

Adler Graduate School

Richfield, Minnesota

AGS Course 533

Clinical Assessment

1. Course Designation and Identifier

- 1.1 Adler Graduate School
- 1.2 Course number 533
- 1.3 Clinical Assessment
- 1.4 Three (3) credits
- 1.5 Prerequisites: AGS courses 511, 504

2. Course Description

This course introduces student to purposes, types, and the process of clinical assessment. Special issues in assessment, including biases, assessment with special populations, and ethical considerations are presented. Research in clinical assessment will be discussed. Course activities will focus on assessment considerations with several clinical conditions, assessment of mental status, risk assessment, and Adlerian approach to clinical assessment.

Techniques for understanding non-verbal behavior, speech and language, and interpersonal transactions are reviewed in a context of behavioral observations as an assessment tool, as well as part of objective and projective types of assessment.

In addition to the 30 hours of class time spelled out in this syllabus, students will carry out at least 30 hours of work specifically tuned to their future professional needs, special interests, or special topics in assessment. These are described more fully in the “Special Project” section of the syllabus.

3. Texts, Materials, and Resources (required and optional)

3.1 Required texts:

Whiston, S.C. (2009). *Principles and Applications of Assessment in Counseling* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

Sperry, L. (2003). *Handbook of Diagnosis and Treatment of DSM-IV-TR Personality Disorders*. (2nd ed.). New York: Brunner-Routledge.

3.2 Supplemental texts (**not required**):

Maruish, M.E. (2000). *Handbook of Psychological Assessment in Primary Care Settings*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Meyer, R.G. & Deitsch, S.E. (1996). *The Clinician's Handbook: Integrated Diagnostics, Assessment, and Intervention in Adult and Adolescent Psychopathology* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

OR

Meyer, R.G. & Weaver, C.M. (2006). *The Clinician's Handbook: Integrated Diagnostics, Assessment, and Intervention in Adult and Adolescent Psychopathology* (5th ed.). Waveland Press

Groth-Marnat, G. (2009). *Handbook of Psychological Assessment* (5th ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

3.3 Students should have access to DSM-IV-TR for assessment exercises

3.4 Additional materials in student handouts

3.5 Selected video and audio tapes will be presented in class.

3.6 A list of additional articles for reading (optional) will be provided

4. Competencies and Learning Outcomes

Students in this course will:

4.1 Continue to gain knowledge of the history, principles, philosophy, types, purpose, and uses of clinical assessment, including significant figures in the history of clinical assessment and importance of research in clinical assessment. Gain beginning understanding of various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses, including diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments

4.1.1 Standards met are 1a; 7a,b,d,e; 8a,e

4.2 Learn basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, behavioral observations; intake interview, a mental status evaluation, a biopsychosocial history, a mental health history, and a psychological assessment for treatment planning and caseload management.

4.3 Learn approaches in identifying specific biases and limitations in clinical assessment and ways of dealing with biases in selection, administration, and interpretation of assessment tools.

4.3.1 Standards met are 1g; 2d; 5a; 7f,g,h,i

4.4 Continue to learn about ethical standards in mental health in general, and in clinical assessment in particular

4.4.1 Standards met are 1g; 2d; 7i

4.5 Continue to learn about issues of diversity, acculturative experiences, and other cultural variables in clinical assessment, as applied to its content and the assessment

process; social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations

4.5.1 Standards met are 2b,d,f; 7f; 8a,e.

4.6 Gain knowledge in understanding human behavior and conducting clinical assessment on various levels of human functioning (from micro level to larger and environmental systems); at different phases of the life span, and from various assessment perspectives (categorical, dimensional, and developmental); the principles and models of assessment, case conceptualization, theories of human development, and concepts of normalcy and psychopathology leading to diagnoses and appropriate counseling treatment plans.

