

**CNS 736: APPRAISAL PROCEDURES FOR COUNSELORS (3 credit hours)**  
**Fall, 2017**  
**Monday, 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**  
**Wake Forest University**  
**Carswell 208**

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Office Hours: By appointment

**Course content:**

In this course, we will study the selection, use, and interpretation of tests in counseling as an adjunct to clinical impressions. More specifically, our focus will be on the appraisal, assessment, and diagnosis of personality, emotional, intellectual, and learning characteristics and disorders of clients in schools, colleges, and community human service agencies. As part of our studies, you will gain a better understanding of psychometrics, norming practices, cultural considerations, and ethical practice as these all relate to appraisal.

**Learning outcome objectives (knowledge and skills):**

The learning goals below are taken from CACREP's 2016 standards. These are agreed upon by counseling professionals and counselor educators as some of the most important knowledge that graduates of CACREP-accredited clinical mental counseling and school counseling programs should possess upon graduation. These also represent competencies that you will want to continue building in preparation for your state licensure exam and for successful employment in the field. Your understanding of these knowledge areas will be assessed through this course through the following learning activities: forms analysis; personal assessments, reflection, and application; reflection on and application of case studies; administration of an instrument with a volunteer and subsequent reflection and application; a research project and presentation; and a final exam. Learning goals for CNS 736 include gaining knowledge and skill in the following areas from Section 2 of CACREP's standards:

- F.7.a. historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment and testing in counseling **(assessed in the exam)**
- F.7.b. methods of effectively preparing for and conducting initial assessment meetings **(assessed in forms analysis)**
- F.7.c. procedures for assessing risk of aggression or danger to others, self-inflicted harm, or suicide **(assessed through reflection on and application of a video case study)**

- F.7.d. procedures for identifying trauma and abuse and for reporting abuse **(assessed through reflection on and application of a written case study)**
- F.7.e. use of assessments for diagnostic and intervention planning purposes **(assessed through forms analysis and through personal assessment, reflection, and application)**
- F.7.f. basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments, and group and individual assessments **(assessed in the exam)**
- F.7.g. statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations **(assessed in the exam)**
- F.7.h. reliability and validity in the use of assessments **(assessed in the exam)**
- F.7.i. use of assessments relevant to academic/educational, career, personal, and social development **(assessed in the research project)**
- F.7.j. use of environmental assessments and systematic behavioral observations **(assessed in forms analysis)**
- F.7.k. use of symptom checklists, and personality and psychological testing **(assessed through personal assessment, reflection, and application)**
- F.7.l. use of assessment results to diagnose developmental, behavioral, and mental disorders **(assessed in the research project and in the exam)**
- F.7.m. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and test results **(assessed through personal assessment, reflection, and application; through the research project; and, in the exam)**

And, from Section 5 of CACREP's standards:

- 3.a. intake interview, mental status evaluation, biopsychosocial history, mental health history, and psychological assessment for treatment planning and caseload management **(assessed through forms analysis and through personal assessment, reflection, and application)**

**Methods of instruction:**

Primary methods of instruction will include, but not be limited to, lecture, class discussion, audio/video clips, feedback on required learning activities, and a final exam. You also will review or take several psychological tests as well as administer one with a volunteer, all as yet another practical way of experiencing and understanding assessment firsthand. Many of these tests are available free online or will be provided at no charge by the Department of Counseling.

**Required text:**

Hays, D., G. (2017). *Assessment in counseling* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

**Schedule of classes and learning activity due dates:**

Our course schedule is available in Sakai.

**Student performance evaluation criteria****Summary of grade weights by assignment:**

<b>Learning Activity</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percent of Grade</b>	<b>Applicable Grading Rubric</b>
Participation	10	10%	NA
Personal Assessment, Reflection, & Application	15	15%	Reflection Paper/Journal
Intake Form Analysis	5	5%	Reflection Paper/Journal
Analysis of Status & History Assessment Forms	5	5%	Reflection Paper/Journal
Case Study (Trauma &	5	5%	Written assignment

Reporting Abuse)			
Video Review & Reflection (Risk Assessment)	5	5%	Reflection Paper/Journal
Administer the Self-Directed Search	15	15%	Reflection Paper/Journal
Research project	20	20%	Written assignment
Research project presentation	5	5%	Presentation
Final exam	15	15%	NA
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>	

***Additional detail about each of these learning activities is provided further below.***

### **Grading scale**

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	70-76
F	0-69

### **Late assignments policy:**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date they are due otherwise they are considered late. You may be asked to submit an electronic version of your assignment along with a hard copy. Unless arrangements have been made with the course instructors, students who submit late assignments will receive a 10% grade deduction for each day beyond the due date.

