grades in this course will be calculated based on the following components (note that only three of the four exams will be included in your grade):

30 pts Exam 1
30 pts Exam 2

30 pts Lab Project
10 pts Class Attendance and Participation

100 Possible Total Points

Final Letter Grades will be distributed as follows:

100 – 98 % = A+	97% – 93% = A	92% – 90% = A-
89 – 87 % = B+	86% – 83% = B	82% – 80% = B-
79 – 77 % = C+	76% – 73% = C	72% – 70% = C-
69 – 67 % = D+	66% – 63% = D	62% – 60% = D-
59 – 0% = F		

Final Disclaimer

For unforeseen reasons, it sometimes becomes necessary to adjust the syllabus and/or schedule. Although we will try to follow the format and schedule presented within this syllabus as closely as possible, I may find it necessary to make alterations throughout the semester.

Course Outline

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>
Tue 1/12	Syllabus and Introduction, Basic Terms and Ideas	
Thu 1/14	History and Fundamentals of Testing	K & S, Ch. 1 and 2
Tue 1/19	<i>Construct Selection</i>	
Thu 1/21	Complete Fundamentals and Test Administration	K & S, Ch. 6 and 7
Tue 1/26	<i>Conceptual Definitions of Constructs</i>	
Thu 1/28	Interviewing	K & S, Ch. 8
Tue 2/2	<i>Define/Refine Domain for Constructs</i>	
Thu 2/4	Basic Stats used in Testing	K & S, Ch. 3
Tue 2/9	Begin Reliability	K & S, Ch. 4
Thu 2/11	<i>Start Item Writing for Constructs</i>	
Tue 2/16	Complete Reliability	Review Ch. 4 and notes
Thu 2/18	<i>Revise Items</i>	
Tue 2/23	Begin Validity	K & S, Ch. 5
Thu 2/25	<i>Select Validation Constructs</i>	
2/27- 3/7	<i>Spring Break!</i>	
Tue 3/9	Complete Validity	Review Ch. 5 and notes
Thu 3/11	<i>Mid-Term Exam</i>	
Tue 3/16	Intelligence Testing (begin data collection)	K & S, Ch. 9 & 10
Thu 3/18	Testing Beyond Cognitive Ability	K & S, Ch. 11 & 12
Tue 3/23	Emotional Intelligence	
Thu 3/25	Clinical and Personality Testing	K & S, Ch. 13
Tue 3/30	Close Data Collection, Clean Data	
Thu 4/1	Spring recess!	
Tue 4/6	<i>Reliability and Validity Lab</i>	Hand out Lab

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>
Thu 4/8	GONE TO SIOP (no class)	
Tue 4/13	Projective Tests and Attitudinal Testing	K & S, Ch. 14
Thu 4/15	Item Response Theory	
Tue 4/20	Test Bias	K & S, Ch. 19
Thu 4/22	Final Exam	Lab Due by 4/28