1. Course Description:

This class presents psychological testing as applied in educational and mental health settings. It covers some of the historical development of testing, its social functions, the technology of testing, and tests commonly used in schools and clinics. Social consequences of testing, legal, and public policy issues are also discussed. Given that SW 614 fulfills a requirement for eligibility to become a school social worker, the primary emphasis of this course will be on learning testing and assessment information that will be useful in working in the public schools as a school social worker, and also the course will tend to emphasize testing with children and youth. In addition to the course material, I am aware that, as a current clinician and school psychologist, and former school social worker, I will also be conveying a style and viewpoint of professional practice which may provide an additional model for students as they develop their own identity as a social worker.

2. Course Content:

The content of the course will cover a range of types of assessment techniques focusing on cognitive, learning, projective, personality, rating scale, preschool, neurological, occupational and behavioral assessment approaches. In addition to formal psychological testing, the course will also discuss an array of assessment approaches that are relevant to serving as a school social worker. Particular objectives for the course are listed below:

3. Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the uses of testing and assessment instruments commonly used in mental health and, particularly, in educational settings.
2. Understand the results and interpretations of commonly used psychological tests,
and the relationship of this information to the assessment data that is generated by other professionals on an assessment team i.e., social workers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, etc.

3. Understand the ethical issues related to the use of testing materials and results.
4. Understand and use assessment instruments that are appropriate for social work evaluations.
5. Understand the limitations of testing data including test reliability, validity, measurement error, test bias, and assessment issues related to minority populations.
6. Understand the relationship of tests and testing to the goals of the client, the agency, the community, and the applicable laws and regulations, particularly special education rules.
7. Understand the dynamics of sharing assessment results with clients and families and its impact on placement, program planning, and treatment or interventions.
8. Understand theories of personality, intelligence, learning, communication, and diagnostic systems such that testing and assessment information can be understood in a theoretical context.
9. Understand assessment issues related to special populations/disorders.

4. Course Design

The course will include lectures, demonstrations, readings, and discussions regarding a broad range of assessment issues. Case examples will be presented and discussed and students are encouraged to contribute examples of assessment issues and concerns for discussion.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

• **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be explored through investigating the relationship between types of testing and its potential for differential impact on various populations in regard to such diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation. This will include discussions of incidents of the inappropriate use of testing, both past and present as it pertains to these various populations.

• **Social Justice and Social Change** and its relationship to testing and assessment will be explored particularly as it relates to the impact of assessment methods on inappropriate labeling and/or placement decisions. Emphasis will also be placed on exploring the current national campaign for accountability through systematic testing and the resulting misuse of testing. The impact of intervening variables in test results will also be discussed particularly as they relate to students and communities that are of lower socioeconomic characteristics.
• *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* and the role of testing and measurement will be explored with particular emphasis on the limits of test results in making decisions regarding diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitative decisions.

• *Behavioral and Social Science Research* will be presented in this course to support the theoretical, statistical, and clinical basis for test designs and assessment procedures. Research will also be referenced regarding the beneficial as well as the inappropriate use of tests in particular situations.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

Social work ethics and values will be addressed within the course as they pertain to issues related to working with clients and their parents, and colleagues. The NASW Code of Ethics, and the Ethical Standards of the American Psychological Association documents will be used to give students direction about these ethical issues. In addition, relevant federal guidelines as put forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act will be reviewed in light of their impact on ethical issues related to assessment.

9. Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS)

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate social injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

[Course Statement Approved: Curriculum Committee Meeting Nov. 30, 2006]

Office Hours:

I will be available to meet with students before and after class, and at other times by appointment. Although I work from 8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. each weekend, I am more than willing to meet with students in later afternoon on any day or on the weekends. Email me and ask to meet and I would be happy to set up a time to discuss the course or the profession in general.

Textbooks:

Required:

“Psychological Testing for Social Workers: The Notes” by Steven Foley LMSW MA PhD (available for purchase at beginning of first class session).

Optional Texts: These may be helpful resources for additional information.