4.6.1 Standards met are 3c,e; 7b; 9b,d

4.7 Continue to learn Adlerian principles of the assessment process

4.7.1 Standards met are 10 b,c,e,f

4.8 Have a beginning knowledge of and beginning skills in selecting, administering, and interpreting selected standardized screening instruments commonly used in counseling profession as it related to common DSM-IV diagnoses and treatment planning (including but not limited by assessment in selected Personality Disorders, Mood Disorders, Anxiety Disorders, Adjustment Disorders; Substance Use Disorders; types and uses of Mental Status Examination, safety assessment); acquire an understanding about reliability and validity of the assessment instruments

4.7.1 Standards met are 5d; 7b,d,e,f,g,i

4.9 Continue to gain knowledge in using clinical assessment data in counseling process

4.9.1 Standards met are 5b; 7h

Numbers and letters, i.e. 1a., identify learning competencies as outlined in the Adler Graduate School's accreditation guidelines

5. Course Outline (minor changes may be made to adjust to specific needs of a particular class as this course progresses) and Reading Assignments

Please note that all reading assignments must be completed prior to the class (unit) for which the assignments are posted.

UNIT 1:

- Introduction and personal goals for this course;
- Administration (grades, assignments, attendance, miscellaneous issues);
- Introduction of course outlines;

- History, principles, philosophy, types, purpose, and uses of clinical assessment, including significant figures in the history of clinical assessment and importance of research in clinical assessment;
- models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses, including diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments
- Biases and limitations in clinical assessment; ways of dealing with biases in selection, administration, and interpretation of assessment tools.
- Ethical considerations in clinical assessment;
- Research in assessment

Reading: Chapters 1, 2, 5, & 14 in Whiston's book (required); pp. 43-50 in Groth-Marnat's book (optional); selected handouts

UNIT 2:

- Introduction into cross-cultural considerations in clinical assessment; issues of diversity, acculturative experiences, and other cultural variables in clinical assessment, as applied to its content and the assessment process; social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations
- Role of the clinician in clinical assessment;
- Types and uses of mental status examination and clinical interview;
- Introduction to risk assessment and Adlerian explanation of a social purpose of suicide

Reading: Chapters 6 & 15 in Whiston's book (required), pp. 51-58, 73-94 in Groth-Marnat's book (optional); selected handouts

UNITS 3:

- Assessment of Depressive Disorders;
- Adler and Adlerians on assessment of depressive symptoms ("hazards of everyday life" and "unreachable fictional goals");

Reading: Chapter 12 in Whiston's book (required); pp. 526-530 in Groth-Marnat's book (optional); selected handouts

UNIT 4:

- Attachment styles and Personality Disorders in clinical assessment;
- Clinical manifestations and screening for traits of Personality Disorders in counseling;
- Adlerian interpretations of Personality Disorders
- Assessment of Substance Use

Reading: chapters 2, 4, & 5 in Sperry's book (required); selected handouts

UNIT 5:

- Assessment for anxiety disorders;

- Adler on nature of anxiety and “fear of defeat”
- Clinical assessment with special populations (children)
- Collaborative approach in clinical assessment

Reading: Chapter 12 in Whiston’s book (required)

UNIT 6:

- Clinical assessment with special populations (older adults);
- Understanding human behavior and conducting clinical assessment on various levels of human functioning (from micro level to larger and environmental systems); at different phases of the life span, and from various assessment perspectives (categorical, dimensional, and developmental);
- theories of human development, and concepts of normalcy and psychopathology leading to diagnoses and appropriate counseling treatment plans.