### **Disability accommodation policy and procedure:**

Wake Forest University recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional climate in which students with differing needs and abilities can thrive. If you have a disability that may require an accommodation for taking this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Center within the first two weeks of the semester at 117 Reynolda Hall, WFU, Winston-Salem, NC, 27109. Phone: 336-758-5929. Email: [lacenter@wfu.edu](mailto:lacenter@wfu.edu).

### **Emergency contingency plan:**

In the event that the University is closed for an emergency, students will be able and expected to keep up with their coursework as all documents will be made available online in a Sakai course website. It is suggested that all materials be downloaded. Student work can be submitted via the course website or via email. If Internet access is limited, work can be submitted via postal mail to the instructor's home address (to be provided if needed). If there is a continued need to cancel class, the due dates for assignments may be pushed back.

### **Academic polices and honor code:**

Every student is required to practice and adhere to the principle of academic integrity while undertaking studies with Wake Forest University. Maintaining academic integrity is considered an essential academic standard of every graduate course and program. The University does not tolerate academic dishonesty. The graduate faculty at Wake Forest has adopted a formal honor code to provide guidance for student conduct with respect to academic pursuits. This policy may be accessed on the Graduate School website at: <http://graduate.wfu.edu/docs/academics/HonorCode.pdf>.

Academic dishonesty may be an academic issue or a disciplinary issue, or both, depending on its pervasiveness and/or severity. Any student engaged in academic dishonesty may face reprimand, disciplinary warning, a lowered or failing grade(s), and/or probation or suspension from the course, academic program, or University; or expulsion from the University.

*The list that follows includes examples, although not all-inclusive, of academic dishonesty:*

- Purchase of term papers turned in as one's own or writing the term paper(s) for another student.
- Submission of same term paper to another class without permission.
- Providing another student answers during an exam.
- Use of notes or book during exam when prohibited.
- Collaboration on homework or take-home exams when instruction called for independent work.
- Providing test question(s) to student(s) in another section of the class.
- Falsifying records or the fabrication of information and/or citation in an academic exercise.

- Violation of computer policies.
- **Plagiarism:** appropriating or passing off as one's work the writings, ideas, etc. of another, i.e.: copying without giving credit due, forgery, literary theft, and expropriation of some other's work. Plagiarism also includes electronic information of all types.
- Assisting someone in doing any of the above.

For the complete academic honesty policy and tips to avoid plagiarism, please see your student handbook.

### **Other academic policies:**

For further information on all academic policies, including the policies for adding and dropping a course, requesting a grade of incomplete, academic probation, termination of enrolment, reinstatement, and student and faculty expectations, see the Wake Forest Student Handbook: <http://college.wfu.edu/counseling/forms/forms-for-current-students/>

### **Additional detail about course learning activities/assignments:**

*We will discuss these further in class. I am happy to answer questions and clarify information.*

**Attendance:** Missing class is discouraged. Missing more than two class periods will result in a failing grade for the course except for extraordinary and unanticipated circumstances. Please use your allowed absences sparingly so as not to jeopardize your final grade for the course. Please be mindful of regularly arriving late or leaving early, as this will affect your participation grade.

**Participation (10%):** You will be expected to participate fully in all components of this course. This includes our time in lecture, class discussion, and class activities. By participation, I mean that you are physically, mentally, intellectually, and emotionally engaged in class. Don't be afraid to share ideas or respectfully challenge ideas. More talkative students should guard against monopolizing classroom discussions; less talkative students should push themselves to speak up and share their insights and questions.

In addition to general engagement in each class, each student will be responsible for facilitating one 10-minute group discussion related to one chapter of assigned textbook reading. An effective way of structuring a discussion can be to share something of personal interest from the reading and then ask the class for their thoughts about that particular topic. Each facilitator should come to class prepared with a few questions for the class to optimize group discussion. The majority of the 10 minutes should be used for class discussion, as this is a "discussion" and not a "presentation."