Braaten, E. & Felopulos, G. (2004). *Straight Talk about Psychological Testing for Kids*. N.Y.: Guilford Press. [This is a guide designed for parents to advocate on behalf of their children, or for those who seek as advocates for parents.]

**Requirements:**

1. Midterm: take-home exam
2. Final: in class exam
3. Good attendance
4. Class participation
5. Paper (8-10 pages) on a topic related to testing and assessment. Description of paper specifications and suggested topics will be handed out in class)

Requirements #1 through #4 are required activities to be in the B range and only the B range. To have an opportunity to receive a grade in the A range you must also complete requirement #5. Completing #s 1 through 5 does not insure a grade in the A range, it only provides an opportunity for possibly receiving a grade in the A range. For those who elect to do the paper, **due date is July 7th**, no
exceptions.

Schedule:

#1 May 12  **Introduction to Testing and Measurement**  
- History of psychological testing  
- The domain of testing, and testing in perspective  
- Appropriate use of tests and limits of tests  
- Terms used in testing  
**Readings:** Wodrich, pp. 1-3, & Chap. 10

#2 May 19  **Psychometrics**  
- Test construction  
- Reliability, validity  
- Normal curve and standardization  
- Understanding test scores, error factors, score comparisons.  
- Limitations of test scores, and practical applications.  
**Readings:** Wodrich, pp. 3-23, & pp. 163-168.

#3 May 26  **Intelligence Testing**  
- Intelligence theory, history, and controversy  
- The WISC IV  
- Other cognitive tests (DAS, Stanford Binet)  
- Nonverbal IQ tests  
- “Multiple intelligences”, “emotional intelligence”  
**Readings:** Wodrich, pp. 103-131.

#4 June 2  **Cognitive Impairment and Developmental Disabilities**  
- Cognitive impairment, defined officially and practically  
- Spec. Ed. & DSM IV TR guidelines  
- Testing controversy – test bias & related court cases  
- Understanding ways to minimize bias in testing  
- Assessment of developmental disabilities  
**Readings:** Wodrich pps. 87-97, & 313-325

#5 June 9  **Achievement Testing and Learning Theory**  
- Learning Disabilities, dyslexia, the discrepancy model RtI  
- Achievement testing (WIAT II, WRAT, WJ III )  
- History, controversy, uses, and limitations  
- Relationship between academic testing and intervention  
- Common learning strategies  
**Readings:** Wodrich, pps. 144-161 & 168-192.  
**Midterm Handed Out**
#6 June 16  Adaptive Behavior, Visual-motor, Memory Assessment, and Speech and Language Assessments.
- Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale, and the ABAS II
- Visual-motor integration and the Beery VMI
- Memory Scales: the WRAML
- Special Education Definitions,
- Speech and Language: CELF-3, pragmatic speech problems
**Readings:** Wodrich, pps. 80-84, 133-142.

**Midterm Handed In**

#7 June 23  Behavior Rating Scales, Questionnaires, and Structured Interviews
- Factor Analytic designs and the Achenbach CBCL
- Behavior Rating Scales: broad spectrum and disorder specific
- Self Report and other-report inventories
- Structured Interviews
**Readings:** Wodrich, pps. 206-217, 292-293, 300-303, 369-370.

#8 June 30  Projective Testing and Personality Assessment
- Projective testing: Rorschach, TAT, RATC
- Projective testing: sentence completion, projective drawings
- Objective measures: MMPI II & A
- Personality dimension models: NEO-PI
**Readings:** Wodrich, Chap. 7

#9 July 7  Neurological, and Neuropsychological Assessment
- Neuro. & neuropsych. instruments
- Executive Functioning
- Making good referrals
**Readings:** Wodrich, pps. 245-288

**Due Date: Optional Paper Must Be Handed In**

#10 July 14  Behavioral and Emotional Assessment
- General considerations: diagnostic systems, bias, referral processes
- E.I. evaluations, “Social Maladjustment”
- Mental Status Exam
- Strategies for working in the schools
- Assessment of ADHD, autism/Aspergers
**Readings:** Wodrich, p.289-305

#11 July 21  Final Exam (In class exam)