Reading: Chapter 11 and pages 266-270 in Whiston’s book; selected handouts

UNIT 7:

- Projective techniques in assessment;
- Balancing professional ethics and legalities: clinical assessment with families and compliance with HMO contracts;

Reading: Chapter 13 in Whiston’s book; Chapters 13-14 in Groth-Marnat’s book (optional); selected handouts

UNITS 8:

- Assessment of therapeutic process and treatment outcomes
- Assessment and treatment planning;
- Special topics in clinical assessment;

Reading: selected handouts

UNIT 9:

- Special topics in clinical assessment;
- Role of a clinician in clinical assessment revisited
- Closure and topics for further research and exploration

Reading: selected handouts

6. Special Project Time (SPT)

Special Project Time (SPT) allows students the opportunity to integrate course materials. SPT is meant to be a self-contained, 30 hour experience. SPT generally focuses on either (a) an experiential exercise paired with an integrative writing component or (b) a research exercise and a short integrative writing component.

An integrative, SPT experience can be based on an individual project or a group project. Once again, the individual or group completes an experiential or a research oriented exercise, followed by a short integrative writing assignment. This should all be planned within the context of a 30 hour student expectation.

SPT experiences may be constructed in such a way that they pertain to students' unique degree plans. For example, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist students, Licensed Professional Counselor students, and Licensed School Counselor students might construct a SPT experience unique to their chosen disciplines. This is done in consultation with the course instructor.

7. Writing Guidelines including APA Format

All written assignments in courses at the Adler Graduate School must be in APA format unless specifically noted by the course instructor (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), 2009, American Psychological Association. ISBN 1-4338-0561-8).

8. Assessment/Evaluation Procedures

8.1 Active Class participation is expected and graded in this class - 45 points

8.2 Special project time (SPT) – 30 points total for all SPT-related activities

SPT is meant to be a self-contained, 30 hours experience. Special project time allows students the opportunity to integrate course materials, to involve additional reading and experiential activities, to use academic knowledge and professional experience related to their chosen degree plan, to practice working in diverse teams, do research and deliver effective presentations.

The culmination of SPT is a team (desired) or individual presentation on a last day of class. The presentation time is approximately 10-15 minutes. The presentation will provide only a brief summary and few highlights of the project, and is not meant to be a detailed description of the SP process or its content. Instead, a SP summary will be used for detailed explanation and/or descriptions of the project.

An alternative to SP presentation may be a full length (10-15 pages) academic paper. Please consult with your course instructor prior to making this alternative choice to see if this option is available in your section. Other options in presenting SPs may be considered (community presentation, project description, etc.).

The projects will focus on creating an assessment battery (or a single tool) for a specific condition, or for various conditions in specific populations to be used in outpatient setting. Alternatively, an existing approach/tool/instrument (or a part of it) can be considered to assess a traditionally underassessed/clinically challenging condition. Special attention will be paid to differential diagnoses. Ideally, the topic for the project will be consistent with students' chosen discipline or a special interest. Students are expected to interview a professional in a field to gather a professional perspective on their chosen topic. Students are encouraged to revisit Adlerian concepts and/or assessment approaches. Topics need to be determined by the second session of this class.

Students are expected to keep a log of activities. A log form will be provided, but students can use any form of their choice, as long as time and activities are accounted for. Students are encouraged to communicate their SPT progress weekly (via oral communication or in e-mails) and to address any concerns early, to ensure the projects are completed successfully.

Following their presentation, students are expected to write a brief (5-8 pages) summary of the Special Project topic, addressing the main message that their presentation was to deliver, how and why they arrived to their respective topic, any personal reflection on how the project was accomplished (anticipated and unanticipated challenges, discoveries, “aha” experiences, etc.), and a reference list. This paper is an individual paper, whether the special project was conducted individually or in a group. This summary is due one week after the last day of class.

8.3 Final Paper Assignment (minimum of 8 pages without a title page and a reference page) – 25 points

Based on class discussions and your individual reading, please pick a disorder or another clinical condition and write up your process of clinical assessment, incorporating at least four different existing assessment methods useful to arrive to an accurate diagnosis. One of the tools will have to be chosen from the BDI-II (Beck Depression Inventory), BYI (Beck Youth Inventories), BAI (Beck Anxiety Inventory), or BHS (Beck Hopelessness Scale). Another tool will have to come from Adlerian assessment techniques. In your paper, please explain the purpose of using the assessment techniques that you decided to include in your assessment process, and how these might later be used to track changes. In your discussion about Beck scales, please explain what items from the chosen inventory seem particularly helpful in your diagnostic process and why, and how the Beck score will be integrated into this process. APA format and use of 3-4 scholarly (peer-reviewed) sources required.