You are encouraged to bring questions from your reading to each class period for discussion. General Q&A is welcomed, as this can help to increase your understanding and application of assigned reading.

Participation for this course will account for **10%** of your final course grade. At the end of the semester, when calculating your final course grade, I will evaluate your participation based, first, on the quality, and second, on the perceived frequency of your engagement in class discussions and activities. This is a subjective grade on my part, and as such, I will let you know if and how at any point in the semester I believe you could improve your participation efforts.

**Personal Assessment, Reflection, & Application (15%):** Participation also will include completion of the various psychological tests that you will be asked to complete over the course of the semester. This is a common practice in graduate appraisal courses, as this gives students firsthand experience with various instruments and helps them better understand the strengths and limitations of psychological tests and the client's perspective on psychological testing. In addition to taking the tests, you'll also be expected to engage in 1) personal reflection on and 2) professional application of your perspective regarding the tests' psychometric, ethical, legal, cultural, and practical aspects. More specifically, answer the following questions:

- 1) What did you personally perceive as a strength of the test and why?
- 2) What do you personally perceive as a weakness of the test and why?
- 3) What seem to be psychometric, ethical, legal, cultural, or practical aspects of the test that would make it challenging to use with some or all clients?
- 4) How might you as a professional counselor use the test to assist you with case conceptualization and treatment planning with a client?
- 5) Why would or wouldn't you use the test to evaluate your client's progress over time?

You are not required to share your personal results, and should you decide to reference your personal results, you are encouraged to share only what you feel comfortable sharing. You also are encouraged to seek personal counseling if you find that your test results raise or increase your awareness of counseling-related needs.

Answer each of these questions for each of the psychological tests you take as part of this course. For each test, your answers to the 5 questions above likely will take up the equivalent of 1 page, single spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. All of your test reflections/applications will count for a combined **15%** of your final course grade. Upload them in Sakai. These assignments will be graded using the Reflection Paper/Journal rubric.

**Intake Form Analysis (5%):** Early in the semester, you should identify a site/practitioner where/from whom you will obtain an intake form. Most ideal is that you bring from your internship site the form the site uses for intake meetings. If your site does not have a form, you may contact or visit another place/person to actually obtain a form, or you may locate one online. Once you have a form, thoroughly evaluate the form based on the presence and absence of ethical, legal, cultural, and practical factors that do and do not make for a useful and overall effective information-gathering tool. Following your review, type two bulleted lists—one labeled “Effective” and one labeled “Ineffective.” The form you choose should be substantive enough that you are able to produce two substantive lists of at least 10 bullets per list. Even though these are “bulleted” lists, you should elaborate on each of your points so that I fully understand your analysis of the in-take form. I want to see with each point that you have said why that particular item is effective or ineffective, and if ineffective, what you would change about the form to make it more effective. Upload your work in Sakai. And, on the due date, bring your list and your assessment form to class for group discussion. This assignment (the bulleted lists) is worth **5%** of your final course grade. It will be graded using the Reflection Paper/Journal rubric.

**Analysis of Status and History Assessment Forms (5%):** You will review samples of the following types of assessment:

- Mental Status Exam
- Mental Health History
- Biopsychosocial History
- Environmental assessment
- Systematic behavioral observation

Following your review, you will answer the following questions about each type of assessment: 1) In what ways do you see this type of assessment aiding in your work as a professional counselor? 2) In what ways might your delivery of this type of assessment be challenging? 3) How might a client experience this type of assessment in a positive way? 4) How might a client experience this type of assessment in a negative way?

Your answers to these questions should be thorough, such that it is evident to me that you have thoroughly reviewed and analyzed these types of assessment. Your answers to the questions **for each type of assessment** likely will take up the equivalent of ½ page, single spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Upload your work in Sakai. On the due date, we will discuss your work in class. This assignment (same 4 questions for each of these 5 types of assessment) is worth **5%** of your final course grade. It will be graded using the Reflection Paper/Journal rubric.

