1. Course Description

This course will cover a range of types of testing including cognitive, learning, personality, speech, visual-motor and behavioral assessment approaches. In addition to formal psychological testing, the course will also discuss an array of assessment approaches that are relevant to the role of a school social worker. Because 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 with youth in the educational settings.

2. Course Content

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, and legal, and public policy issues are also discussed. The implication of testing on various 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 will be presented.
3. Course Objectives

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

1. Understand assessment instruments commonly used in mental health and, particularly, in educational settings.
2. Interpret 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. Describe ethical issues related to the use of testing materials and results.
4. Use assessment instruments that are appropriate for social work evaluations.
5. Describe limitations of testing data including test reliability, validity, measurement error, and test bias.
6. Know 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. Conduct effective assessment interviews with parents.
9. Describe assessment issues related to special populations/disorders such as attention disorders, Asperger syndrome, child bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety.

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.

7. **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]

**Students with Unique Circumstances or Learning Challenges:**

Students who have circumstances that could possibly put them at a disadvantage in their participation in the course should bring this to my attention as early in the course as possible. “Unique circumstances” can range from having a chronic condition such as a disability that could affect mobility, concentration, learning, or academic productivity to a transient condition such as temporary environmental stressors, economic factors, or pregnancy that may also have an impact on your learning. My goal is to maximize your learning of the material during the time in my class and this can be done through various accommodations unique to your circumstances. If you feel it would be helpful I would be
happy to meet with you to discuss your situation and, if it is helpful, we could also draw up a set of understandings about what accommodations would be appropriate and helpful for you.

**Textbooks:**

**Required:**


**Highly Recommended:**

“Psychological Testing for Social Workers: The Notes”
- Available for purchase “at cost” ($20 or less) at the beginning of the first class session.
- This packet is the majority of notes for the class, and I have found that it increases the efficiency of the learning to have this in your possession.

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


Braaten, E. & Felopulos, G. (2004). *Straight Talk about Psychological Testing for Kids.* NY: Guilford Press. [This is a guide designed for parents to advocate on behalf of their children, but also contains good basic information.]

**Requirements:**

1. Three Quizzes
2. Good attendance.
3. Class participation.
4. Optional paper (10-12 pages) on topic related to testing and measurement.
NOTE: The grading system contains two options. The option you choose will depend on your particular situation this semester.

Option #1

- You complete requirements #1 through #3 listed above.
- The requirements will be weighted as follows:
  - Quiz #1 25%
  - Quiz #2 25%
  - Quiz #3 25%
  - 3. Class attendance 12.5%
  - 4. Class participation 12.5%
- And if you select Option #1, you will be a candidate for receiving a grade ranging from E up to B+ regardless of how well you do on requirements 1 – 3. You will not be a candidate for receiving a grade in the A range.

Option #2

- You complete requirements #1 through #4 listed above.
- The requirements will be weighted as follows:
  - Quiz #1 20%
  - Quiz #2 20%
  - Quiz #3 20%
  - Class attendance 10%
  - Class participation 10%
  - Optional Paper 20%
- And if you select Option #2, you will be a candidate for receiving a grade ranging from E to A+.

Schedule of Lecture Topics:

#1 Sept. 1  **Introduction to Course and Background to Testing & Measurement**
- The domain of testing; its assets and limitations
- Historical perspectives on testing development
- Ethical guidelines for test use.
- Terms used in testing.
  
  Readings: Wodrich, pps.1-3, & Chap. 10

#2. Sept. 14 **Psychometrics and Understanding Scoring**
- Test construction
- Scores and scoring systems
“Normalcy” and the normal curve
- Understanding test scoring, error factors, score comparisons
- Limitations of test scoring and practical applications
Readings: Wodrich, pps. 3-23, & pps.163-168

#3. Sept. 21 **Intelligence testing**
- Intelligence: history, & theory
- Structure of tests: WISC IV, Stanford-Binet, DAS
- (CHC) cognitive theory and the WJIII Tests of Cognitive ability
- Nonverbal IQ tests
- Testing controversy- test bias and IQ testing of minority populations
- IQ and the nature/nurture controversy
- Multiple intelligences theory
Readings: Wodrich, pps. 103-131

#4. Sept. 28 **Cognitive Impairment and Developmental Disabilities**
- Cognitive impairment, defined officially and practically
- Special Education & 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, & pps.313-325
*Quiz #1 to be taken during the second half of the class session.*

#5. Oct. 5 **Achievement Testing and Learning Theory**
- Evaluation of learning disabilities
- Achievement testing: WIAT II, WRAT4, WJ III Ach
- History, controversy, uses, and limitations of achievement testing
- LD assessments -discrepancy model, dyslexia theory, & RTI models.
- Relationship between academic testing and intervention
- Common learning strategies
Readings: Wodrich, pps. 144-161 & pps.168-192

- Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale II, the ABES
- Bender-Gestalt, Visual-Motor Integration Test
- Memory Scales (WRAML)
- Special Education definitions, CELF-3, Pragmatic speech problems
Readings: Wodrich, pps. 80-84, 133-142

Oct. 19 **No Class**
#7. Oct. 26  **Behavior Rating Scales and Questionnaires**
- Factor analytic designs and the Achenbach’s CBCL
- Broad spectrum & disorder specific disorder scales
- Self report, and other report inventories
- Structured interviews
Readings: Wodrich, pps.206-217, 292-293, 300-303, 369-370
**Quiz #2 to be taken during the second half of the class session**

#8. Nov. 3  **Personality assessment: Projective**
- The projective hypothesis and projective testing
- Rorschach, TAT, RATC
- Incomplete Sentences
- Projective Drawings
Readings: Wodrich, Chap. 7

#9. Nov. 9  **Personality assessment: Objective Measures**
- MMPI-2, MMPI-A, MMPI-RF
- NEO Personality Inventory and the “Five-Factor Model”
- Myers-Briggs; its popularity and limitations
Readings: Wodrich, Chap. 7

#10. Nov. 16  **Neurological & Neuropsychological Assessment**
- Neuropsychological assessment
- Direct and indirect measures
- Executive functioning
- Making a proper referral
Readings: Wodrich, pps. 245-288

#11. Nov. 23  **Behavioral and Emotional Assessment**
- General Considerations, E.I. evaluations, “Social Maladjustment”
- Mental Status Exam
- Classroom Observations, file reviews
Readings: Wodrich, review pps. 193-201
---Optionalt Papers Due---

#12. Nov. 30  **Assessment of Special Populations.**
- ADHD, assessment procedures, school’s role.
  - Role of testing in assessment
Readings: Wodrich, pps. 289-305.

#13. Dec. 7  **Assessment of Special Populations-continued**
- Assessing ASD (autism spectrum disorder)
- Assessing Aspergers, Hyperlexia, Pragmatic Speech disorder
- Assessing Non-verbal Learning Disability

**Quiz #3 to be completed in the second half of the class session**

#14. Dec. 14  
**Assessment of Special Populations-continued**
- Assessment of child anxiety, school avoidance, anxious family systems
- Assessment of child depression
- Assessment of enuresis and encopresis
- Final course comments about being a school social worker.