8.4 How the total grade will be calculated

Assignments	Date Due	Maximum Points
Class participation	Weekly	45 points (5 points per unit)
Special Project (presentation)	last day of class	15 points
Special Project (individual summary)	1 week after the class ends	15 points
Final Paper	2 weeks after the class ends	25 points

Grades

Grades are assigned according to a classical strategy (i.e., A, B, C, R)
 A – 91-100 points; B – 81-90 points; C – 71-80 points; R – Non-performance related to either attendance or failure to complete assignments within 45 days after last class session. Highest possible grade for students who will miss two units is “B”

Request for extension must be made in writing, prior to deadline. Extension (if granted) cannot go beyond 45 days after last class session. Highest possible grade for students with extension requests is “B”, and students are encouraged to submit their written assignments on time.

9. Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. When a student is unable to attend class, it is a courtesy to notify the course instructor in advance using either e-mail or phone. AGS’ attendance and grading policies appear in the School’s Student Manual.

10. Participation Disclaimer

Active participation in class discussions/exercises/demonstrations is encouraged. As with other AGS courses, in this course, individual students must determine for themselves the level of disclosure/intimacy that is appropriate for them.

Whenever confidential information/material is used in any AGS course, students and faculty members are expected to observe AGS policy concerning the handling of confidential information/material. Full descriptions of these policies are readily available.

11. Academic Integrity Policy

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects, and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism, or some other form of dishonest conduct may result in failure for the work involved. Academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of academic dishonesty, suspension from the Adler Graduate School . Here are examples of academic dishonesty:

- Cheating - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit.
- Fabrication - Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- Facilitating academic dishonesty - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of academic integrity.
- Plagiarism - The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

12. Internet/On-Line Activity

On-line components Adler Graduate School classes provide an opportunity for open and insightful dialogue. As in face-to-face discussions, there are differences in opinions concerning topics discussed. We view these differences as welcomed attribute of a good scholarly discussion. Respect for differences will also be viewed as a sign of scholarly debate.

Following are guidelines governing on-line discussions:

- Never post content that is known to be illegal. Never post potentially harassing, threatening, or embarrassing statements, as well as statements that that might be potentially offensive and seen as disrespectful in any way.
- Faculty members monitor discussion and intervene when requested or as deemed necessary.
- On-line communication presents a significant level of ambiguity, as verbal content of communication is not well supported by its non-verbal (including contextual) components. If a student feels threatened or offended by a statement made by another student during on-line portion of a class, please address the issue immediately with the other student(s) to clarify their position and your reaction. If this does not work, contact your class instructor so actions can be taken if necessary.
- During on-line discussion, follow the same rules concerning protection of confidential information as you would follow in face-to-face discussion.

13. Nondiscrimination Clause

The Adler Graduate School is an equal opportunity educator and employer. The Adler Graduate School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or physical disability in the employment of faculty or staff, the admission or treatment of students, or in the operation of its educational programs and activities. The institution is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws.

14. Learning Accommodations (including students with disabilities)

If a student in this course has a documented learning disability, he or she should tell the instructor during the first week of class. The instructor needs to know on the front end so that he or she can work with the student. The Adler Graduate School is committed to helping all students be successful, as best as can be reasonably accommodated. Documenting a learning disability occurs at the student's expense. When documented appropriately, the Adler Graduate School makes all reasonable accommodations.

15. Instructor Contact Information

Please submit your paper via e-mail or regular mail (either to AGS mailing address or the instructor's office address). If mailed, it must be postmarked by the due date assigned in class.

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