Please note that the sample forms I’ve chosen for you are just that—samples. There is no one universal form for any of these types of assessment. Most of their individual components are commonly featured in that particular type of assessment, but formats

and specific procedures or documentation styles vary widely depending on the setting and individual clinicians' preferences. Also be aware that I have not selected the particular samples that you are reviewing because they are "best" or model samples. I chose these because they were reasonably good (not perfect) samples and easily available as free downloads on the internet. Lastly, notice that these types of assessments tend to target similar information. And, in fact, while they have their own unique foci, they do share a good bit of overlap. Again, setting and preference will typically dictate which of these forms and in what combination you might use them.

### **Case Study (Trauma & Abuse Reporting) (5%):**

Read the case study I've provided for you in Sakai (Resources). This is a scenario that would require trauma assessment, an ethical decision-making process, and, in most if not all states, the reporting of abuse. After reading the case study, answer these questions:

- 1) This counselor uses conversation and observation as ways of assessing for trauma. In what ways is the child in the case study being traumatized?
- 2) Upon observing the child in the session and hearing her story, what should be a counselor's next steps in terms of ethical decision-making? Include in your answer:
  - a. Who and what would we consult in our decision-making process?
  - b. Do we allow the child to leave our office, and upon what factors do we base that decision?
  - c. Do we tell the child and/or the parent that we must report our concerns of child abuse to Child Protective Services?
- 3) Upon making a decision to report, what would be our next steps?
  - a. Who would we call?
  - b. What would we say?
  - c. What happens next for the child?
  - d. How would we need to handle documentation?

There are many other important elements about this case study that we could discuss, but for now, simply answer these questions. Beyond your textbook reading, you are encouraged to do additional research on trauma and abuse reporting, including researching the steps for reporting suspected child abuse in your state. You are free to make presumptions or otherwise expand on the case study with subtle details that you believe add clarity or further help you in your hypothetical, ethical decision-making process.

Your combined answers to the questions above likely will take up the equivalent of 1 page, single spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. This assignment is worth **5%** of your final course grade. Upload it in Sakai. It will be graded using the Reflection Paper/Journal rubric.

### **Video Review, Reflection, & Application (Risk Assessment) (5%):**

After reading Chapter 7, specifically the section on Suicide Assessment, watch the video case of Glen (in Sakai). Reflect upon and write about how well you believe the counselor assesses Glen for suicide risk. Support your answer with information from your Chapter 7 reading. Along with your reflection, apply this learning activity to your own work as a professional counselor by answering these questions:

- 1) In what ways might suicide assessment be difficult for you as the counselor? Or if not difficult, in what ways would suicide assessment not be difficult for you?
- 2) How might you sustain and even grow the therapeutic alliance between you and a client even while conducting a suicide assessment?
- 3) What would you consider to be therapeutic next steps for Glen? That is, how might his suicide prevention become part of his treatment plan?

There are many other important elements about this case study that we could discuss, but for now, simply reflect on the counselor's risk assessment skills and answer these 3 questions. Your combined answers for the 3 questions likely will take up the equivalent of ½-1 page, single spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. This assignment is worth **5%** of your final course grade. Upload it in Sakai. It will be graded using the Reflection Paper/Journal rubric.

**Administer the Self-Directed Search (15%):** Earlier in the semester, you will take the Self-Directed Search (SDS) online for yourself as a way of familiarizing yourself with the instrument. Then, I will provide you with a second online administration of the SDS so that you can administer it for another person. This volunteer should not be a classmate, other counseling student, or other counseling professional. Your volunteer can be a friend or family member. If appropriate for your internship site, you can ask your site supervisor's permission to administer the SDS with one of your internship clients. Along with administering the SDS, you will complete a questionnaire (in Sakai) that asks about the experience, the volunteer's reaction and input about the process, and your thoughts on the SDS. You also will be asked about how, hypothetically, you would incorporate your volunteer's test results into a treatment plan for him or her. Use this assignment as an opportunity to continue practicing building rapport, explaining test administration, debriefing with a client following an assessment, and treatment planning. This assignment (studying the SDS, taking it, administering it for a volunteer, completing the questionnaire) is worth **15%** of your final course grade. It will be graded using the Reflection Paper/Journal rubric. Upload an electronic copy of your completed questionnaire in Sakai.

