

## Post-Master Counseling Certification Program

### SYLLABUS

#### **HUS 662: Therapeutic Counseling and Human Service Delivery Applications of Clinical Assessment and Testing**

Department: Master of Human Services

Instructor: Dr. Effie Bastas

Semester: Spring, 2005

Phone: (215) 842-0678

Credit hours: 3

Office hours: W, Th 1-6 p.m.

**Pre-requisites:** Master's degree in Human Services or related field; eligibility for licensing as professional counselor.

**Course description:** This course will examine a variety of assessment and testing methods, advanced interviewing procedures, and observational techniques associated with the formulation of diagnostic impressions and treatment plans in human service settings. Emphasis will be given to multi-modal and eclectic appraisals of cognitive, affective, social, vocational, interests/aptitude, achievement, intellectual and personality aspects of functioning. The course will also present frameworks and models for the development of assessment practices. Attention will be given to the function and origin of assessment and testing instruments and principles underlying counseling and clinical practice in various human services settings. Additionally, concepts identifying appropriate paradigms for diagnostic inferences will be covered. Guidelines for conducting the assessment process in an ethical and considerate manner will be presented. Much attention will be given to the implications of clinical assessment and testing for diagnosis, clinical decision making and treatment planning. The techniques, tools, instruments and models incorporated into the course content will be elucidated in a pragmatic manner to be utilized by counselors, clinicians and human service practitioners who might not necessarily administer psychological tests, but will, nevertheless, be responsible for making clinical judgements and interventions based upon an understanding of test results.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this course is to convey a practical understanding of clinical assessment and testing approaches and models to counselors, therapists, and other human service practitioners who must make clinical judgments, diagnose clients, frame interventions, and manage the course of treatment within a variety of human service settings. The intention is to present an overview as well as detailed characteristics of different types of assessment tools and tests, in order to make them accessible to practitioners who utilize assessment data in the practice of counseling and clinical interventions. The course will not teach participants how to construct instruments but how to utilize assessment techniques and testing results to enhance the effectiveness and outcomes of treatment and service delivery.

#### **Course goals:**

1. Explore historical developments and current trends in clinical assessment;

2. Distinguish the different types of tests of ability, intellectual functioning, personality functioning, affective status, and cognitive functioning relevant to clinical and counseling practice;
3. Explain the significance of projective tests, such as the Thematic Apperception Test, in clinical decision-making;
4. Clarify concepts of validity and reliability as related to testing and assessment in counseling and clinical settings;
5. Demonstrate the utility of accurate assessment data in making effective clinical decisions;
6. Delineate a variety of issues and concerns stemming from testing and assessment practices with diverse, multicultural, and multiethnic populations;
7. Explore issues of racism, sexism, and other biases with respect to testing and assessment.

**Student objectives: Students will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the origins and functions of psychological testing and assessment in clinical practice;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of basic technical and methodological principles underlying psychological testing and assessment;
3. Comprehend the nature, distinctions, and applications of different types of tests, such as tests for ability, personality tests, interest and aptitude tests, tests of intellectual functioning, tests for affect, and tests for identifying symptoms;
4. Explain issues of reliability and validity and why they are important concerns for counselors and clinicians;
5. Identify observational techniques relevant to the assessment of behaviors in clinical settings;
6. Describe how to use interviewing and case histories along with information from psychological tests in order to make clinical decisions;
7. Indicate how to use different psychological tests and assessment results to augment other types of clinical observations, inferences, and interpretations.

**Topics to be covered:** Historical perspectives in testing and assessment; recent trends and issues; purposes of testing and assessment in counseling and clinical settings; concepts and types of validity and reliability; basic concepts of measurement, such as scales, distributions, measures of dispersion, and correlations; contexts and uses of current psychological tests, such as education, career development, and other human service settings; projective techniques as tools for clinical interpretation; confidentiality; the role of testing and assessment in clinical decision-making; guidelines for determining selection of psychological tests; the assessment interview and case history; the mental status examination; behavioral assessment strategies; self-report inventories; specific tests, including the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales, the Bender-Gestalt Visual Motor Test, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, the Rorschach, and the Thematic Apperception Test; cultural biases and racism as barriers to objectivity; the clinical report, guidelines and format.

**Course requirements:**

1. Students will be expected to comply with established principles and tenets of academic integrity as delineated by Lincoln University policy.
2. Students will be expected to attend all classes. Three absences will constitute a failure of the course.
3. Students will be expected to participate in classroom discussions, as well as complete all in-class exercises, role-plays, and/or small group activities.
4. Each student will be required to give an in-class 20 minute oral presentation identifying and describing a specific clinical assessment or psychological test, analyzing the assessment technique or test, describing guidelines for conducting and applying the assessment technique or test, and explaining its relevance to the students' particular client population and agency setting. A summary of the presentation must be distributed as a handout to the class.
5. Each student will be required to develop a clinical report using a fictitious client and based on fictitious results from three assessment instruments that the student will select.
6. Each student will submit a 10-15 page final paper discussing the role, significance, and application of clinical assessment and psychological testing with respect to the special population with which he/she works and the agency setting in which the work is conducted. In addition to the instruments under consideration, the paper must address issues regarding the history of psychological assessment and testing, cultural biases, and racism. The paper must be written according to APA format.

**Schedule of assignments:**

Weeks 3-7 Oral presentations

Week 7 Clinical report due

Week 11 Final paper due

**Assessment of student performance: Student grades will be based on the following:**

Oral presentation 20%

Clinical report 30%

Final paper 50%

**Course methods:** The course will employ a variety of educational methods, including lectures, small group discussions, presentations, and simulations. By utilizing various methods, the course will foster learning that is active, participatory, and grounded in practice. The integration of theory and practice will be emphasized.

**Required reading:**

Anastasi, A. & Urbina, S. (1997). *Psychological testing*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Groth-Marnat, G. (1999). *Handbook of psychological assessment*. N.Y.: Wiley.

Suzuki, L.A., Meller, P.J., & Ponterotto, J.G. (Eds.) (2001). *The new handbook of multicultural assessment: Clinical, psychological, and educational applications.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

**Recommended reading:**

Ponterotto, J.G., Casas, J.M., Suzuki, L.A., & Alexander, C.M. (2001). *Handbook of multicultural counseling.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rosenthal, H. (2002). *Encyclopedia of counseling.* N.Y.: Brunner-Routledge.

Thyer, B. (1995). *Clinical assessment for social workers: Quantitative and qualitative methods.* Chicago: Lyceum Books.