**Research project (25%):** This assignment is graded in two sections: **20%** of your final course grade will be based on the content of your project; **5%** will be based on your presentation of the content. Early in the semester, you will choose an assessment instrument, or test, of interest to you, and then across the semester, research that

instrument in a comprehensive manner. Ideally, you should focus your research on an instrument that you foresee yourself using in a counseling setting or with a population of interest to you. This will make your research more personally meaningful. I would prefer that no two students research and present on the same instrument, and so to help accomplish this goal, we will “draw” for choice early in the semester. You will notice in the schedule that I have made time for presentations based on their relevance to our reading for a particular week. Please factor this in when selecting your presentation date. You may not present on any of the assessments that you take as part of the course.

For the content portion of this project, you should use a minimum of 7 scholarly sources (peer-reviewed journal articles, Mental Measurements Yearbook, or other professor-approved source). You may use your textbook as one of your resources.

For the presentation portion of this project, plan on taking 10 minutes for your presentation and then being able to field and answer questions for up to 5 minutes. As you can tell, the limited amount of time that you will have to present will necessitate good time management on your part. Plus, you should provide the class with a simple handout that covers the instrument’s psychometric basics (i.e., reliability, validity, and normative sample) and its administrative considerations (i.e., cost, number of items, time needed, counselor qualifications, age range, language). This way, you can spend the 15 minutes that you have in a most meaningful way, ideally focusing most on the details that best explain to us why we would or would not want to consider using that instrument. It will be important here to support your impression with summary statements from the scholarly resources you reviewed for your project.

Here again, many possibilities exist for how you may want to approach the content portion of your project. Examples of possible formats include writing a traditional research paper, creating a 3-panel poster such as those presented at professional conferences, creating a powerpoint **with detailed presenter’s notes**, designing a newsletter about your test of choice, or creating some type of video or podcast about your test. I am open to your ideas about format, so please feel free to consult with me about your plan for this assignment. My ultimate goal is giving you freedom to work in a personally meaningful way but also holding the class as a whole to an overall fair expectation for a graduate-level final product.

As a way of providing some structure without limiting you, I recommend that you clearly demonstrate your understanding of and integration of the required minimum 7 scholarly resources; that you clearly demonstrate your study of the test’s psychometric properties, strengths, limitations, and population-specific considerations; and that you clearly demonstrate a time investment worthy of 25% of your final grade. I furthermore recommend that if writing a paper, you write a minimum of 7 content pages (this number doesn’t include title, abstract, and references pages); and if choosing any other format, you include an equivalent amount of information as would be in a 7-page research paper. Thus, if doing a newsletter, you should create it such that an average reader may require between 10 and 15 minutes to fully read it; if doing a powerpoint, that you

include presenter's notes inside the powerpoint to further bolster the slide content; if doing a video or podcast, you create it such that it runs for 10 to 15 minutes; and if doing a 3-panel poster, you create one that would be presentable at a professional conference (no hard copy needed; a digital/powerpoint version will suffice).

In summary, whatever format you choose to present your information should require you the same amount of time and material as would a 7-page research paper. Having a choice of format merely allows you some creativity and flexibility in how you approach your project. In all aspects of your project, remember to use APA style, including providing a list of references as part of any project format you choose.

For the presentation portion of your project, you have the same freedom as you have with the content portion. However you decide to structure your 10-minute presentation (plus 5 minutes of Q&A), at a minimum, I recommend that you are informative (teach us about your test), creative (grab our attention), and interactive (involve us in ways that keep our attention without taking away from your responsibility and desire to inform us). But above all of these elements, you must educate us on the instrument you chose to research.

The content portion of this project will be graded using the Written Assignment Rubric. Please talk with me if you have questions about how I might adapt that rubric for something other than a "written" assignment. The presentation portion of this project will be graded using the Presentation Rubric. You should upload your completed project and presentation in Sakai by the class period you are due to present.

**Final Exam (15%):** The final exam will count as **15%** of your final course grade. Early in the semester, I will provide you with a "reading guide/exam study guide" to help you focus your reading in preparation for the exam. The exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions that come directly from our textbook. I will provide additional details about the exam closer to the end of the semester, but in general, you will take this timed, open-book exam via Sakai.

**Final Note:** Let's keep the lines of communication open! Please feel free to share with me if at any time during the semester you have questions, concerns, great new ideas, etc., related to this course. I continually seek to improve my knowledge of best practices, both in counseling and in counselor education, and I appreciate constructive student feedback. You can assist me by sharing your ideas in a respectful and positive manner. Together, we create an outstanding learning experience!